

# A Study of Jim Corbett Works towards Wildlife

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**Abstract – The analysis of the present work is based on wildlife in forest literature by Jim Corbett. The specific source material for study and description of the present work is chosen by Jim Corbett. This study offering to examine Jim Corbett's works. Here an attempt is made to focus the wild life documented by Jim Corbett in his fascinating stories of man-eater tracking and shooting in his book Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag. Corbett's tales of his hunting abilities and stamina are told in this book. Such stories demonstrate his keen knowledge of the sights, sounds and life in the Indian Forests, as well as his passion for the hunting terrain and human beings.**

**Key Words: Jim Corbett, the Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indians and foreigners have written much of the literature on Indian forests and life in the Indian forest in their own languages. The attitudes of Indians and foreigners of Indian forests, wildlife and tribal life are seen to vary. India is a land of myth and wonders for foreigners so they look with a sense of curiosity and wonder at Indian forests, tribal and wild life. Foreigners are immensely drawn and intrigued by the thick forests of India, its landscapes, the variety of wildlife as well as the numerous dialects, rituals, customs and lores of Indian tribes.

Since several years India has been regarded as the land of forests overflowing with wild beasts and serpents. India has magnificent natural landscapes to it. Large forests dominated most of the world until the beginning of the 19th Century. India's forest past is linked to civilisation past.

The author describes wild life in the forest and the tribal life. The primary concern is to focus on the wild animal's behavior in their natural surroundings. Forest literature writer documents Nature images, sights and phenomena. The scribe reconstructs forest events from the forest signs and sounds.

Today the entire world faces the great environmental crisis. Man has become aware of its effects after thousands of years of manipulating Nature. Ecological imbalance has created a serious concern for social activists, administrators, scientists and environmentalists all over the world. Now the awareness for preserving ecological equilibrium is growing. Modern man in towns is isolated from Nature. First, human beings and animals converged

and shared the most beautiful landscape on earth. Today convergence has been a conflict with the search for capital resulting in the disappearance of endangered animal species. Humanity faces a great challenge on how to thrive and lead a better life while maintaining a balance with Nature.

Deforestation has caused depletion of the network of food, fodder and fuel, and has devastated the habitats of numerous tribal communities, birds, reptiles and wild animals. The rapid industrialization has polluted the Earth's atmosphere. Globe climate is undergoing a rapid shift due to deforestation. It is about time we take advantage of all opportunities to save wildlife and prevent clashes between man and beast.

There are many authors and naturalists who in their works have depicted nature and wild life. Foreign-shore authors include James Harriot, John Muir, Rachel Carlson, Henry David Thoreau, and Peter Matthiessen. Their writings are extremely valuable. The other prominent authors, including Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey and Ian Douglas Hamilton, are biologists and conservationists whose path-breaking studies have inspired generations.

Indian English literature has a Forest literature tradition of its own. Published in Jim Corbett's footsteps the famous writer Dr. Saleem Ali's Collapse of the Sparrow is a fascinating study on the Indian Birds. Dr George Schaller spent three years in Madhyapradesh researching wildlife in the Kanha forest. The study's outcome is his most intriguing book 'The Deer and the Tiger.' Additionally, Rudyard Kipling, Ruskin Bond and a

few other authors have contributed to Indian forest literature.

## 2. JIM CORBETT'S LIFE AND WORKS

Jim Corbett was born in Nainital, the hill station at the foothills of the Himalayas, on 25 July 1875. Its ancestors migrated in the early 19th century from England to India. Corbett's father settled as a Postmaster of the flourishing colonial town at Nainital. For the winters at Kaladhungi he built a second home on a land provided by District Commissioner Sir Henry Ramsay. Thus, Jim Corbett grew up at Nainital and Kaladhungi, in the manner of a domiciled Englishman. He studied the languages of the region i.e. Hindi and Kumaoni dialect, and could therefore form a bond of friendship with the natives.

Although he was only six years old, his father died and the eldest brother Tom became the head of the household. Corbett, as a child and a young man, spent all his free time playing in the surrounding forest and on the hills. He started shooting with a catapult and later with a pellet bow before Stephen Dease received a double-barrelled, muzzle loaded shotgun. Corbett shot the first leopard of his life at age ten.

Corbett completed his schooling at Nainital and then entered the Railway Department in Bihar as a fuel inspector. He later took over from Railway Department the contract for the transshipment of goods across the Ganges at Mokameh Ghat. The twenty-one year term was extended.

During World War I Corbett led an Indian labor force in France. In the Indian Army he was granted the substantive rank of General. During World War II Corbett taught war troops to fight in the forest s. He received Lieutenant Colonel's honorary rank. He has participated in the Waziristan Third Afghan War. He retired from the rail service on his return from the Afghan War in 1920 and settled at Nainital at the age of forty-five. Many man-eaters experiences happened after he arrived at Nainital.

In 1922 Corbett, with the help of Nainital District Commissioner, Mr. Percy Wyndham, bought a coffee estate in Kenya. Then, he traveled to Africa annually. His exposure to African grasslands brought about significant changes in India's attitude toward wildlife. He compared huge populations of wildlife in African grasslands with that of the Kumaon region. Corbett recognized the need for wildlife protection to maintain ecological balance in the area. Therefore, he chose not to kill a tiger until he was sure that the tiger was normal man-eater.

So Corbett in his mid-fifties was very active in ecological matters. He launched a movement to save the forest s and wild life therein. He gave lectures to build awareness about the climate and wildlife in the local schools and societies. Through lecturing,

organizing slide shows and tiger films he imparted information about the forest life and wild animals to his audience. He was one of the editors of Indian Wild Life journal. Hence, he is considered a conservationist visionary.

Jim Corbett was actively involved in Nainital city affairs. From 1920 through 1944 he was a member of the Nainital Municipal Council. He was Municipal Board Senior Vice-Chairman from 1923 through 1926. During this period he made efforts to preserve Nature and put his conservationist ideas into practice. He placed a ban on night fishing at Naini Lake, for example.

When India gained freedom in 1947, Corbett decided to leave the country as did many other Europeans domiciled. He went for permanent settlement to Nyeri in Kenya along with his sister Maggie. He died in 1955.

Jim Corbett has won many awards from the Government of Britain. He got the "Kaiser – I – Hind Gold Medal" He was made a "Star Order Companion of India." He was awarded the Forest Independence-a very unusual distinction.

His grandeur was posthumously remembered by the Government of India. The Uttar Pradesh game sanctuary was renamed as "The Corbett National Park" His house in Kaladhungi is preserved as a "Museum of Corbett". In commemoration of his centenary birth, the government of India issued twenty-five paise postal stamp. A new tiger breed was called "Panthera Tigris Corbett" in 1968.

Since 1926 Jim Corbett started writing about his adventures in the forest. His articles and other news-papers were published in The Pioneer. With his frustration over deforestation and smuggling he wrote in newspapers. The 1931 annual for the Houghunters contains the first of his tiger stories, known as Pipal Pani Tiger. Corbett began a magazine called Indian Wild Life to express his conservationist ideas and views on ecological preservation. As editor and writer he has contributed to it. His Wild Life in the Village article: An Appeal is well established.

One lady Violet Haig persuaded Jim Corbett to write on his forest experiences. But his first book '**Man-Eaters of Kumaon**' (1944) was published when he was sixty nine years old. Later on, he wrote five books:

- 1) The Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag (1948).
- 2) My India (1952)
- 3) Jungle Lore (1953)

- 4) The Temple Tiger and More Man-eaters of Kumaon (1954)
- 5) Tree Tops (1955).

### **3. BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK "THE MAN-EATING LEOPARD OF RUDRAPRAYAG"**

Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag is Corbett's second book. The Pioneer magazine published Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag news on its front page in 'a Nainital reporter' three-column article on May 15, 1926. The story told in it is similar to Corbett's tale of shooting man-eater in the twenty-fourth chapter called "A shot in The Dark." (R.E. Hawkins, Jim Corbett's India, 8) The Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag is Corbett's most thrilling book on man-eating Leopard hunting. The Rudraprayag Leopard had killed a hundred and twenty-five pilgrims in the area renowned for the Hindu shrine. The book demonstrates Corbett's strong memory and excellent storytelling abilities. Since Corbett shot the Leopard on May 2, 1926 and his book was published in 1948 that means that after about twenty years Corbett wrote this book.

Corbett portrays topography of the area in the opening chapter of this novel. He has identified the pilgrimage route to Kedarnath and Badrinath, the age-old shrines. He provided details of the road up to Rudraprayag in minutes. Corbett defines the Alakananda Valley with many landmarks including, pilgrim shelters, a massive mango tree, Golabrai pundit house. All these landmarks are very relevant when reading man-eater novel. Corbett took great care of the readers by providing the map of the pilgrimage route from Haridwar to Badrinath and Kedarnath and also the area in which Rudraprayag's man-eating leopard lived from 1918 to 1926.

Corbett has also given Rudraprayag's history. He listed the war in 1805 between the Garhwal people and the Gurkha invaders. Corbett explains the majesty of the Ganges valley and the snow-capped Kedarnath range. His perception of Hindu people's feelings is really interesting. At the end of the chapter Corbett says,

"And ..... But being a good Hindu you must focus on, soothing yourself with the thought that merit is not earned without suffering, and the greater the misery in this universe, the greater the reward in the next "(Corbett The Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag, 4)

He knew the mindset and religious values of the people well.

In chapter two, Corbett analyzes why and how a leopard transforms into a man-eater. That's the key problem in the plot. He compares different reasons

which compel the leopard to become a man-eater. In the same reasons as tigers do, he notes as leopards are not becoming man-eaters. He says about how people give the name to the man-eater. For identifying purposes, it is a place-name given to the man-eater. Therefore, the villain had given the name of Rudraprayag in the story i.e. man-eating leopard,

As a writer Corbett's goal is to make it clear to his readers. He discusses the Hindi term 'Prayag' definition. As an English-Indian writer, Corbett knows that it is important for international readers to give meanings to Hindi and native words. Corbett marvels at the uniqueness of leopards as,

"The most beautiful and the most graceful of all the animals in our Jungles," (6)

He compares their feeding habits to lions in the forests of Africa. Corbett writes about Garhwal's social condition, local cremation practices and the people's difficulties in the region. When disease spreads through the hills in epidemic mode, the inhabitants die faster and in crisis the people conduct a very simple rite of cremation, which consists of putting a live coal in the mouth of the deceased. A great number of dead bodies are dumped into the gorge, allowing leopards to ease their meals. Corbett describes this as one of the reasons of being man-eater for leopards. Corbett notes that the epidemic influenza wave swept through the country in 1918, spread very seriously in Rudraprayag and the Garhwal man-eater emerged in the same year. The first human killing of the man-eater Rudraprayag reported at the village of Bainji and the last killing took place at the village of Bhainswara on April 14th, 1926. The number of murders reported by Government during eight years was one hundred and twenty-five.

This leopard was the most publicized animal reported in the press in many countries including England, U.S.A., Canada, Kenya, Malaya, Hong Kong, Australia, South Africa. Thus the man-eater in and outside India became famously popular. Corbett's accurate description of all those events that occurred during that time and a clear interpretation of the leopard's man-eating habit adds to this story's success.

Corbett skillfully shows how Rudraprayag's man-eater threatened Garhwal's citizens in the third chapter called 'Terror.' He's been studying the psychology of fear among Garhwal citizens. Corbett has identified only a few events that took place shortly after the man-eater became the leopard. He describes three events reported in the Report of Government. Via these events the elusive existence of the forest creature is revealed. For eight years the fear of the leopard persisted in the area. Normal life was disrupted by man-eater

terror and situation in that area was like curfew ordered. Corbett says,

"When night came on ominous silence brooded over the whole area-no movement and no sound anywhere." (10)

Corbett trusts his readers and says that the descriptions of the victims of man-eater mentioned by him are adequate to reassure the reader that the people of Garhwal had enough cause to be afraid of Rudraprayag's man-eating leopard. He comments on the superstitious nature of the native people.

"Garhwalis are intensely superstitious and that, added to their fear of physical contact with the leopard, was their even greater fear of the supernatural, of which I shall give you an example." (16)

Corbett has described several examples of making the man-eater recognize the evil spirit. The people of Garhwali accused sadhus and the Bokhsars in the area as human victims. He notes that all killings by man-eaters in Garhwal are attributed to sadhus, and all such killings are attributed to the Bokshars in Nainital and Almora districts who kill people for the jewelry their victims wear. The sadhus are believed to be fighting for human flesh and blood lust.

Then, Corbett confidently states he can quickly identify the pug marks of the man-eater, and then the animal's age, height, sex. Corbett describes his 1926 arrival at Rudraprayag. He was welcomed by the Deputy Commissioner of the United Provinces, Sir William Ibbotson. He has described his journey to Rudraprayag. In the following chapter, entitled "Investigation," Corbett makes it clear that he does not want to make his readers feel boring; by providing day-to-day account of his Rudraprayag activities. He is really honest as he admits that writing about all that happened during his ten-week trip will be difficult for him.

"I shall not attempt to give you a day-by-day. I shall confine myself to relating a few of my experiences, sometimes while alone and at other times in company with Ibbotson." (30).

Corbett has defined the topography of the region on both banks of the Alaknanda River to the east of Rudraprayag. He asks the reader to find the map on the last page that he has given. This lets his readers imagine all of the events that arise during his journey. Corbett spent ten weeks chasing the man-eater at Rudraprayag, which lasted for eight years. Thus, The Man-eating Leopard of Rudraprayag is a two-and-a-half-month tale of chasing the leopard. His chase-and-hunt page now begins.

Corbett identified different methods of killing leopards in the forest resulting from the hunts. He gave very valuable details concerning the leopards. He knew

their eating patterns, personality and behavior, very well. That for ordinary readers is really interesting. Corbett has admitted at the end of this important chapter that the joy of shooting a leopard with camera is greater than shooting it with a gun. By observing the leopard's gestures he differentiates gratification from the possession of a trophy. The Conservationist philosophy is his. She appreciates leopard beauty as

"..... and there is no more graceful and interesting animal in the jungles to watch." (34)

In following words, Corbett supports shooting the leopard with a camera than with a rifle,

"Having tracked, located, and stalked a leopard far more pleasure is ever got from pressing the trigger of a rifle". (34)

After reporting his arrival at Rudraprayag, Corbett explains how the man-eating leopard raised the Sadhu from among the pilgrims who were sleeping on the house platform at night. Corbett supports man-eating leopards,

"Man-eating leopards are of rare occurrence, and for this reason very little is known about them." (38)

Corbett reflects on his plan to pursue the man-eater hunting expedition and notes that it is very difficult to locate and shoot any animal over an area of five hundred square miles in the region such as Garhwal consisting of mountains and rivers. He's telling,

"My object in going to Rudraprayag was to try to prevent further loss of human life,...." (38)

He has expressed his concern for the poor Garhwal people living under the man-eater's threat. To his fun he has come to Rudraprayag not to shoot the leopard but to remove fear. His sense of humor is expressed when he explains the state of a swing bridge on the river Alaknanda and his encounter with the fearsome jhula toll-collector. He is very fair when determining the man-eating leopard's operational style.

Corbett outlines his actions in killing the leopard in chapter, "The Second Kill." For all of his plans, the torrential rain and furious storm stopped him from shooting the man-eater near his kill. His love of nature is well reflected in explaining the beauty of the Valley of Ganges,

"The sun was near setting, and the view of the Ganges Valley, with the snowy Himalayas in the background showing bluish pink under the level



rays of the setting sun, was a feast for the eyes.” (46)

His understanding of the Indian climate, rivers, is exceptional in that portion of the Himalayas. Therefore, when describing the wind, he used the local word "dadu" for the wind that blows from the south during daytime.

Corbett reflects on the mindset of the local community and their superstitious nature in the "Magic" chapter. He explains the unknown person bearing a cross with him. He has come to Rudraprayag to eliminate the evil issue, i.e. the man-eater that lives in that remote area. Corbett uses this opportunity to humorously reflect on the state of religion in India. Its observation of the country's social life is very good. And he says,

“In India, where there are no passports of identity discs, and where religion counts for so much-” (59)

In the chapter, "Near Escape", Corbett describes the visit of man-eater when they trekked him into their village. Finally, man-eating leopard attacked them but for Corbett's squad it was a narrow escape.

"The Gin Trap" is chapter of great importance. It is brimming with suspense and mystery. In a small village, a cow had been killed and Corbett set a trap near the kill, and he was waiting for the leopard to come at night. Corbett provides an exciting account of a leopard shooting.

“Beyond the hump was a little depression, and crouching down in this depression and facing us and growling, was the leopard. Within a few minutes of my bullet crashing into his head, we were surrounded by an excited crowd, who literally danced with joy round their long-dreaded enemy.”(68).

They had lived their happiness short though. Because Corbett was positive it wasn't the same man-eating leopard they had been expecting.

"The Hunters Hunted" is another thrilling chapter in which Corbett gives account of how he was pursued by man-eating leopard. This chapter is brimming with action and suspense. He explains the man-eater's fear and then a dog's actions that suggests the leopard was chasing them. Corbett gave this chapter a very fitting title.

Corbett in chapter "Retreat" talks of his disappointment. His expedition failed and left him anxious. In reality he faced risk of his life on several occasions. When he confesses, he views leopard as a human character?

“I had not fully realized the degree of cunning that a man-eating leopard can acquire after eight years of a close association with human beings.”(87)

Corbett talks here on man's perception of the leopard. He has listed the historic significance of the man-eater crisis by providing examples of Indian news articles.

“.....for the leopard at that time was daily mentioned in the Indian papers.”(88)

His compañero Madho Singh attributed Corbett's failure to evil spirit. Corbett says his role was very dangerous and required a lot of patience and hard work. He decided to give up sometime on his self-imposed mission. In this chapter Corbett thus reveals his state of mind.

After three moths Corbett has resumed his expedition. In his absence, man-eater had killed ten human beings, and the fear of man-eater intensified so much that hundreds of false stories of suspected man-eater attacks were attributed to man-eater and any sound heard at night.

Corbett quite accurately describes the villagers weighted down by terror. He understands the essence of the people well. He explains how the man-eater had badly mauled a woman and her son. He admires the strength of that woman who courageously faced the assault.

Corbett generates suspense between the reads by explaining the man-eating leopard's unusual behavior. Instead than eating the goat Corbett offered the leopard chased Corbett and Ibbotson down to the village. The man-eater remained unaffected at the dead goat. It was apparent the leopard was just interested in humans.

The really thrilling chapter is "Cyanide Poisoning" Corbett explains his attempts at man-eater poisoning. The Man-eater killed a woman. While waiting for the patient the leopard ate his victim's poisoned flesh and went inside the cave. Corbett's sealed the cave for 10 days. Yet there had been skepticism about the leopard's burial. On the tenth day, as Corbett returned from the cave, Ibbotson told him by the man-eater of another kill five miles away. He'd been surprised and dismayed. He replied with the following words,

“Even so, it was no longer any matter of surprise to me – who had only been acquainted with the leopard for a few short months. (114)

Corbett supports the conviction of the Garhwal people that fire alone can kill this animal with supernatural forces.

Corbett's engaging style of storytelling makes the "Touch and Go" chapter very interesting. He cares for his readers by offering correct information on the kill's location. He's telling,

"I will give a description of the position of the kill, to enable you to follow our movements and the subsequent happenings," (120)

Then he presents the area's exact topography so readers can know what's going to happen next.

Since his effort to capture the man-eater in the gin-trap failed, Corbett had studied the essence of the leopard perfectly. He goes on to say,

"However unbelievable the actions of the leopard may appear to have been, they were in fact just what one would have expected from an animal that had been a man-eater for eight years." (126)

Yet Corbett has expressed his expectation of success at the end of this segment. He claims his repeated mistakes and deceptions strengthened his resolve to fire his rifle at the man-eater.

Corbett criticizes the sportsmen who attribute their misfortunes to their misfortune. He criticizes them in "A lesson in caution" for underestimating wild animals, which rely solely on their senses not just for food but for self-protection too. They are, he says, well above civilized human beings. He's telling,

"A wrong estimation of the intelligence of animals, and the inability to sit without any sound or movement for the required length of time, is the cause of all failures when sitting up for animals." (128)

He also offers the most appropriate collection of birds and animals for this reason. He narrates his own experience and explains very valuable reading of the forest and knowledge of wild animals. He expresses his solidarity with the Garhwal people on the left bank of the Alakananda River, as the man-eater worked in that region. He had closed the man-eater bridge and then the people on the left side were suffering from the man-eater. Corbett respects its tolerance.

Corbett narrates an event in the story "A Wild Boar Hunt" in which an old man has lost his best goat to the man-eater, who killed it without purpose. He tracked the leopard's trail and realized that after that kill she had crossed the distance of eight miles. Corbett distinguishes this Man-eater behavior from other leopards. He goes on to say

"This long and seemingly aimless walk away from a kill was in itself a thing no ordinary leopard would under any circumstances have undertaken." (137)

An object appeared on the hill on the other side of river Ganges while he was talking to the old man. This traversed the river and came up to them. Yet it didn't get fired by Corbett. When the old man asked him in surprise, Corbett answered he had brought a gun to Garhwal to shoot only a leopard, an evil spirit

and no other animals running for their lives. It shows Corbett was only interested in shooting the man-eater for fun and not any other species. His journey to Rudraprayag thus had only the intention of shooting the man-eater leopard.

Corbett's nature love is well expressed in the "Vigil on a pine tree" chapter. He was amazed by the beauty of nature, mountains close to Alaknanda covered in snow. He appreciates the magnificent Alaknanda Valley,

"Immediately below me was the beautiful valley of the Alaknanda, with the river showing as a glomming silver ribbon winding in and out of it." (141)

Corbett opposes glorification of nature but uses observational imagery and metaphors to represent its beauty.

Although commenting on the topography of the valley villages, Corbett reveals his deep understanding of the Garhwal people, their social needs and beliefs. He is well aware of the indigenous people's poverty, and says that for agriculture every foot of walkable land in Garhwal is required.

Corbett then describes spectacular sunsets in Kenya's northern Tanganyika. In snowcapped Kilimanjaro, he explains sunset. Corbett visited Kenya, Africa annually and thus contrasts the beauty of the Himalayas with that of Kilimanjaro. He mentions this when sitting on the pine tree,

"Our sunsets in the Himalaya are mostly red, pink or gold." (143)

He was simply waiting for the man-eater on the pine tree, but he is sensuous about the beauty of nature on that occasion as well. He reciprocates it with full accuracy to its readers. Corbett expresses his forest-folk affection for them. He says the Indian forest s are to him the source of happiness. He has learned the jungle-folk's languages and habits. He's telling,

"There is no universal language in the jungles, each species has its own language and.....the language of each species is understood by all the jungle-folk." (144)

He says the human vocal cords are adaptable, and the ability to speak the jungle-folk language is of great value in the wild. He's providing examples of his experience in Kashmir for evidence. He recounts his brush with an albino-musk-deer in the Kashmir jungle. It is reflected in his environmentalist approach. He didn't kill the rare musk-deer but Kashmir's Game Warden asked why he didn't kill it. Corbett expresses his inner wish that he should encourage the musk-

deer to live in their own habitat rather than in any zoo.

Corbett narrates his attempt to call out the pine tree man-eater by imitating the female leopard's voice. He'd had a good leopard chat. Yet the leopard left to meet with some other female leopard. His attempt to attract the man-eater failed and that night the terrible storm pulled him down from the tree. His sense of humor is also expressed here in reflecting on the goat's behavior that he had tried to attract the leopard there.

"My Night of Terror" is an exciting chapter in which Corbett articulated in the darkest hours of the night, his confused state of mind, anxiety and fear. He spent the night waiting for the man-eater behind the rock close kill. But heavy rain was spoiling his chance and the situation was ideal for the leopard to attack him. He spent the terrifying night in man-eater's shadow, to save his own life. When the next day he studied the sight, he was surprised to see the man-eater's pug marks in there. When he returned to Rudraprayag, it was very clear that man-eater had followed him. Consequently, Corbett states,

"When I look back on that night, I look back on it as my night of terror." (159)

Corbett referred to a visit to Rudraprayag by a member of the Garhwal Legislative Council, Mukandi Lal, to examine the situation created by the man-eating Leopard. He had sent the council a report. Corbett refers to the annual pilgrimage to Kedarnath and Badrinath, and offers information on program structure. He also reported that man-eater had killed many pilgrims on the road during the last few years. It was his daily habit during the season of pilgrimage.

One day at Bhainswara, a village eighteen miles southeast of Rudraprayag, Corbett received reports that a boy had been killed the previous evening. Corbett immediately reached the position to take chance to kill the leopard. He observed a curious fight between the two leopards there, however. He gives an exciting account of the violent battle between them. The title of this chapter, "Leopard Fights Leopard" is therefore quite fitting. He has studied why the man-eater had taken such a long trip up to Bhainswara. The local leopard challenged the man-eater's encroachment and then there was the fierce battle. The date of this incident has been listed by Corbett which makes his narrative more credible.

"The 14th of April 1926 is a date that will be long remembered in Garhwal, for it was on that day the man-eating leopard of Rudraprayag killed his last human victim." (163)

"A shot in the dark" is the book's climatic segment. It documents his expedition termination. Corbett arrived at Golabrai, after a fruitless visit to Bhainswara. In the first chapter he met his friend the

pundit whom he described. Corbett recounts how the pundit encountered a man-eater attack a couple of years ago. The leopard has since been referred to as a "demon" by the pundit. Upon Ibbotson's arrival, Corbett told him about the habit of leopard going down the road between Rudraprayag and Golabrai. He vowed to shoot the leopard within 10 days. For this Corbett set a machan fifty yards beneath the house of the pundit in the mango tree. One night he spent on the same machan. During the deciding night he heard a rush from the tree's foot and a sharp tinkling of the goat's bell. He realized it was a leopard and his target and instantly pushed his rifle button. Instead he narrates the man-eating leopard's dramatic conclusion. He defines the dead animal in such terms as:-

"Here was only an old leopard.....; the best-hated and the most feared animal in all India, whose only crime-not against the laws of man...." (185)

Corbett then gives an account of the valley situation, and how Ibbotson suffered when man-eater was active during that time. That day, 2nd May 1926, he was the happiest man. Native people greeted Corbett and they expressed their gratitude to him. He says of local traditions, tribal people's rituals at Garhwal.

Corbett narrates his experience at Meerut at the end of the book in the "Epilogue," sixteen years after his man-eater pursuit of Rudraprayag. He recounts how Corbett was expressed gratitude and happiness by a wounded war soldier. Instead of thinking about his own courage during the battle, the soldier praised Corbett for murdering Rudraprayag's man-eating leopard. Corbett gets really emotional as he explains the soldier's feelings. He retains deep faith in the Garhwal people. He appreciates the devotion of the soldier Garhwali who remembered the death of the man-eater. The soldier responded,

"I was a small boy when you shot the man-eater. I shall tell all the people I meet there that I have seen and had speech with you." (191)

The encounter with the soldier shocked Corbett. He is voicing his hope that these Indian natives will offer the country a strong future. At the end of the book he is highly positive. He admires Indian people and shares his sense of appreciation to them.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

As a writer he's more interested in telling the authenticity of his real-life forest stories. He hopes to relive his life's exciting activities. Thus all these stories end with Corbett's success. By the end of each story he shows the circumstances which caused the tiger or the leopard to become a man-

eater. His outstanding storytelling ability and exciting encounters make these tales an integral part of Corbett's classic corpus.

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