

THE COOLEST NERVE I EVER SAW

BY CHARLES J. MC GUIRK.

This is the fourth of a series of stories concerning bravery in tight places. The incidents were related to Mr. McGuirk by men whose work has put them in touch with conditions where nerve was required. This article contains experiences known to Capt. Robert Foran, fighter, wild game hunter and strenuous friend of T. R.

"There's a legion that never was 'listed,
That carries no colors or crest,
But, split in a thousand detachments,
Is breaking the road for the rest.
Our fathers, they left us their blessing—
They taught us and groomed us, and
cramped;
But we've shaken the clubs and the messes
To go and find out and be damned—
(Dear boys!)
To go and get shot and be damned."
—"The Lost Legion."

SHOOK hands with a bronzed, lithe, wiry little Englishman, bearing the mark of the soldier in the carriage of his body, who met me at the threshold of his room. Capt. W. Robert Foran, F. R. G. S., F. Z. S., and F. R. C. S., late of the British army, big game hunter, geologist, explorer, soldier of fortune, personal friend of Col. Roosevelt, writer, and at present a resident of Chicago, bade me welcome to the warmth of his room and the gift of his varied experiences as we sat sheltered in coziness against one of the coldest nights of this winter.

"What is the coolest display of nerve I ever saw?"

He mused over my question while the smoke from his pipe and my cigaret formed designs and pictures which dissolved and reformed again till the blue haze became too faint to see. Then he opened to me the treasure house of his career, telling me of incidents in which men had shown their contempt for death in the lust for war and the desire to kill. Eight years of pure adventure in Africa, India, and the Sudan were drawn from, and the incidents were rich with the wealth I sought.

For Capt. Foran served in the British army through the whole of the Boer war, in the infantry, cavalry, and on staff. From 1890 to 1910 his life was woven in the web of war. He served in the Waziri campaign on the northwestern frontier of India; then in Somaliland, Northeast Africa, in the disastrous campaign against the Mad Mullah in which the British arms met defeat. After this he joined the constabulary in East Africa, seeing service in the Kisii expedition of 1905 in Sotik, and with the Nandi field force in 1905-06. In 1908 he was with the second expedition against the Kisii, and when that was done he spent his time in hunting and exploring.

In 1909-10 he was with Col. Roosevelt's expedition in eastern and central Africa when the colonel hunted the big game. He traveled as representative of the Associated Press and was the only newspaper man to go through with the expedition, but his experience in big game hunting and his knowledge of the country made him an invaluable acquisition to the party. An autographed copy of Roosevelt's "Big Game Trails" and a letter from the author testified to the colonel's friendship.

So I learned again of the waste places and the bitter road of the younger son, of bravery and forlorn hopes, of death and its reception by the men who met it, sneering as they coughed away their life blood or laughing as they backed their enemy with swishing saber. The tales were incidents of the passing of the white man's law among the lesser breeds. They lost nothing in the telling.

Cured a Snake Bite.

Capt. Foran took his pipe from his mouth and spoke. "Yours is a difficult question," he said. "It is hard to answer, because I've seen so many things of that sort."

"An act of Dr. Jay Easton-Stuart, a young surgeon in the British army, comes to my mind. Dr. Stuart and I left Nakmo one time with a Safari. We hunted bongo, a rare specimen of hybrid antelope. I remember we were walking rapidly through the forest of upland country, momentarily expecting sight of the game. We thought of nothing else. Simba, the doctor's gun bearer, walking just in the doctor's rear, jumped suddenly from the trail, yelling in midair.

"Tazamo! Nyoka, bwana, doctari!" he cried.

"The doctor halted and crouched warily, prepared to spring, for the servant had given warning of the pop adder, whose bite is death. But even as he crouched the snake struck, sending its fangs deep into the surgeon's leg, just above the ankle.

"Simba's teeth were chattering in terror. The doctor paled. Death impended, swift and horrible.

"Dr. Stuart, realizing his danger, handed me his hunting knife and told me to cut into the wound. But I couldn't. I tried, but it was no use. He took the knife from my hand and jabbed it into his leg, cutting out the flesh from around the wound for the depth of about an inch. Then he took a cartridge from his belt, bit out the lead, poured the powder into the wound and set it afire with a match, and the doctor had saved his own life. Simba and I carried him a mile back to camp. He lay in bed for weeks, but he recovered."

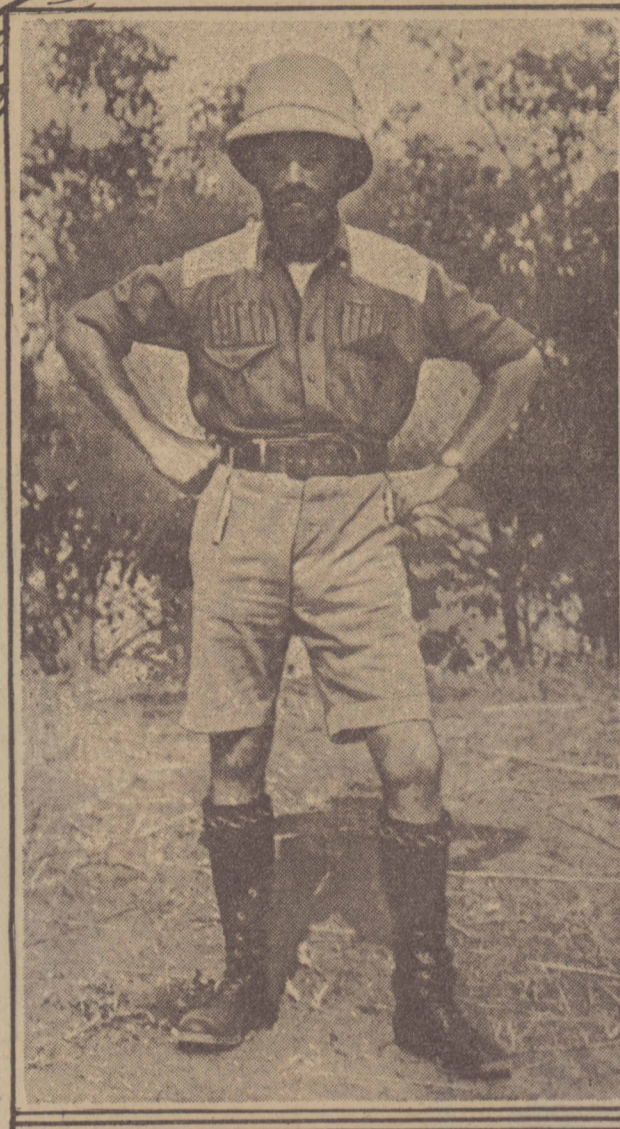
Capt. Foran told the tale dispassionately. It was the story of a brave man who had

risen to a difficult occasion. But the interesting thing to the captain was the occasion rather than the act. The story had brought before him other scenes, incidents of the war and the acts of men that commanded tribute from their comrades.

Paid His Respects to the Enemy.

"Have I ever told you of Trooper Tom Nelson?" the captain asked after a pause. "Nelson was with the Australian contingent, with the New South Wales mounted rifles, I think. He was a quiet, phlegmatic sort of chap, not given to impulsive action. On the day I speak of I was riding in command of a reconnoitering force. Our orders were to ride along the bed of the Nau river to locate the Boers if possible. If we found the coast clear, we were to report it, so that the main force could move across the river bed. I remember we were riding at ease along the river bed. I was talking to my sergeant when I noticed a piece of paper on the ground. I ordered Nelson, who was riding near, to dismount and pick it up. It was a letter, written in Dutch, and I ordered my force to halt while I read it.

"Fifty yards ahead there was a bend in the river bed, and from this as I read there came a heavy volley, which emptied several saddles. We afterward learned that the bend held a force of 500 Boers, but we didn't wait to find out their number then. I ordered a retreat, and we rode straight for the hill down which we had come, lying flat on our



CAPT. ROBERT FORAN *** AT THE END OF THE ROOSEVELT EXPEDITION IN AFRICA.



THERE WAS A FLARE, A SMELL OF BURNING FLESH, THE DOCTOR HAD SAVED HIS OWN LIFE.

horses and trusting to luck. Half way up the hill five strands of barbed wire blocked our retreat and held us for a minute. Several of the men dismounted and hacked these down while the murderous fire decimated us. As we rode through a riderless horse passed me. Nelson turned in his saddle and looked back. Fifty yards below the fence lay the horse's rider down with a bullet in the back. Nelson turned his horse and rode at a gallop down the hill. I yelled an order to him to come back. But he kept right on. When he reached the fallen man he dismounted and tugged with his body, succeeding at last in throwing him into the saddle. When he mounted behind him the Boers had ceased firing and both forces watched him. But Nelson hadn't finished. He rode with his friend almost up to the mouth of the Boers' guns, and, holding his friend in one arm, he swept his hat from his head and bent low in a formal bow to the enemy.

"Then he turned his horse and rode hard toward us. As he passed the fence the enemy commenced firing and we covered his retreat as best we could. When he reached our lines he was reeling from a bullet in the shoulder. As another trooper helped him down I went over to him, threatening him with court martial and cursing him as only an angry man can.

"But Nelson smiled. 'The bloody blokes were so respectful that I had to return the compliment,' he said.

Gathering Souvenirs for Mother.

"Then there was Trooper John Martin, a lad of 19. We were part of a force, made up of my yeomanry and a company of Dublin fusiliers, under the command of Maj. English, which was guarding sappers repairing the railroad line between Durban and Victoria, in South Africa. The sappers worked day and night, and we rode out with them about 300 yards from camp. We hadn't seen anything

of the Boers and we thought they had left us. But one morning at dawn they attacked us in force and drove us to our trenches. After a fight of about an hour we had exhausted our ammunition and I called for volunteers to go back to the camp for more.

"Martin was chosen, and started over ground raked by shrapnel and bullets. As he started a shell burst about fifty feet from him and he ran straight toward it, picking up fragments here and there. He did this three times on the way to camp. He came back unscathed and with the ammunition. He explained his action of picking up the shell by saying that he wanted some souvenirs to send to his mother and had picked the shells that were fired at him."

"You've hunted big game quite a lot, haven't you, captain?" I threw out this question tentatively. I knew his reputation and I had read several of his stories.

The captain smiled. "So many times I can't remember," he said. "Fritz Schindelhaar, soldier of fortune, explorer, and big game hunter of great renown, who was killed on Jan. 27 last by a wounded lion, was one of the nerviest men I ever knew. The way he met his death was typical of him."

Hunting Lions with Revolvers.

The captain quoted from the Associated Press dispatch: "Schindelhaar's daring was responsible for his death. He had accompanied Paul Rainey, the American millionaire-adventurer, on his expedition in the African jungle and had faced death many times. When Rainey was leaving the country he expressed the hope that he would get a picture of a charging lion within ten feet of the camera. Schindelhaar on Saturday saw an opportunity to fulfill Rainey's wish. The lion kept getting closer and closer to the camera and Schindelhaar stuck to his machine. He was unable to get out of the way of the lion and was badly mauled. He was carried to the



HE SWEEPED HIS HAT FROM HIS HEAD AND MADE A FORMAL BOW TO THE ENEMY.



SCHINDELAAR STUCK TO HIS MACHINE.

"Fritz waited a minute and then, putting spurs to his pony, drove straight at the lion, sending a bullet crashing through its forehead as the lion crouched for a spring. The lion rolled over on its side, dead."

The captain sighed. "It was contempt for his enemy that brought Fritz to his death," he said. "I hope he is resting well. He was a brave man."

Trained Under Sandow.

We smoked, silent a while. I looked at the clock. It was nearly midnight. Then I heard the captain's voice again.

"Capt. Chauncey Hugh Stigand, big game hunter, explorer, and writer, and one of the show pupils of Sandow, the strong man, while holding a commission in the king's African rifles, was the hero of an exploit which will always be one of the legends of the country.

"I was stationed at Mombasa, Africa, and I was going over my district on a trip of inspection. Capt. Stigand, who had been a schoolmate of mine in England, came to visit me on his way home. At Mombasa is a little railroad station, and near it is a water tank. It is a lonely place. You have to telegraph ahead to have the train stop there.

"When Capt. Stigand arrived I told him of native rumors concerning four lions, one lion and three lionesses, that came to the water tank to drink every night. Being a noted hunter, my story interested him and he decided to investigate. I called two of my native soldiers and they verified the report. Capt. Stigand decided to get the four lions, even if he had to miss his boat.

"He was one of the best physical specimens of manhood I ever saw. He stood over 6 feet in his stockings, and his muscles bulged all over his body. His training under Sandow and his outdoor life in Africa had made him the strongest man I ever hope to see. I had no fear for him.

"That night Capt. Stigand, accompanied by his gun bearer, went to the station. The captain went on to the water tank, while his bearer waited at the station. All night long the captain lay on the rim of the tank with two high power guns beside him. Toward

morning the lion and the three lionesses came out of the jungle. They were beautiful specimens. Capt. Stigand killed the lion in his tracks as he mounted the station platform, and he wounded one of the lionesses so badly that she died within a few minutes.

Felled Lion with Fist.

"The other two lionesses ran into the jungle. All was quiet. In half an hour one of the lionesses came out again to look for her mate. Capt. Stigand wounded her badly. She crawled into the jungle. An hour later the other lioness came out again and the captain wounded her. She dragged herself into the tall grass.

"Now, ordinarily, Capt. Stigand was a careful hunter, but everybody makes a mistake. His almost cost his life. He waited for an hour and then decided to go in for the other two lionesses, both wounded and crouching somewhere in the jungle. He took up the spoor of the first easily and came upon her dead about fifty feet from the open. Then he picked up the spoor of the last one.

"At dawn that morning a French explorer, Dr. Jules Cozad, and the captain's gun bearer started in search of the captain. They picked up his spoor and came upon the second dead lioness. Here the ground was torn and thrashed. They got the captain's spoor again about twenty feet from the dead animal. With their guns at ready, the two broke through the tall grass, following the spoor easily. About a hundred feet from the dead lioness they came upon the scene of the terrible struggle. The body of Capt. Stigand lay under that of the third lioness. The lioness was dead. Capt. Stigand was unconscious. The lioness' jaw hung low and sideways, broken at the base by the fist of Capt. Stigand, who had given her the finishing shot and gone down under her last spring. As she was in midair the captain swung straight and true, smashing her jaw into twenty pieces. He was badly mauled.

"Jules Cozad, brave man himself, looked in awe, taking in the details of the fight. Then he gave tribute after the manner of his kind. "Sacred body of God!" he breathed. "Thees ees a man. Thees ees a man."