

Chapter-III

The Temple Tiger

A. Introduction:

The Temple Tiger along with the hunting experiences of four man-eaters in Kumaon deals with other various interesting experiences that Corbett has met with. As usual, Corbett describes the enchanting wildlife of Kumaon and explores the supernatural element experienced by him. Occasional sketches in the book describing the events make the book more interesting.

The very first story of '**The Temple Tiger**' discloses Corbett's unsuccessful attempts to kill the Dabidhura temple tiger that has been reputed to be protected by the gods and therefore has supernatural protection. Hill people believe that the animal is blessed and no one can kill it. It is a thrilling narrative of Jim getting in a number of shots but failing even to graze the tiger. Though Corbett is unable to hunt the tiger, his experience is one of the most interesting shikar experiences he has ever had. He tries to hunt the tiger when out on his mission to kill the Panar man-eater about which he tells afterwards in this book. Corbett is also accused by some for diverging his attention from the man-eater that was an urgent hunt. According to Corbett, the Temple tiger has never molested human beings and though he has killed some cattle, has committed no crime against the jungle code. But killing him would have benefited the people who were suffering from his depredations. The story also explores the theme of superstition through the story of Bala Singh, a hill man and an acquaintance of Corbett. Bala Singh and other hill people believe that he has swallowed the demon of

Trisul and afterwards, the demon takes his life. In addition, the story gives account of Corbett's hunting of a bear and one of the rare fights that he has witnessed in the forest between the bear and the tiger.

Corbett records the successful hunting of a dangerous cat in '**The Muktesar Man-Eater**' that he kills within seventy-two hours after his departure from his home, Naini Tal. He also discusses the reason for the tigress's becoming an established man-eater. She has been forced to eat human being through injury as is the case with the most of man-eaters that Corbett has hunted. Not unlike other man-eaters, the tigress has terrorized people to such an extent that no one, even in daylight, dared to move about alone; and after dusk, everyone remains behind the locked doors. Many attempts have been made to shoot her but she has never returned to any of her kills because of the elaborate preparations made to sit over. The operating area of the tigress was not only extensive but also unknown to Corbett. When he gets the first chance to shoot her he relies on his ears as it was too dark to see anything and loses the chance. Then he tries for a beat that also fails because of want of sufficient people but suddenly notices the beast and carefully shoots her. Corbett also shares his memory of the supernatural in this story when he has been unable to kill a tiger because of the impact of g in that particular area.

Corbett's third man-eater hunt is the Panar man-eating leopard the name given after the Panar river. The leopard has terrorized the villages on the eastern border of the Almora district and that has been then, the issue in the House of Commons. It has killed not less than four hundred human beings. Still, Corbett notices that it has got less publicity though it has

caused far more human suffering than the Rudraprayag leopard. In his first visit to Almora, in April 1910, Corbett fails to complete his mission but the second time, in September, he kills the leopard though in return having unforgettable and horrible event of its attack on the tree where he has sat on. He has tied a goat out in the open ground and sat on an oak tree. He has taken the precaution to tie bundles of blackthorn shoots to the trunk of the tree securely with strong rope and because of *the efficient carrying out of these small details* (P.82, *T.T.T.*) he owes his life. The leopard was not afraid of human beings and so, when it comes and notices Corbett, jerks violently the blackthorn shoots and several times nearly unseats him as there has been nothing stable to hold on to for him. Finally, when the leopard goes and kills the goat, Corbett shoots it in the indistinct light only to wound it. He then calls the villagers who insist him to find out the wounded animal with the help of pine torches and he finishes it.

The Chuka man-eating tiger has been operating in the Ladhya valley. The story unfolds the unfortunate plight of some human victims killed before Corbett's trying to finish the tiger. On one of the occasions, the tiger attacks a man carrying a sack and very humorously, having caught his teeth in the sack, carries it away without doing the man any injury but afterwards learns a lesson not to attack a human having any burden. When Corbett visits Chuka, along with Ibbotson, the then Deputy Commissioner-in-Charge of the three districts of Naini Tal, Almora and Garhwal, ties six buffaloes on different grounds as a bait for the tiger. On the fifth day, the tiger carries one of them but Corbett fails to kill as it does not return to the kill. He then sits on guard at a live buffalo but this plan also fails. The tiger kills another buffalo but for

no use. When it kills the third buffalo, Corbett very cautiously and silently climbs a nearby tree with the help of Ibbotson and their men and successfully kills the tiger. Corbett finds the reason for the tiger's becoming man-eater that the right canine tooth in his lower jaw was missing and several pellets of buckshot were embedded in his body. In addition to the hunting of the man-eater, Corbett gives an account of very interesting and humorous fishing by Ibbotson and his wife, Jean. He also portrays an osprey's deplorable effort to feed itself by catching fish and a very interesting account of a tiger and his two cubs feeding on their prey.

Corbett refrains himself from telling the story of the Talla Des man-eater operating in the district of Almora until he has written *Jungle Lore* as he thinks that to many people the story will seem incredible. The man-eater has operated over a very large area as man-eaters generally do, for eight years and killed one hundred and fifty human beings. As usual, Corbett has hunted this man-eater on foot but what makes this hunting special is that he has tracked it even at night and in abnormal physical condition. He has been suffering from the abscess in addition his hearing has been defective. In the first part of the story he explains how an unfortunate accident affected his hearing while shooting from the back of a well-trained elephant on the grasslands of the Terai. Describing his worst physical condition at the time when he tracks the tigress at night, he writes, '*The swelling on my head, face and neck had now increased to such proportions that I was no longer able to move my head up or down or from side to side, and my left eye was closed.*' (P.163, *T.T.T.*) The man-eater is introduced earlier in '**the Chuka man-eater**' when it was not the man-eater but only a mother with her cubs

On the very first day of his arrival at Talla Kote, Corbett hunts her two cubs and after five days kills the mother meanwhile bearing much mental and physical torture. In the 'Epilogue' Corbett suggests the readers one pleasant hiking place for sportsmen as hiking in the Himalayas is becoming a very popular pastime. The track is the same used by him for going to Tall Kote. It also includes the villages like Thak and Chuka.

The researcher has observed the following major perspectives in

T.T.T.:

- A. Wildlife in Kumaon
- B. Socio-Economic and Religious life in Kumaon
- C. Human Nature and the Supernatural
- D. Geographical Perspective and the Bondage between Man and Animal

A. Wildlife in Kumaon:

Corbett has deep and enduring love for the Kumaoni Mountains with their enchanting forests of pine, sal, plum, and oak. He loves to walk along the forest roads in the moonlight during the winter months. As he is fascinated by the beautiful sights in the wild, he is always pleased to erect his white tent under a canopy of orange-coloured bloom with '*densely wooded foothills in the background topped by ridge upon rising ridge of the Himalayas, and they in turn topped by the eternal snows.*' (P.117, ***T.T.T.***)

The early morning crisp air with all the sweet scents that are the facet of an Indian jungle goes to the head like champagne. Various trees such as ficus, jamun, semul, shisham, oak, sal, plum, medlar and dense patches of ringal (stunted bamboo) are found in the jungles of Kumaon. In addition, emerald-

green elephant grass, oat grass, nettles, black-thorn, bracken, maidenhair fern, wild rose, golden orioles, a multitude of brilliantly plumaged red and gold minivets, raspberry bush that are worth eating, an aromatic type of weed that grows to a height of four or five feet and has leaves like chrysanthemums having the white undersides grow throughout Kumaon. On the flat ground grows the orange-coloured lily, the round hard seeds of which can be used shot in a muzzle-loading gun.

Kumaon is teeming with variety of bird-life. Rose-headed parakeets, golden-backed woodpeckers and wire-crested drongos flit from tree to tree shaking down the bloom to make the ground a beautiful carpet. A great number of pheasants such as kaleege pheasants, magpies, babblers, thrushes and black-throated jays, all of which call on seeing a member of the cat family, are present in the forests of Kumaon. Black partridge, bulbul and drongos also inform every movement of a beast to a skilled hunter. According to Corbett, white-throated laughing thrushes and scimitar-babblers are the most reliable informants in the hills. Corbett has been able to distinguish between the natural calls and the alarm calls of all the animals and birds towards the beasts. He has also acquired the art of pin-pointing, that is fixing the exact direction and distance of all sounds heard. It would not be exaggeration to say that he could understand the language of the jungle denizens. The beautiful species of birds, blue Himalayan magpies, have an uncanny instinct for finding in a jungle anything dead. They do a lot of destruction in the nesting season among tits and other small birds. They are very vocal and so, can be heard from a long distance. Vultures, golden-headed eagles, chukor (hill partridge), peafowl, red jungle fowl, bush quail

to see such interesting chases in the jungle. He recollects one such chase when a bush chat has passed from a sparrow-hawk to a red-headed merlin, then to a honey buzzard and finally to a peregrine falcon without once touching the ground. Crows feed on osprey's leavings. Ground owls that are about twice the size of a partridge, live in abandoned pangolin and porcupine burrows. They look white on the wing and have longer legs than the ordinary run of owls. When on a shooting campaign in Terai, Corbett along with his other companions enjoys a ground owl's successful efforts to run away from a peregrine falcon. According to Corbett, the beautiful cardinal bats that look like gorgeous butterflies as they flit from cover to cover are only to be found in heavy elephant-grass. Of birds there are many varieties and of flowers there is great profusion in Kumaon. The most beautiful of which is the white butterfly orchid. These orchids hang down in showers and veil the branch or the trunk of the tree to which their roots are attached. On such trees, Corbett has seen a Himalayan black bear make its nest.

There is abundant stock of game in the valleys of Kumaon. Wild pig, porcupine, baral, horned owl, cock florican-hens, hare, bear, sambhar, cheetal, kakar, langur are in a large number. Jarao, that is hill sambhar, on occasions grow very fine horns. Corbett has known one shot in Kumaon some time previously with horns measuring forty-seven inches. Thar, ibex, markor and ghooral all these species of goat are found in Kumaon. All goats, Corbett says, have a habit of *standing on a projecting rock and looking into space*. (P.27, *T.T.T.*) Ghooral is hunted down for meat in the hills. Male ghooral has white disk on his throat. Corbett notices that thar is the most sure-footed of all Himalayan goats. Sarao's flesh is considered a great

delicacy throughout Kumaon. Terai has variety of games ranging from quail and snipe to leopard and swamp deer in addition to a great wealth of bird life. Many hog deer and swamp deer are found in this area. Being an expert hunter, Corbett knows much about the alarm calls that animals give. He observes that jackal gives the alarm call with the full force of its lungs that can be heard for a very long distance. He describes the sound as '*pheaon*' repeated until the danger is in sight. Kakar stands still and barks after seeing a tiger. Ghooral do occasionally call on seeing human beings, but not langurs. However, both call on seeing a tiger. Monkeys are blessed with exceptionally good eyesight and a red monkey warns the jungle folk of the presence of a tiger.

Fights in the wild are very rare. Hence, Corbett is pleased to see the fight between a tough animal like bear and a tiger. Bears are not built for stalking, as tigers and leopards are but this one not only stalks the tiger as smoothly as a snake and as silently as a shadow but drives it off its kill courageously. Corbett praises, '*Himalayan bears are no respecters of tigers and do not hesitate to appropriate their kills.*' (P.50, *T.T.T.*) Bears sometimes steal tiger's kill and shoo leopard off or snatch its kill. A scream of a bear can be mistaken for the scream of a human being, for the two are very similar and at a distance would not be distinguishable from one another. Once, Corbett has been out for shooting the temple tiger when his men mistake the scream of a bear for the scream of Corbett and think that he is carried away by the tiger. Bear's fat is greatly valued as a cure for rheumatism. The trees selected by bears in which to make their nests are of the variety whose branches will bend without snapping and Corbett has seen

the nests at altitudes of from two thousand to eight thousand feet. At the lower altitude, to which bears descend during the winter months to feed on wild plums and honey, the nests give protection from ants and flies while at the higher altitude they enable the animals to bask undisturbed in the sun. Unless they have a special reason they do not move about at midday. Corbett observes that man-eating leopards hunt at night. But there are many contradictions on this matter.

Tiger, the king of the jungle, is scarce in the hills. It has the keenest hearing of anything in the jungle. While writing about man-eating tigers, Corbett insists that the cubs of these carnivores in Kumaon do not become man-eaters simply because they have eaten human flesh when they were young. Tiger skins need a lot of care, for if every particle of fat is not removed and the lips, ears and pads properly treated, the hair slips, ruining the skin. Living nearly all his life into the jungle, Corbett has learnt some rules of the wild life. He writes, '*An unseen tiger's growl at close range is the most terrifying sound in the jungle, and is a very definite warning to intruders not to approach any nearer*' (P.104, *T.T.T.*) and the only safe way of getting away from such an animal is to walk backwards very slowly. Tigers are restless at a kill in daylight. They hide their kill on occasions with dead leaves and dry twigs. Corbett believes that '*when a tiger hides his kill is usually an indication that he does not intend lying up near it, but it is not safe to assume this always*' (P.25, *T.T.T.*) as he observes in the case of the Temple tiger. He also speaks the possibility that tigers at times will return to a kill after being fired at. Corbett has once seen the cubs of man-eater tiger have eaten even the blood-soaked clothes of the victim. He also observes

that tigers do not go through a jungle scanning, without a reason, every tree they approach.

Corbett is pleased to witness the lessons given to the cubs by their mother of how to approach the kill cautiously. He writes, '*it was very interesting to see the pains the mother took to impress on them the danger of the proceeding and the great caution it was necessary to exercise.*' (P.106, *T.T.T.*) It is here that Corbett gets ample proof for his belief that tigers do not have the sense of smell for the cubs pass and repass a dozen times within a yard of the kill but could not find it until the flies disclose its position. Tigers have no sense of smell but good eye-sight and keen hearing. The scene of the cubs feeding themselves and the mother keeping watch on them, reminds Corbett of a thar mother giving lessons of adventure to her young at the foot of Trisul. Corbett thinks that in addition to this instinct, the infinite patience of the mother and the unquestioning obedience of her offspring enables the young of all animals in the world to grow to maturity. According to him, there is nothing more interesting to be seen in jungle than the animals' training their young.

Corbett has learnt a little about the habits of tigers and in particular their method of approaching and of killing their victims. Tiger, being a soft-footed animal, does not run down its prey; it either lies in wait or stalks it. If an animal avoids passing within striking distance of a tiger, avoids being stalked, and reacts instantly to danger whether conveyed by sight, scent, or by hearing, it has a reasonable chance of living to an old age. Human beings can not use sense of scent and hearing as much as animals. As a result, when a man-eater attacks, he has to depend for his safety almost entirely on sight.

Corbett maintains that a tiger does not kill beyond its requirements, except under provocation. Like human beings, animals also possess different temperaments. Therefore, Corbett is unable to predict what a wounded tiger will do when approached by a human being on foot because a lot depends on the nature of the wound and the temper of the wounded animal. Some tigers may attack immediately after getting the wound but some may allow humans to come near at close proximity. But, Corbett observes the situation a little complicated where a wounded man-eating tiger is concerned. The tracker may not know whether it will attack for self-protection or to feed itself. But he is sure that *'tigers, except when wounded or when man-eaters, are on the whole very good-tempered.'* (P.154, *T.T.T.*) The fact that thousands of people work daily in tiger-infested jungles without being harmed proves this. As a matter of fact, a tiger objects very close approach to its cubs or a kill and growls so as to disclose its presence. If the intruder keeps on, it roars. But all these warnings are neglected, it has no other way than to attack and this, Corbett says, is the fault entirely of the intruder.

In order to strengthen his assertion that *'tigers are good-tempered'*, Corbett also tells about the experience which he has met with when on a hunt. At that time, he has been following the blood trails that ended to a bush. He parted the bushes and the tiger looked up stopping the eating of a cheetal. Corbett remained perfectly still though the beast was close enough to stretch out a paw and stroke his head. The tiger, after looking straight into his face for a moment, rose, turned, and sprang into the bushes behind him with a graceful movement. Therefore, he writes, *'As a general rule a tiger is not considered to be dangerous'* (P.161, *T.T.T.*) All unwounded tigers, whether

man-eaters or not, are disinclined to make a head-on attack. Therefore, when hunting man-eating tigers the greatest danger is of an attack from behind. Corbett believes that, not unlike crows and monkeys, tigers have sense of humour.

Corbett not only observes the wild denizens and their habits but also notices the laws of Nature. He believes that the nightly period of rest ordained by Nature extends from midnight to 4 a.m. which varies a little according to the season of the year and the phases of the moon. In this period, the killers sleep and so do the denizens who fear them. He writes, '*Nature had set apart these few hours so that those who go in fear of their lives can relax and be at peace.*' (P.101, *T.T.T.*) According to Corbett, tracking, like jungle lore, can be absorbed a little at a time and the process can go on indefinitely. It is one of the most interesting and sometimes exciting forms of sport as it has infinite variations. He writes of two methods that are used for tracking. One of them is following a blood-trail which is the more sure way of finding a wounded animal and the second is following without a blood-trail where foot-prints and the disturbance to vegetation caused by the animal's passage can be taken into consideration. Nature of the ground and animal's foot play an important role in tracking. Corbett gives the solution for the uncertainty as to whether an animal has been hit or not. He writes, '*the point can be very easily cleared up by going to the exact spot where the animal was when fired at, and looking for cut hairs. These will indicate that the animal was hit, whereas the absence of such hairs will show that it was clean missed.*' (P.177, *T.T.T.*) He observes that the skin of animals is loose. Therefore, when an animal that is hit runs at full speed, the

hole made in the skin does not coincide with the hole in the flesh. As a result, little blood flows from the wound when it is running at full speed and when it slows down, the two holes come closer and blood continues to flow more freely. Corbett also notices that blood does not always flow immediately after an animal has been hit. Corbett has also tried a different method successfully that is to follow blowflies or meat-eating birds.

B. Socio-Economic and Religious Life in Kumaon:

Kumaon and its Hill-life

Corbett notices that prior to the year 1905, man-eaters were unknown in Kumaon. Consequently, there were very few hunters who had any inclination for this new kind of adventure that was considered, '*as hazardous as Wilson's solo attempt to conquer Everest.*' (P.65, *T.T.T.*) Kumaoni people have to face many calamities such as malaria, leprosy and man-eaters in the days. The girl that Corbett meets in the story of '**The Muktesar man-eater**' tells him that her father has bhabari bokhar that is malaria. Corbett also has been affected by malaria while on his expeditions of hunting man-eaters. Leprosy has been the most terrible and the most contagious of all diseases in the East and very prevalent throughout Kumaon and especially bad in the Almora district. Corbett says that '*being fatalists the people look upon the disease as a visitation from God, and neither segregate the afflicted nor take any precautions against infection.*' (P.75, *T.T.T.*) The problem of man-eaters has been not less than these fatal diseases as they would endanger the life of all people in the area and interrupt the inter-village communication. Villages and hamlets in Kumaon are situated at long distances. Corbett visits a hamlet

consisting only two families and the only inhabited place on the southern face of a mountain. Corbett always finds these people to be kind and helpful.

After living almost whole of his life in Kumaon, Corbett has learnt much about kumaon and its culture. While travelling, he uses the signs that are used and known throughout the hills. Once going ahead of his men he leaves such two signs for them. The first of them consists of a small branch laid in the middle of the road, held in position with a stone or bit of wood, with the leaves pointing in the direction in which it is intended that the person following should go. The second sign consists of two branches crossed, in the form of an X. The Kumaoni people love to sing. In the hill-songs it is customary for one man to sing the verse, and for all the other men present to join in the chorus. The hill-songs are customary to Corbett as the hill-men accompanying him in his expeditions of hunting always sing songs round the camp-fire before going to sleep. The hill people are innocent and ignorant of the modern world outside. Corbett meets such a man who has bought big boots in an auction because he thinks they would shrink. Corbett finds that these people are very honest. Cattle-lifting is unknown in the Himalayas, and throughout Kumaon there are communal cattle-stations situated in the jungles close to the grazing grounds. Admiring the honesty of hill people, Corbett writes, *'The fact that the station was in the depth of the jungle, and unguarded, was proof of the honesty of the hillfolk...'* (P.32, *T.T.T.*) While hunting man-eaters, Corbett visits various villages and makes himself acquainted with the rural life. Commenting on the rural life Corbett writes, *'In rural India the post office and the bania's shop are to village folk what taverns and clubs are to people of other lands, and if information on any*

particular subject is sought, the post office and the bania's shop are the best places to seek it.' (P.44, *T.T.T.*) Turner describes these shops as gossip shops. Hill people use pine torches that are made of twelve to eighteen inches long splinters of resin-impregnated pine-wood cut from a living tree. These torches provide the remote villages in Kumaon with the only illumination they have ever known. These torches give brilliant light. Corbett observes the hill people very minutely. They, like some boys, are very good at whistling through their teeth.

Religious perspective

Corbett has been very well acquainted with the religions in Kumaon. In the story of the Talla Des man-eater, he writes of the Goddess Bhagbatti who is worshipped at the Purnagiri temples that are situated on a mountain. Tens of thousands of pilgrims visit these shrines each year either from the track through Baramdeo or through Kaladhunga. At the junction of the two tracks is situated the less sacred of the two shrines. The more sacred shrine of the two is higher up and can only be reached by going along a narrow crack. Nervous people, children, and the aged are carried across the cliff in a basket slung on the back of a Hillman. Prayer at the upper shrine starts at sunrise and ends at midday. After this hour no one is allowed to pass the lower shrine. The hill people believe that only those whom the Goddess favours are able to reach the upper shrine; the others are struck blind and have to make their offerings at the lower shrine.

Poor conditions in the hills

Corbett always has had sympathy for the poor hill people who fight desperately against nature and wild animals in order to keep a grass roof

above their head. A man from the village near Dabidhura begs Corbett to kill the tiger as his small holding of cattle has been destroyed by it. His land was also small and hence, he has to depend only on his cows for the living and, if, the tiger kills them, he and his family has to starve. People become agitated after the loss of their cattle because cattle are scarce in the hills and the loss of a milch cow to a poor man is a serious matter. Little hamlets having only one or two houses have to face many difficulties because of the man-eaters. Corbett relates very awesome incident in the story of the Panar man-eater. A man and his wife has been sleeping with the door open for it was very hot when a leopard came and dragged the wife out of the house that comprised only a room. The man bravely seized her arm and pulling her into the house, closed the door. Describing their pitiful condition, Corbett writes, *'for the rest of the night the man and his wife cowered in a corner of the room, while the leopard tried to tear down the door. In the hot unventilated room the woman's wounds started to turn septic and by morning her suffering and fear had rendered her unconscious.'* (P.68, T.T.T.) He could get no help even the next day because a mile of scrub jungle lay between him and his nearest neighbour. When Corbett luckily reaches there, he throws himself sobbing at his feet. Corbett realizes that there is no medical or any other kind of aid nearer than Almora, twenty-five miles away. He, therefore, asks Stiffe, the then Deputy Commissioner of Almora, for medical aid for the woman but before it reaches her she dies. In many of the cases, the victim's wounds turn septic in the unventilated room with a swarm of flies buzzing and he dies for want of proper medical treatment.

Bravery of hill people:

Corbett, now and then, admires the courage of hill people that he experiences frequently. Shortly after his arrival in the Muktesar area, the tigress kills a white bullock the whereabouts of which are shown to him by a brave little girl, only eight years old, called Putli. He has met her walking alone along the lonely road on which men were afraid to walk except when large parties. Hill people are very strong and can climb steep hills very easily. They can travel on the odd ways consisting hills and ravines. While relating the story of Chuka man-eater's earlier human victims, Corbett writes of a courageous man who very bravely tries to protect his bullocks from the tiger's attack by interposing himself between the tiger and his bullocks and manages to escape the claws of the beast only because of the plough and a bag on his back. Another woman on learning that her son had entered the jungle to drive out the cattle and had not returned, sets off to look for him neglecting the fact that a little time ago a tiger has attacked a cow. Praising the adventurous hill people, Corbett writes:

I do not think it is possible to appreciate courage until the danger that brought it into being has been experienced. Those who have never lived in an area in which a man-eating tiger is operating may be inclined to think that there was nothing courageous in a mother going to look for her son, in two boys grazing cattle, or in a party of men going out to look for a missing boy. But to one who has lived in such an area the entry of the mother into a dense patch of jungle in which she knew there was an angry tiger; the two small boys sitting close together for protection; and the party

of unarmed men following on the blood trail left by a man-eater, were acts calling for a measure of courage that merited the greatest admiration. (P.92, T.T.T.)

Corbett eagers to prospect the scene of the Talla Des man-eater's last kill when the kill's boy voluntarily steps forward in order to assist him.

Corbett marvels at the courage of people living in an area in which there is danger from a man-eater and the trust they place in him. The boy is one of the examples of that courage and trust. For years he has lived in fear of the man-eater and only an hour previously he has seen the pitiful remains of his mother. And yet, alone and unarmed, he was willing to accompany an absolute stranger into an area in which he has every reason to believe-from the alarm call of a ghooral and a langur-that the killer of his mother was lurking.

Hospitality and helpful nature

Corbett's experiences about the co-operation of the villagers, especially, of the relatives of the victim are much more contradictory to the Turner's who writes about the refusals he has got from the relatives of the victims for his plans to sit over the human kill. Their hospitality has always been a marvel to Corbett for however poor these people are they always wish to help and give something to him. Corbett once spends a night in the cattle-shed. In the morning, the owners of the cattle come and offer him the warm drink of milk that he welcomes for since breakfast the previous day he has only drunk water and eaten nothing. The people also invite him for a meal to their village. Hill people have always respected Corbett and the ample example is of Govind Singh who having seen Corbett's hat knocked off by

the rose bush has retrieved it and brought it to him neglecting the danger ahead only because '*at that time no European in India went about without a hat.*' (P.61, *T.T.T.*)

Corbett is very much pleased with the hospitality of the villagers of Tamali. When he reaches the village all the people come to greet him and the time he reaches the people, a square of carpet is produced, a seat is placed on it and he has hardly sat down before a brass vessel containing milk is placed in his hands. Very much pleased with this attitude of hill people, Corbett says, '*I often wonder whether in any other part of the world a stranger whose business was not known, arriving unexpectedly at a remote village, would be assured of the same welcome and hospitality as he would receive at any village throughout the length and breadth of Kumaon.*' (P.13-*T.T.T.*) Corbett likes to drink the tea made hill-fashion with milk given by the hill people with love. Talking about Indians he praises, '*When an Indian gives his loyalty, he gives it unstintingly and without counting the cost.*' (P.169, *T.T.T.*) Corbett while going after the Talla Des tigress at a night has instructed his men to wait in the village until the following evening and if does not return by then to pack up the things and leave for Naini Tal. But to his surprise, when he returns, he finds them round a fire near his tent instead of the village keeping a kettle of water on the boil in order to prepare tea for him. Corbett is much surprised to this loyalty and caring nature of his men for his return was uncertain. Still they have been waiting in the open in the area where it was dangerous to sleep anywhere except behind locked doors. They have taken this risk because in case they could be of any help to him if he returns. Corbett remembers his shoes being drawn off by willing

hands and a rug spread over him as he lay down on his bed. Praising Indian servants, he writes, '*In no other part of the world, I imagine, are servants as tolerant of the vagaries of their masters as in India.*' (P.33, T.T.T.)

C. Human Nature and the supernatural in Kumaon:

The very first story explores and strengthens the supernatural element effectively. Throughout the book this element is reflected as Corbett himself has been superstitious like many other hunters such as Taylor.

Differentiating between superstitions of simple uneducated people who live on high mountain and the sophisticated educated people who live at lesser heights, Corbett writes, '*It is not possible for those who have never lived in the upper reaches of the Himalayas to have any conception of the stranglehold that superstition has on the people who inhabit that sparsely populated region.*' (P.1, T.T.T.) On one of his shooting trips Corbett camps at the foot of Trisul, where he is informed that eight hundred goats are sacrificed each year to the demon of Trisul.

The most noteworthy experience that Corbett narrates in order to describe the superstitious nature of hill people is about Bala Singh, one of his servants. On one of his campaigns, he has six Garhwalis to carry his luggage and after the stay of first night at the foot of Trisul, he notices it is being made up into five head-loads and that Bala Singh is sitting apart near the camp-fire with a blanket over his head and shoulders. When he goes to speak to Bala Singh, other men stop their work and watch him very intently. To all his questions he gives only one answer that he is not ill. In the two-mile march that follows after this incident, he keeps silent and Corbett observes him bringing up the rear and moving like a man who is walking in his sleep,

or who is under the influence of drugs. Other men are performing their work without the usual cheerfulness, and all of them have a strained and frightened look on their faces. When Corbett inquires about Bala Singh to his servant, he comes to know that when all the people were sitting near the camp-fire, the previous night, the demon of Trisul entered Bala Singh's mouth and he swallowed it. The people tried their best to drive the demon away but couldn't get success and nothing can be done afterwards. Bala Singh sits apart from other people as they are frightened of him and shun his company. When he speaks to Corbett, says with a strained look in the eyes and in a hopeless tone of voice that he can feel the demon moving about in his stomach. After the unfortunate incident, Bala Singh, a man of about thirty years of age, loses all interest in life. All the efforts to make him well go waste. He would just sit at the door of his house never speaking unless spoken to. One of the surgeon friends of Corbett declares that he is in perfect physical condition. Corbett also tries unsuccessfully the help of an Indian doctor who has been not only a Hindu but also a hill man. When the doctor learns about the demon, he also steps away from the patient and declares that he can do nothing for him. One day Bala Singh announces that the demon wants to be released and the only way to accomplish this is for him to die. He just lies down and dies.

Corbett does not believe in the tragic story of Bala Singh as he thinks: '*Superstition...is a mental complaint similar to measles in that it attacks an individual or a community while leaving others immune.*' (P.5, *T.T.T.*) Regarding his own opinion about superstition, he writes, '*though I claim I am not superstitious I can give no explanation for the experience I met with at*

the bungalow while hunting the Champawat tiger, and the scream I heard coming from the deserted Thak village. Nor can I give any explanation for my repeated failures while engaged in one of the most interesting tiger hunts I have ever indulged in....'(P.5-6, **T.T.T.**) As a matter fact, Corbett has been superstitious but sometimes he refrains himself from admitting it.

Corbett who has hunted down so many beasts, when challenged by a priest fails to kill the tiger. The priest of Dabidhura temple tells Corbett that *'neither he nor anyone else will ever succeed in killing it.'* (P.8, **T.T.T.**) Many of the times he tries to shoot the tiger but every time he fails. When Corbett attempts for the first time to kill the tiger, he is using a new rifle which has a double pull off and he has never used such an improved rifle earlier. Bala Singh couldn't bring his old heavy rifle for some reasons. Still, Corbett is not sure that even with that rifle he would have killed the tiger that evening. The second time, he witnesses a fight between a bear and the tiger. He fires at the tiger and then kills the bear. But the tiger escapes his bullet two times. On the fourth occasion, his companion under the impression that he is shooting at the wrong direction gives a jerk to his arm and the tiger escapes. Finally, he leaves it to die of old age.

Corbett relates one incident explaining how many things go wrong to spoil one's chance of getting the shot, or the photograph. He has been sitting on a track that leads to a very sacred jungle shrine known as Baram ka Than in order to shoot a tiger that has been killing village buffaloes. According to Corbett, Baram is a jungle God who protects human beings and does not permit the shooting of animals in the area he watches over. The forest around this shrine is well stocked with game and is a favourite hunting ground of

poachers and sportsmen. 'Yet', Corbett says, '*in a lifetime's acquaintance with that forest, I do not know of a single instance of an animal having been shot in the vicinity of the shrine.*' (P.58, **T.T.T.**) He has been a mile from Baram's shrine. The tiger was coming slowly towards him and was about a hundred yards away from him when a jamun tree started leaning down along with two other trees. All the three trees crashed down to the ground and the tiger without being alarmed turned and went back. The occurrence has been so unusual for Corbett because not only the trees were young and vigorous but no rain had fallen recently to loosen their roots and there was no wind at all in the forest. As a matter of fact, Corbett believes this to be the effect of the supernatural presence in the forest. The hill people also believe in their superstitions firmly. When Corbett fails at his first attempt to kill the Chuk man-eater, some old people from Thak beg him not to be discouraged for they had consulted the stars and offered up prayers and so they were very much sure that it will be killed.

Corbett writes of another experience of the supernatural about the mysterious light that he has seen on his way to Kaladhunga in the story of '**The Talla Des Man-Eater**'. He halts on his way one night when on the hill on the far side of the river he suddenly sees three lights appear. At first he guesses it to be the light of the fire in the forest. After a little time, two more lights appear there. These lights Corbett realizes of a uniform size about two feet in diameter, burning steadily without a flicker or trace of smoke. So he thinks that a potentate out on shikar has evidently lost some article and sent men armed with lanterns to search for it. As a matter of fact, the next day he finds after scanning every foot of the hill with field glasses that the rock

where the lights have appeared was perpendicular where no human being, unless suspended from above could possibly have gone. Therefore he inquires about the lights to the priests of Purnagiri. Then he learns that climbing pinnacle of a rock a hundred feet high near the upper shrine of Purnagiri is forbidden by the Goddess. Long ago an ambitious sadhu climbed this pinnacle with the object of putting himself on equality with the Goddess. As a result, the Goddess was incensed at his disregard of her orders and hurled the sadhu from the pinnacle to the hill on the far side of the snow-fed river where Corbett has seen the mysterious lights. The priests believe that it is this sadhu, who banished forever from Purnagiri worships the Goddess by lighting lamps to her. The lights appear only at certain times and are visible only to favoured people. So Corbett admits the belief by saying that '*this favour was accorded to me and to the men with me, because I was on a mission to the hillfolk over whom the Goddess watches.*' (P.127, *T.T.T.*) Corbett has also written an article regarding these lights in a local paper and the High Priest of Purnagiri has congratulated him for being the only European ever to have seen the lights. Corbett believes the story related to the mysterious lights to be true as he writes, '*The High Priest was emphatic that the lights were an established fact which no one could dispute-in this I was in agreement with him for myself...*' (P.127, *T.T.T.*) The next year, Corbett along with Sir Malcolm Hailey, the then Governor of the United provinces, has been fishing in the same area. There they come to know from the local fisherman that the area is haunted by evil spirits. But Corbett doesn't think those spirits to be evil ones.

The hill people and Corbett also have some superstitions about starting any work on a particular day or time. Before starting the journey to Talla Des, Corbett's servants have consulted the old priest at the temple in Nainital to have the success and he has selected the propitious day for their departure and so Corbett believes that evil omens has been absent at the time of their departure. The superstitions of the people associated with Corbett have always been of interest to him. Being himself superstitious-he is unwilling to begin a journey on a Friday-he does not laugh at a hillman's rooted aversion to begin a journey to the north on Tuesday or Wednesday, to the south on Thursday, to the east on Monday or Saturday, or to the west on Sunday or Friday. He also believes that a bullet can do no harm to an animal whose time to die has not come. He believes in one's luck and so says, '*Luck plays an important part in all sport.*' (P.152, *T.T.T.*) The Talla Des tigress he believes, has full share of it. When Corbett shoots her cubs, she instead of lying in the open was in thick cover. Then his bullet has struck the bone that was capable of preventing it from having a fatal wound. Later she has twice fallen down a rock cliff but has survived at first because of a cushion of branches and bracken, then by a soft patch of sand. Again, when Corbett has been only a hundred yards from where she was lying up, the rain comes and washes down the blood trail. Corbett speaks very little of his sixth sense in these stories. But in the story of the Temple tiger, he experiences this sense as he says, '*I could not see him but I knew he had come for I could feel an unconscious sense his presence.*' (P.31, *T.T.T.*)

D. Geographical Perspective and the Bondage between man and animal

Corbett gives detailed geographical information of Kumaon so as to convey exact places affected by man-eaters. Naini Tal has been the administrative headquarters of Kumaon. A bridle-road running from Naini Tal to Loharghat passes through Dabidhura, and a branch of this road connects Dabidhura with Almora. To the south of Dabidhura the hill is less steep than it is to the north. Corbett describes a valley in Dabidhura as a *'boat-shaped...some five acres in extent, and was like a beautiful park dotted over with giant oak trees.'* (P.24, *T.T.T.*) Muktesar is 6,500 feet to over 7,000 feet above sea level, at high altitudes. People who have lived at Muktesar claim that it is the most beautiful spot in Kumaon, and that its climate has no equal. Eighteen miles to the north-north-east of Naini Tal is a hill eight thousand feet high and twelve to fifteen miles long, running east and west. The western end of the hill rises steeply and near this end is the Muktesar Veterinary Research Institute, where lymph and vaccines are produced to fight India's cattle diseases. The northern face of the hill commands one of the best views to be had anywhere of the Himalayan snowy range. This range and all the hills that lie between it and the plains of India, run east and west, and from a commanding point of any of the hills an uninterrupted view can be obtained not only of the snows to the north but also of the hills and valleys to the east and to the west as far as the eye can see.

Corbett gives the way of his travel when he visits Talla Kote, a small village in Almora district. He walks fourteen miles down from Naini Tal to Kathgodam and travels by train through Bareilly and Pilibhit up to Tanakpur. From then onwards he walks twenty-four miles to Kaladhunga through

Baramdeo that is at the foot of the sacred Purnagiri Mountain. From Baramdeo there are two roads for Kaladhunga; one goes steeply up the left-hand side of the mountain to the Purnagiri temples over a shoulder of the mountain and down to Kaladhunga while the other track follows the alignment of the tramway line that has long since been washed away but portions still remains.

Corbett has been very much familiar with the weather of Kumaon. At an altitude of eight thousand feet the nights are cold and the water, even in daylight is ice-cold. But, in the month of April, it is very hot in Kumaon as well as overall in India. He observes that the wind always blows uphill in the hills in daylight. He admires the climate of the Himalayas as '*the stars are nowhere more brilliant than in the Himalayas...*' (P.30, *T.T.T.*) In the Himalayas, especially in the summer, kills attract hornets, most of which leave as the light fades but those that are too torpid to fly remain. In Kumaon there are magnificent views of hills upon rising hills backed by the snowy range extending to east and west as far as the eye could see. Rivers such as the Sarada, the Ladhya and the Kali flow through the Kumonai hills. Some regions in Kumaon are much more difficult to travel as there are no roads at all. The inter-village communication is carried out along footpaths that run from village to village. Villages and small hamlets are widely scattered over many hundreds of square miles throughout Kumaon. Sometimes a hamlet can be very small that the one visited by Corbett '*consisted of a single grass hut, a cattle shed, and an acre or so of terraced fields...*' (P.10, *T.T.T.*)

The Bondage between man and animal

Corbett always has had compassion for animals not excluding man-eaters. He learns their language and sometimes communicates with cattle. Therefore, he feels sorry even for the animal that he has killed and regrets the deed. Many of the times, he writes of the intimate relationship between hill men and their cattle. Once, an owner of the dead cow tells him with tears in his eyes that the fine animal that lay dead has been bred by him and has been a special favourite. Corbett has seen cattle show their intimacy with their owners by risking their own life. While on his campaigns against man-eaters, he has learned that buffaloes and cows risk their life to rescue their owner from a tiger or a leopard. They occasionally attack a beast and endanger their life in order to save the life of any of their species. He recollects that four buffaloes have fought vigorously until death with an enraged tiger making it severely wounded because one of them has been killed by it. In the story of Chuka man-eater Corbett writes about such an incident that '*the killing of the second boy was evidently witnessed by the cattle, who rallied to his rescue...and after driving the tiger from the boy they stampeded.*'(P.91, **T.T.T.**)

Though Corbett has killed many a man-eaters, he has always been sympathetic towards these animals. When he kills the Chuka man-eater, the conditions demand first to break its back before killing. Therefore, he regrets, '*the thought of disabling an animal, and a sleeping one at that, simply because he occasionally liked a change of diet was hateful.*'(P.113, **T.T.T.**) As a matter of fact, when concerning man-eater, he prefers to keep his sentiments aloof though the method of killing is unpleasant so as to save

further loss of human life. He feels very sorry after he has killed the big-hearted animal as he says, '*I should have felt less a murderer if, at my first shot, the tiger has stormed and raved but...he never opened his mouth, and died at my second shot without having made a sound.*' (P.114, *T.T.T.*)

Corbett always has tried his best to kill the man-eaters at the first shot so as make its pains less.

Though man-eaters have been the greatest threat to the people of Kumaon, Corbett never feels any hatred for them. He, now and then, states that they have done no any crime by killing human beings. On the other hand, he insists that the circumstances compel them to do so. He discovers that the Talla Des tigress when young has been injured by an encounter with a porcupine. Unable to find her natural prey in order to feed herself and her two cubs she has been killing human beings, an easy prey. Corbett thinks, '*doing this she had committed no crime against the laws of Nature.*' (P.174, *T.T.T.*) Being a carnivorous animal, flesh, whether human or animal, was the only food she could assimilate. Corbett sympathies with her by saying that '*Under stress of circumstances an animal, and a human being also, will eat food that under normal conditions they are averse to eating.*' (P.174, *T.T.T.*)
