

THE TIGER.



THE tiger (*Felis tigris*) is nearly as large as the lion, and though not so powerfully made, nor so majestic in its air and movements, is more agile and rapid, and therefore perhaps more dangerous. The markings of its fur are very beautiful, a series of dark transverse stripes being laid on a rich yellow ground. This ferocious animal is confined to Asia, and is spread through the whole of India as far as the north of China. In Sumatra their number is scarcely credible, whole villages being sometimes almost depopulated, and the cattle destroyed by their ravages.

Hunting the tiger, though very hazardous, is at the same time a very favourite sport in the East; and as horses cannot be brought to stand steadily in the combat, elephants are employed on the occasion, which, though often dreadfully agitated, yet in general preserve sufficient firmness to allow the riders to take aim with the musket. The parties are placed in a howdah, or cushioned seat, on the elephant's neck, and the sagacious animal (whose enmity to the tiger is very remarkable) proceeds cautiously to beat up the jungle, in order to force the dreaded monster into the open country. Bishop Heber thus describes one of these forays. It appears that a tiger, which had done a good deal of mischief, was discovered in the "adjoining *tope*," and a party was formed to dislodge, and if possible destroy the unwelcome neighbour:—"A number of people on foot and horseback attended from our own camp and the neighbouring villages, and the same sort of interest and delight was evidently excited which might be produced in England by a great coursing party. The rajah was on a little female elephant,

hardly bigger than the Durham ox, and almost as shaggy as a poodle. She was a native of the neighbouring wood, where they are generally, though not always, of a smaller size than those of Bengal and Chittagong. He sat in a low howdah, with two or three guns ranged beside him ready for action. Mr. Boulderson had also a formidable apparatus of muskets and fowling-pieces projecting over his *mahout's* (driver's) head. We rode about two miles across a plain covered with long jungly grass, which very much put me in mind of the country near the Cuban: quails and wild-fowl arose in great numbers, and beautiful antelopes were seen scudding away in all directions."

After beating up the jungle, "at last the elephants all drew up their trunks into the air, began to roar, and stamp violently with their fore-feet. The rajah's little elephant turned short round, and, in spite of all her mahout could say or do, took up her post, to the rajah's great annoyance, close in the rear of Mr. Boulderson. The other three went on slowly but boldly, with their trunks raised, their ears expanded, and their sagacious little eyes bent intently forward. 'We are close upon him,' said Mr. Boulderson; 'fire where you see the long grass shake, if he rises before you.' Just at that moment my elephant stamped again violently. 'There! there!' cried the mahout, 'I saw his head.'

A short roar, or rather loud growl, followed: and I saw immediately before my elephant's head the motion of some large animal stealing through the grass. I fired as directed, and a moment after, seeing the motion still more plainly, fired the second barrel. Another short growl followed; the motion was immediately quickened, and was soon lost in

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the more distant jungle. Mr. Boulderson said, 'I should not wonder if you hit him that last time; at any rate we shall drive him out of the cover, and then I will take care of him.' In fact, at that moment, the crowd of horse and foot spectators, at the jungle side, began to run off in all directions. We went on to the place, but found it was a false alarm, and in fact we had seen all we were to see of him, and went twice more through the jungle in vain."

The tiger steals upon his prey or awaits it in ambush, and springs upon it like the lion; but he is active by day as well as by night, from which cause he is more dangerous to travellers, who too frequently fall his victims. His strength is very great, the weight of a man or of a much more ponderous animal occasioning no embarrassment to his rapid and bounding movements.

A party of travellers, landing on Saugur Island, in the East Indies, in pursuit of deer, saw numerous tracks of tigers. While "resting by the side of a jungle, a roar like thunder was heard, and an immense tiger seized our unfortunate friend, the son of Sir Hector Monro, and rushed again into the jungle, dragging him through the thickest bushes, and among the trees, everything giving way to his monstrous strength; a tigress accompanied him in his progress. The united agonies of fear, horror, and regret, rushed at once upon us. I fired at the tiger, and my companion fired also, and in a few moments after our unfortunate friend came up to us bathed in blood. Every medical assistance was in vain, and he expired in the space of twenty-four hours, having received such wounds from the teeth and claws of the animal as rendered his recovery hopeless. A large fire, con-

sisting of ten or twelve old trees, was blazing near us at the time this accident took place; and ten or more of the natives were with us. We had but just pushed our boat from this unhappy shore, when the tigress again made her appearance, fierce and angry, and remained on the sand all the time that we continued in sight."

A most ingenious mode of tiger-killing is that which is employed by the natives of Oude. They gather a number of the broad leaves of the prauss-tree, which much resembles the sycamore, and having well besmeared them with a kind of bird-lime, they strew them in the animal's way, taking care to lay them with the prepared side uppermost. Let a tiger but put his paw on one of these innocent-looking leaves, and his fate is settled. Finding the leaf stick to his paw, he shakes it, in order to rid himself of the nuisance; finding that plan unsuccessful, he endeavours to attain his object by rubbing it against his face, thereby smearing the ropey bird-lime over his nose and eyes, and glueing the eyelids together. By this time he has probably trodden upon several more of the treacherous leaves, and is bewildered with the novel inconvenience; then he rolls on the ground, and rubs his head and face on the earth in his effort to get free.

By thus acting, he only adds fresh bird-lime, so that he lies floundering on the ground, tearing up the earth with his claws, uttering howls of rage and dismay, and exhausted by the impotent struggles in which he has been so long engaged. These cries are a signal to the authors of his misery, who run to the spot, armed with guns, bows, and spears, and find no difficulty in despatching their blind and wearied foe.
