

NATURAL HISTORY.

From Tiler's Natural History.

THE TIGER.

CONCLUDED.

THERE is now living in the village of Kildwich, in Craven, Yorkshire, a Mr. Turner, who at an early period of his life was in the East Indies, as a soldier in one of the regiments stationed there. When encamped at Ganjam, on the Malabar coast, he had a dreadful personal conflict with a huge tiger. With the particulars of the affray Mr. Turner himself has obligingly furnished us for this work. He is, probably, the only living instance of an individual encountering a tiger, under such circumstances, and remaining, as he certainly did, by the retreat of the enemy, master of the field.

On the day the regiment arrived at Ganjam, two men belonging to it, named Bateman and Murray, had gone upon a contiguous mountain without fire arms, and had been put into considerable consternation by a large black bear. The next morning they invited Mr. Turner to accompany them to the same place, and took with them two muskets and bayonets, with six rounds of ammunition, as a prudential defence against the dangers they might probably encounter. Having ascended the summit of the mountain, Mr. Turner perceived a small loose rock upon the edge of a lofty precipice, and tumbled it down, for the purpose of disturbing from their lurking places the wild and savage tenantry of the place. The result was immediately seen; for one of the party shouted out "a tiger! a tiger!" and fired upon it; when they all immediately recognized a large royal tiger, that turned his eyes upon his enemies, and paralyzed them with a dreadful roar, as he doubled the angle of the mountain in proceeding to his fair. This, unfortunately, lay directly upon the path by which they had ascended the mountain; and, being the only safe road by which they could descend the eminence, the tiger's position out of their retreat. Recovering a little from their consternation, Bateman and Murray proposed to attempt their escape in another direction; while Turner, more courageous, was for facing the foe, and offered to fire upon the tiger if his companions would load their pieces.—Mr. Turner had barely secured a favourable position for the attack, as his eye met that of the tiger, who, with an amazing bound and dreadful roar, sprang up the cliff to meet him. The assailant fired, and the tiger fell, tumbling down the rock he had ascended with so much agility; but, recovering himself, the monster made a second spring, with a roar of agonized fury, when he received Mr. Turner's second ball, which tumbled him again backwards. Thrice again the tiger returned to the charge more infuriated from the effects of each successive shot; when Mr. Turner's companions called out, that the ammunition was expended, and advised their escape by the back of the mountain. Against this he remonstrated, from his own perilous position, and urged them to stand by him; but they were deaf to all remonstrance, and disgracefully left him to the fury of the tiger, whose near approach was announced by a roar more terrific than any he had previously uttered. Mr. Turner had but a moment to place himself in a posture of defence, when the infuriated animal sprang at him, and received the bayonet into his chest, up to the muzzle of the musket. In the attempt to disengage the bayonet from the tiger's chest, however, it unfortunately became separated from the musket, which Mr. Turner instantly clubbed, and, with every energy that fear and courage could supply, he struck the tiger with such force as slightly to fracture his skull; whilst the firelock was broken, by the blow, into three pieces.

Up to that moment the hardy soldier had not received a single scratch, though he had inflicted many severe wounds upon his adversary; but his present position was the extreme of peril, being unarmed and completely defenceless before an enraged tiger, whose wounds appeared to make him the more dreadfully infuriate. The tiger sprang at the head of his victim, and immediately brought him to the ground, and seizing Mr. Turner by the right shoulder, he lifted him from the ground with a furious shake, tearing his body across the loins, from side to side. In a very short period thirty-three wounds were inflicted upon the body of Mr. Turner, whilst his garments, which were a sort of undress of light calico, were torn to shreds and drenched in blood; indeed, all that remained of his dress upon the mangled body, were the waistband of the pantaloons and the collar of his shirt. Though thus dreadfully mutilated, shaken, and torn by the savage beast, Mr. Turner had the presence of mind to fix his grasp in a wound, which one of the musket balls had made in the neck of the tiger, and tore out a quantity of ragged flesh from the interior of the wound. From the pain thus inflicted upon the tiger, he uttered a tremendous roar, which was distinctly heard into the camp, a mile distant, and then took his departure.

For some moments Mr. Turner lay upon the rock insensible; but a voice from two Europeans, exclaiming, "Turner's killed?" roused him, and, jumping upon his feet, he cried out, "I am worth twenty dead

men yet!" Being taken into the camp, his wounds were carefully examined and dressed, and happily pronounced not mortal.—The result justified the decision; for, by careful treatment, Mr. Turner so far recovered as to be able to revisit the scene of the battle in about a month from the period when it took place. The dead body of the tiger was found, the morning after the affray, upon the bank of a small rivulet, whither he had gone to quench his thirst. Mr. Turner very naturally observes, that the recollection of this perilous conflict, though more than thirty years have now rolled over since its occurrence, is still frequently attended with mingled emotions of wonder and terror.

The above painfully interesting narrative elicits one fact, of considerable importance, in the natural history of the tiger—that he is not so cowardly a creature as writers of natural history love to represent him; especially in comparison with the lion. The lion himself could not have shown more courage, and he might not have displayed so much, as did the tiger on this occasion, when there was every opportunity to escape.

In most cases the tiger is easily terrified by any sudden opposition from human beings. A party of pleasure in the country, in India, were once saved from a tiger, by a lady suddenly opening an umbrella, as she saw him about to spring.—The animal shrank back in fear, and disappeared in the forest, thus leaving the affrighted company in safety.

Before the natural history of the tiger was so well known, it was supposed to be perfectly untameable. That, as well as many other suppositions, more intimate acquaintance with its character has proved to be incorrect. Kind treatment can tame the most indomitable creatures; as is seen by the operations of divine love and grace on that savage creature—man.

Though the tiger is not mentioned in the scriptures, the leopard is frequently noticed there.—We presume from that circumstance, as well as from the known haunts of the tiger, that it was a stranger in the Holy Land, and in countries adjoining Palestine.

There are many other species of this interesting tribe; but as the habits of all are so much alike, the specimens we have given are a sufficient introduction to the whole family.

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