

DEER HUNTING IN SOUTH AMERICA.

As the haunts of the fallow-deer or venays are generally far from the abodes of men, and as they live in continual alarm from the depredations of the host of enemies, beasts and birds of prey, and even reptiles, that beset them, but for the extraordinary instinct or sagacity nature has endowed them with for their preservation, the race must long since have been extinct. The impenetrable mountains of the Cordilleras are inhabited by immense herds of these animals; a species of the stag-kind also sometimes herds amongst them, though, as there seems a great aversion to this commixture, it must be considered as dictated by some necessary or instinctive policy. In those haunts are also to be met the *cabia montes*, or mountain-goat, so much admired for its symmetry of form and delicious flavour. The intricate and steep pathways leading to their couching haunts are mostly in clefts of rocky precipices, inaccessible to beasts of prey; and even a nimble dog can scarcely skip from rock to rock, to the outposts where their videttes are placed. Should any of them venture, they soon have occasion to repent their temerity.

It is not uncommon to see the jaguar, the tiger, &c., who have the hardihood to attack their outposts, hurled by the butting sentinels, the horned patriarchs of the flock, down a precipice of five or six hundred feet; so that unless impelled by extreme hunger, they never attack them, except in their more open pastures. As those ravenous creatures are dormant during the day, the deer are then partly secure. At night a straggler from the community is sure of his fate; as the jaguars hunt in packs, and are very quick-scented. One trait of the South American deer is worthy of notice. In Europe, a hunted deer is driven from amongst the herd, and abandoned to its fate; here, the guardians of the flock succour even a stranger of their community. I apprehend, that during the fawning season the females and fawns suffer more than the males, as the young are obliged to be deposited in thickets, and the eagle and vulture are always watching over head. The large brown snake is also a great destroyer of them, but the jaguar and wild-cat are their worst enemies. There are about four bucks to one doe, in the herd, which shows what destruction there must be of the latter. The colours of the deer are various, and mostly beautifully dipped upon yellow, white and dun. The stag is generally of a dusky brown. Hunting those animals is a source both of amusement and emolument to the Indian tribes in high latitudes, and they may be said to have brought it to high perfection. Having ascertained the haunts of the animals for about a week, the whole tribe assemble before day-break, some ascend the highest trees, to mark their progress; others crouch under leaves, so as to impound them when they betake themselves to their fastnesses; then the whole tribe, men, women, and boys, stretch over a vast extent of country, and, assisted by their curs

and horns, make every kind of hideous noises obliging them to quit their grazing spots while the dew is on the ground. As the deer assemble, they form in complete marching order, preceded by the elders or patriarchs, while the bucks of the second class bring up the rear, to protect the females and young, and repel any attacks. In this manner they arrive at their haunts; whilst the Indians, advancing in all directions, prevent their retreat, by closing up all the embouchures or openings, and while the deer are forming in battle array, prepare the instruments of destruction, viz. large lances, resinous torches, and nooses fixed to long poles. The women are also busy stuffing jaguar and tiger skins. The Indians having made proper crevices, dug into the grit and brown rock which form the paths, advance. The images of the wild beasts are now presented, to intimidate the deer from breaking, which the bucks no sooner perceive than they make a violent effort to strike them into the gulf,—their animosity to those beasts being such, that they often pass or leap over a man to get at them. The Indians then strike, and hurl them into the abyss below, where the women are ready to hamstring or disable them, before they recover from their stupor. When the hunters can no longer provoke them to rush on the stuffed tigers, &c., they make signals for those overhead to throw lighted flambeaux amongst them. This causes them to make a desperate effort to escape, and when the Indians have hurled a sufficient number down the precipices, they suffer the females and the fawns, and some of the bucks to escape. Indeed, they seem very much averse to destroying a doe at all, and always liberate the doe fawns. In those excursions they take on an average from four to five hundred. In taking the *Cervo Grande*, or Large Stag, they seldom get more than from thirty to fifty; but of the mountain-goat they catch an immense number; they enter the caverns in the rocks by night, and pursue them by torch-light; and frequently yoke a great many of them together alive, although the flesh loses its flavour from the effort to domesticate them, and they scarcely ever lose their native wildness. A full-grown fallow-deer could be bought at Valencia for seven pisettos, or about five shillings British. During the hunting season, the Creoles sometimes hunt, but the Indians are more expert.

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AN AFRICAN KING.

In the afternoon I was visited by the king, who was attended by a great number of eunuchs and a cavalcade of about a dozen horsemen. He was splendidly dressed in silk and velvet robes, and appeared to be a man of immense size. His countenance is by no means prepossessing, particularly his eyes, which are of a dirty red colour, having a sinister and foreboding expression. I presented him with a brass-mounted sword, an umbrella five feet in diameter, highly ornamented, a brace of pistols, and several other things, and then informed him through my interpreter that I had