

I followed her with my rifle so eagerly that Bommay Gouda whispered to me to let her get to the carcase before I fired. When she reached the bullock she stopped, and at the same instant I fired at her shoulder, broadside on, with my express. Bommay Gouda could contain himself no longer, and jumped up before I could stop him; I did so also, but could see no tigress! It was extraordinary, certainly; we looked up the hillside, but she was not there. Was she really a devil, as all believed, and had vanished in air? Just then up went a tail on the far side of the bullock in a convulsive quiver—she had fallen exactly behind the carcass. I ran along the hillside to intercept her should she gain her feet; but it was all right, she was only opening her mouth in spasmodic

gasps, and I settled her. The trackers came up in great glee; they had seen the tigress come over the summit of the hill and enter the rocks on our side half an hour before we saw her; they were in a large tamarind tree away in the plain. On examining her we found that she was in milk, which was the first intimation we had that she had a cub; she was in the prime of life and condition, and had no lameness or apparent injury to account for her having taken to man-killing.

I may here say that we never killed her cub. It was heard calling to its mother for several nights around Iyen-poor, but we could not find it in the daytime, and it must have died of starvation, as had it lived we should have encountered it."

## SEALS AND SALMON.



SEALS, which a few years ago abounded along the north-west coast of Scotland, are now comparatively rare, and before long will be entirely banished to the undisturbed and unfrequented rocks of the more northern islands. The salmon-fishers on the coast wage a constant war against them, in consequence of the great damage they do to their stake-nets, which are constantly torn and injured by these powerful animals. Nor is the loss they occasion to the salmon-fishers confined to the fish which they actually consume, or to the nets that they destroy, for a seal hunting along the coast in the neighbourhood of the stake-nets keeps the salmon in a constantly disturbed state, and drives the shoals of fish in the deep water, where they are secure from the nets. There is consequently a constant and deadly feud between the fisherman and the seals, which has

almost totally expelled the latter from this part of the coast. An old seal has been known to frequent a particular range of stake-nets for many years, escaping all attacks against him, and becoming so cunning and so impudent that he will actually take the salmon out of the nets (every turn of which he becomes thoroughly intimate with) before the face of the fisherman, and retiring with his ill-gotten booty, adds insult to injury by coolly devouring it on some adjoining point of rock or shoal, taking good care, however, to keep out of reach of rifle-ball or slug. Sometimes, however, he becomes entangled in the nets, and is drowned; but this seldom happens to a full-grown seal, who easily breaks through the strongest twine if he can find no outlet. From the shore opposite Cromarty I one day saw a large seal swim into the stake-nets and take out a salmon, with which he retired to a small rock above the water, and there devoured it entirely in a very short space of time.



Sometimes, at high water and when the river is swollen, a seal comes in pursuit of salmon into the Findhorn, notwithstanding the smallness of the stream and its rapidity. I was one day, in November, looking for wild ducks near the river, when I was called by a man who was at work near the water, and who told me that some "muckle beast" was playing most extraordinary tricks in the river. He could not tell me what beast it was, but only that it was something "no that canny." After waiting a short time, the riddle was solved by the appearance of a good-sized seal, into whose head I instantly sent a cartridge, not having any balls with me.

The seal immediately plunged and splashed about in the water at a most furious rate, and then began swimming round and round in a circle, upon which I gave him the other barrel, also loaded with one of Eley's cartridges, which quite settled the business, and he floated rapidly away down the stream. I sent my retriever after him, but the dog being very young and not come to his full strength, was baffled by the weight of the animal and the strength of the current, and could not land him; indeed, he was very near getting drowned himself, in consequence of his attempts to bring in the seal, who was still struggling. I called the dog away, and the seal immediately sank. The next day I found him dead on the shore of the bay with (as the man who skinned him expressed himself) "twenty-three pellets of large hail in his craig."

Another day, in the month of July, when shooting rabbits on the sandhills, a messenger came from the fisherman at the stake-nets, asking me to come in that direction, as the "muckle sealgh" was swimming about, waiting for the fish to be caught in the nets, in order to commence his devastation.

I accordingly went to them, and having taken my observations of the locality,

and the most feasible points of attack, I got the men to row me out to the end of the stake-net, where there was a kind of platform of netting, on which I stretched myself, with a bullet in one barrel and a cartridge in the other. I then directed the men to row the boat away, as if they had left the nets. They had scarcely gone three hundred yards from me when I saw the seal, who had been floating, apparently unconcerned, at some distance, swim quietly and fearlessly up to the net. I had made a kind of breastwork of old netting before me, which quite concealed me on the side from which he came. He approached the net, and began examining it, and carefully, to see if any fish were in it; sometimes he was under and sometimes above the water. I was much struck by his activity while underneath, where I could most plainly see him, particularly as he twice dived almost below my station, and the water was clear and smooth as glass.

I could not get a good shot at him for some time; at last, however, he put up his head at about fifteen or twenty yards distance from me; and while he was intent on watching the boat, which was hovering about waiting to see the result of my plan of attack, I fired at him, sending the ball through his brain. He instantly sank without a struggle, and a perfect torrent of blood came up, making the water red for some feet round the spot where he lay stretched out at the bottom. The men immediately rowed up, and taking me into the boat, we managed to bring him up with a boat-hook to the surface of the water, and then, as he was too heavy to lift into the boat (his weight being 378 lbs.) we put a rope round his flippers, and towed him ashore.

A seal of this size is worth some money, as independently of the value of his skin, the blubber (which lies under the skin, like that of a whale) produces a large quantity of excellent oil.