

face, and the brute was, at any rate, 'a good eater.' There was something very piquant if not flattering, in being selected for his exclusive malignity. But he was gone, and the menagerie had henceforward lost, for me, a portion of its interest.

After the first surprise was over my curiosity became excited, and I began to speculate on the causes of the creature's absence. Was he dead? Had he been destroyed for his ferocity, or parted with to make room for a milder specimen of the species? Had he gone to perform in the legitimate drama—or taken French leave? I was looking round for somebody to answer these queries, when all at once I descried an object that made me feel like a man suddenly blasted with a thunderbolt.

'Mercy on us! You don't mean to say that it was the tiger!'

I do. Huddled up in a dark corner of the room, he had been overlooked by me on my entrance, and cunningly suppressing his usual snarl of recognition, the treacherous beast had proceeded to intercept my retreat. At my first glimpse of him he was skulking along, close to the wall, in the direction of the door. Had I possessed the full power of motion, he must have arrived there first—but terror rivetted me to the spot. There I stood, all my faculties frozen up, dizzy, motionless and dumb. Could I have cried out, my last breath of life would certainly have escaped from me in one long, shrill scream. But it was pent up in my bosom, where my heart, after one mighty bound upwards, was fluttering like a scared bird. There was a feeling of deadly choking at my throat, of mortal sickness at my stomach. My tongue in an instant had become stiff and parched—my jaw locked—my eyes fixed in their sockets, and, from the rush of blood, seemed looking through a reddish mist, whilst within my head a whizzing noise struck up that rendered me utterly incapable of thought or comprehension. Such, as far as I can recollect, was my condition, and which, from the symptoms, I should say, was very similar to a combined attack of apoplexy and paralysis.

This state, however, did not last. At first every limb and joint had suddenly stiffened, rigid as cast iron; my very flesh, with the blood in its veins, had congealed into marble: but after a few

seconds, the muscles as abruptly relaxed, the joints gave way, the blood thawed, and seemed escaping from the vessels, the substance of my body seemed losing its solidity, and with an inexpressible sense of its imbecility, I felt as if my whole frame would fall in a shapeless mass on the floor.

'Gracious goodness—how dreadful!'

The tiger, in the interim, having gained the door, had crouched down—cat-like—his back curved inwards, his face between his fore-paws, and with his glaring eyeballs steadily fixed on mine, was creeping on his belly by half-inches towards me, his tail meanwhile working from side to side behind him, and as it were *sculling* him on.

In another moment this movement ceased, the tail straightened itself out, except the tip, which turned up, and became nervously agitated, a warning as certain as the like signal from an enraged rattlesnake.

There was no time to be lost. A providential inspiration, a direct whisper, as it were, from heaven, reminded me of the empty cage, and suggested, with lightning rapidity, that the same massive bars which had formerly kept the Man Eater within, might now keep him out. In another instant I was within the den, had pulled too the door, and shot the heavy bolt. The tiger, foiled by the suddenness of this unexpected manœuvre, immediately rose from his couchant position, and after lashing each flank with his tail, gave vent to his dissatisfaction in a prolonged inward grumble, that sounded like distant thunder. But he did not long deliberate on his course: to my infinite horror, I saw him approach the den, where rearing on his hind legs, in the attitude the heralds call rampant, he gave a tremendous roar, which made my blood curdle, and then resting his fore-paws on the front of the cage, with his huge, hideous face pressed against the bars, he stared at me a long, long, long stare, with two red, fiery eyes, that alternately gloomed and sparkled like burning coals.

It was now my turn to know and understand how Time 'travels in divers paces with divers persons.' To feel how the precious stuff that life is made of might be drawn out, like fine gold, into inconceivable lengths. To learn the extreme duration of minims and seconds,