

NATURAL HISTORY.

CAPTURE OF AN ALLIGATOR.

In Silliman's Journal of Science and the Arts, is the following very interesting account of the capture and death of a large alligator, at Manilla, in the island of Luconia, one of the Philippines, the details of which confirm several of the astounding stories related of this stupendous creature.

In the course of the year 1831, the proprietor of Halabala, at Manilla, in the island of Luconia, informed me that he frequently lost horses and cows on a remote part of his plantation, and that the natives assured him they were taken by an enormous alligator, who frequented one of the streams which run into the lake. Their descriptions were so highly wrought, that they were attributed to the fondness for exaggeration to which the inhabitants of that country are peculiarly addicted, and very little credit was given to their repeated relations.

All doubts as to the existence of the animal were at last dispelled by the destruction of an Indian, who attempted to ford the river on horseback, although entreated to desist by his companions, who crossed at a shallow place higher up, and reached the centre of the stream, and was laughing at the others for their prudence, when the alligator came upon him. His teeth encircled the saddle, which he tore from the horse, while the rider tumbled on the other side into the water and made for the shore. The horse, too terrified to move, stood trembling when the attack was made. The alligator, disregarding him, pursued the man, who safely reached the bank, which he could easily have ascended, but, rendered foolhardy by his escape, he placed himself behind a tree which had fallen partly into the water, and drawing his heavy knife, leaned over the tree, and, on the approach of his enemy, struck him on the nose. The animal repeated his assault, and the Indian his blows, until the former exasperated at the resistance, rushed on the man, and seizing him by the middle of the body, which was at once enclosed and crushed in his capacious jaws, swam into the lake. His friends hastened to the rescue; but the alligator slowly left the shore, while the poor wretch, writhing and shrieking in his agony, with his knife uplifted in his clasped hands, seemed, as the others expressed it, "held out as a man would carry a torch." His sufferings were not long continued, for the monster sank to the bottom, and soon after re-appearing alone on the surface, and calmly basking in the sun, gave to the horror-stricken spectators the fullest confirmation of the death and burial of their comrade.

A short time after this event, I made a visit to Halabala, and expressing a strong desire to capture or destroy the alligator, my host readily offered his assistance. The animal had been a few days before, with his head and one of his fore feet resting on the bank, and his eyes following the motion of some cows which were grazing near. Our informer likened his appearance to that of a cat watching a mouse, and in the attitude to spring upon his prey, when it should come within his reach.

Hearing that the alligator had killed a horse, we proceeded to the place, about five miles from the house. It was a tranquil spot, and one of singular beauty, even in that land. The stream, which a few hundred feet from the lake, narrowed to a brook, with its green banks fringed with the graceful bamboo, and the alternate glory of glade and forest, spreading far and wide, seemed fitted for other purposes than the familiar haunt of the huge creature that had appropriated it to himself. A few cane huts were situated a short distance from the river, and we procured from them what men they contained, who were ready to assist in freeing themselves from their dangerous neighbour. Having reason to believe that the alligator was in the river, we commenced operations by sinking nets, upright, across its mouth, three feet deep, at intervals of several feet. The nets, which were of great strength, and intended for the capture of the wild buffalo, were fastened to trees on the banks, making a complete fence to the communication with the lake.

My companion and myself placed ourselves with our guns on either side of the stream, while the Indians, with long bamboos, felt for the animal. For some time he refused to be disturbed, and we began to fear that he was not within our limits, when a spiral motion of the water under

the spot where I was standing, led me to direct the natives to it, and the creature slowly moved on the bottom towards the nets, which he no sooner touched, than he quietly turned back, and proceeded up the stream. This movement was several times repeated, till, having no rest in the enclosure, he attempted to climb up the bank.—On receiving a ball in the body, he uttered a growl like that of an angry dog, and plunged into the water, crossed to the other side, where he was received with a similar salutation, discharged directly into his mouth. Finding himself attacked on every side, he renewed his attempts to ascend the banks, but whatever part of him appeared was bored with bullets, and feeling that he was hunted, he forgot his own formidable means of attack, and sought only safety from the troubles which surrounded him.

To be continued.

"THE LION DOING HOMAGE TO 'PEACE PRINCIPLES.—A man belonging to Mr. Schmelen's congregation at Bethany, returning homewards from a visit to his friends, took a circuitous course, in order to pass a small fountain, or rather pool, where he hoped to kill an antelope to carry home to his family. The sun had risen to some height by the time he reached the spot, and seeing no game he laid his gun down on a shelving low rock, the back part of which was covered over with a species of dwarf thorn-bushes. He went to the water, took a hearty drink, and returned to the rock, smoked his pipe, and being a little tired, fell asleep. In a short time the heat reflected from the rock awoke him, and, opening his eyes, he saw a large lion crouching before him, with its eyes glaring in his face, and within little more than a yard of his feet. He sat motionless for some minutes, till he had recovered his presence of mind; then eyeing his gun, moved slowly towards it; the lion seeing him, raised his head and gave a tremendous roar; he made another and another attempt; but the gun being far beyond his reach, he gave it up, as the lion seemed well aware of his object, and was enraged whenever he attempted to move his hand.

"His situation now became painful in the extreme; the rock on which he sat became so hot, that he could scarcely bear his naked feet to touch it, and kept moving them, alternately placing one above the other. The day passed, and the night also, but the lion never moved from the spot; the sun rose again, and its intense heat soon rendered his feet past feeling. At noon the lion rose, and walked to the water, only a few yards distant, looking behind as he went, lest the man should move; and, seeing him stretch out his hand to take his gun, turned in a rage, and was at the point of springing upon him. The animal went to the water, drank, and returning, lay down at the edge of the rock. Another night passed. The man, in describing it, said, he knew not whether he slept, but if he did, it must have been with his eyes open, for he always saw the lion at his feet. Next day, in the forenoon, the animal went again to the water, and while there, he listened to some noise, apparently from an opposite quarter, and disappeared in the bushes. The man now made another effort, and seized his gun; but, on attempting to rise, he fell, his ankles being without power. With his gun in his hand, he crept towards the water, and drank, but looking at his feet, he saw, as he expressed it, his 'toes roasted' and the skin torn off with the grass. There he sat a few moments, expecting the lion's return, when he resolved to send the contents of the gun through his head; but as it did not appear, tying his gun to his back, the poor man made the best of his way on his hands and knees, to the nearest path, hoping some solitary individual might pass. He could go no farther, when, providentially, a person came up, who took him to a place of safety, from whence he obtained help, though he lost his toes and was a cripple for life."

FOSSIL REMAINS OF THE MASTADON.—The skeleton of one of these monsters has been found by some miners who were digging for lead ore near Einsinewa Mound in the north of Iowa, at the depth of sixty feet in the earth. The enamel of the tusks was as perfect as when the huge animal roamed the earth, though the skeleton had probably been imbedded in the rock and clay for ages. The skeleton was found in a crevice, and the Hawkeye says, "the position of the bones would seem to indicate a precipitous pitch head downwards of this monster, by some sudden opening of the earth."

THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

MARRIAGE AND DEATH.

EMILY and Jane were the daughters of a landed gentleman, the possessor of a small but valuable estate in the north of Scotland. He and their mother being themselves decidedly pious, had trained up their daughters in the fear of God from their earliest years, and the exertions they had made for that purpose were amply repaid by the success attending them. Their children were both pious and dutiful. Their mother having in early life enjoyed the advantage of a very superior education in one of our larger towns, and having no children but one son, the oldest of the family, and themselves, was both qualified to be their teacher and had leisure to attend to the improvement of their minds; and under her careful tuition they grew up not only amiable but accomplished young ladies. It is one incident connected with the history of this family we are now about to relate, as told to us many years ago by him who once ministered to them in holy things.

Jane, the youngest, had reached her seventeenth year. Though rather under the middle size, she was finely proportioned—bright hair flowed in graceful curls over a fair and noble forehead, and the leading expression of her countenance was sweetness. Emily was in her nineteenth year; taller than the generality of her sex, a gentle bend marked the contour of her figure, which seemed to remind the attentive beholder of the yielding of a beautiful, but fragile flower; dark eye-lashes shaded her deep blue eyes, and her countenance was expressively beautiful. The affection of the sisters towards each other was proverbial in the country side. Their tempers were gentle, their tastes similar, and both, as we have said, were truly pious; but there was something still more sublime in the religious feelings of Emily than in those of Jane; she seemed to breathe much of the air of heaven while yet she trod the green earth—sensibly felt herself continually in the presence of God—received every thing as a gift from him, and she was happy.

Such, said our aged informant, was Emily, when I received a hint from her mother that ere long my services would be required to officiate at her wedding. The goings of the adjacent village had for some time conjectured that such an event was at hand; and indeed there were circumstances occurring about her father's house which gave ample probability to their surmises. Large parcels had been known to arrive from the neighbouring borough town—the industrious sempstress was busy there, and it was noticed, that some of the articles on which she was employed were quickly hid from the view of neighbours when they unexpectedly entered—hid, from that delicate feeling of innate modesty which leads our Scottish maidens so often to wish the concealment of approaching marriage till the proclamation of banns told to all the time is at hand.

Her intended husband, Robert K——, was an amiable young man, comfortable as to his worldly circumstances, and residing about two miles from her father's house. He was the proprietor of about forty acres of valuable land; his parents were both dead, and for some years he had been carefully improving his property. On his paternal inheritance stood a neat cottage; it was indeed straw-roofed, but its walls were covered in some parts with ivy, and in others with various kinds of climbing plants, through which, in their season, might be conspicuously seen the bright orange-coloured flowers of the Indian creeper. Before the cottage there was a beautiful sloping field, part of which, immediately in front of the dwelling, had been partitioned off with neatly dressed privet hedges to form a garden, laid out with gravelled walks, box edging, and flower borders; while a few clumps of ornamental trees, tastefully disposed over the remainder, rendered the appearance of the whole beautifully picturesque, in whatever direction it was viewed. Such was the married residence of Emily.

In due time the marriage took place; the simple but impressive presbyterian ceremony was performed in the house of her parents by her own minister, who loved her as a daughter, and to whom she had been a frequent visitor; for though he had long known the bitterness of sorrow, and sorrows of frequent recurrence, yet still he could participate by sympathy in the joy of the young of his flock, and loved to have them frequently with him. Heartfelt indeed were his wishes for the happiness of the newly married pair, for both were much and sincerely esteemed by him. As they thought their own house was the proper place wherein to spend the earlier, as they hoped to do the remaining, days of their married life, thither, accompanied by a few friends, they repaired in the evening, and Emily was duly received as its mistress. Happy was she as she entered it, and doubted not of passing many happy days within it. But the fairest earthly prospects are often deceitful, and those of this young married pair proved themselves to be.

Four short weeks had but barely passed when the fair young wife was laid on a sick bed. Her complaint was at first deemed a cold, though attended with a slight degree of fever; a restless night was passed; on the morrow she was worse, and the mor-