

which has given a rattle to the most dangerous of serpents to announce its approach, has also given to wild animals eyes that glisten in the night, and roaring voices to proclaim their attack.'

This assertion was far from agreeable, but the danger was still distant; the moment had not yet come when thirst makes those animals forget the involuntary dread which they have of the presence of man. All was again quiet in the woods, whose gloomy depths were thrown into shadow by the moonlight. The Canadian had risen from the grass, and leaned drowsily against the tree, smoking a short pipe, with his rifle between his knees. I had learned enough of the course of the stars to know that the hour was at hand for which we had so long been watching. Bermudes again spoke:—'It is time now to think of you,' he said. 'Do you not perceive that the silence becomes more and more profound around us, and that the odour of the plants has almost changed? Under the influence of the night they exhale a new perfume. When you have lived longer in the desert, you will learn that each hour of the day, as well as of the night, has its peculiar signification. At each hour, as one voice becomes silent, another makes itself heard. At present ferocious beasts salute the darkness, as tomorrow the birds will salute the dawn. We are near the hour when man loses the imposing influence of his look—at night his eye becomes dim, while that of wild animals brightens and pierces the deepest gloom: man is the king of day, but the jaguar is king of darkness.'

After uttering these words with a grave emphasis, the hunter rose, and fetching a bundle from the place where it had been deposited, unrolled two sheepskins covered with their wool, and, drawing his knife from its sheath, observed, 'You see your arms!'

'And what, in the name of wonder, do you expect me to do with that?' I inquired. 'I hoped at least for a rifle.'

Bermudes proceeded to explain that, on such an occasion, a rifle could be intrusted to those only who were sure of their aim. 'You will roll these skins round your left arm,' he continued, 'and take the knife in your right hand; then you put your right knee to the ground, and rest your protected arm upon the left knee. In this manner the arm defends your head and body, while your stomach will be shielded by the knee; for tigers have an ugly habit of trying to disembowel their enemy with a stroke of their paw. If you are attacked, you present your arm, and while the animal's tusks are buried in the wood, you rip him up from flank to shoulder with one plunge of the knife.'

'All that appears to me incontestable,' was my answer; 'but I would rather hope that two hunters such as you will not miss your tiger. For my part, I shall hunt, as you call it, with my hands in my pockets; that will be more original.'

Failing the armour of sheepskins, the hunter urged me to take the knife, which I accepted. The two associates then primed their rifles, and we waited without exchanging a word. The lower part of the forest was now in profound darkness, while the little space around the fountain was brilliantly illuminated. We were sheltered by the drooping branches of a large mangrove, forming a kind of natural arch. Twenty paces in front reclined the colt, whose instinct was to be the hunters' guide. Presently I saw the animal raise its head with evident signs of uneasiness, which were soon after succeeded by broken cries of terror, and efforts to escape from its fastenings. These attempts being useless, it remained

trembling in every limb: a breath of terror seemed to pervade the atmosphere. All at once a cavernous roar from the neighboring heights pealed in echoes through the woods; the colt hid its head in the grass. A deep silence followed: the two hunters crept from the shelter, and I heard the double click as they cocked their rifles.

An instant after, a terrible roar again burst upon our ears: a form of light color darted through the air upon the colt, which had crouched down in terror: there was a noise of crashing bones, followed instantaneously by the report of Bermudes's rifle.

'Your knife!' he cried to his companion, who was preparing to fire. 'Look up; that is for you!'

I turned my eyes in the direction indicated by Matasiete, as he took the Canadian's knife. High up among the branches of the cedar I saw two large eye-balls shining like burning coals, watching all our movements: it was the second jaguar, whose tail was lashing the foilage, and beating off the dried moss from the branches in showers. The Canadian stood motionless, with his eye fixed upon the two fierce-gleaming lights in the tree. Meantime the wounded jaguar sprang at one leap close to Bermudes, where the moonlight showed the furious animal. The blood was streaming from one of his legs, shattered by the ball. Collecting himself for a last rush, the animal lowered his head, beat the air, and howled in fury; his blazing eyes seemed to expand to twice their ordinary size. Bermudes stood, self-possessed, on the defensive, holding his knife forwards. At length the tiger leaped; but his muscles were weakened by the wound, and the hunter, stepping aside, buried his knife in the monster's heart as he fell: there was a terrible yell—a struggle of agony—and then all was over.

'Whether or no,' exclaimed the brave Matasiete, 'there is a skin badly torn, to say nothing of my own,' at the same time showing his arm lacerated by a long gash. He had scarcely finished, when a second roar was heard in the direction of the cedar; it was answered by the report of a rifle; a noise of rending branches, followed by a heavy fall, announced the skill of a practised marksman. The Canadian had aimed between the glowing eyes. When the two hunters, going round to the other side of the spring, had found the body, their shouts of triumph gave me to understand that the Canadian's accurate eye had not been deceived. It was not without a feeling of compassion that I approached another victim of the slayers and slain—the dead colt. The poor animal lay stretched upon the grass; a bleeding wound at the back of the head, and another on his nose, showed where the tiger's claws had fallen; the complete fracture of the vertebrae of the neck proved death to have been instantaneous. Already cold and rigid, the first jaguar lay near: I measured it with my eye, but at a distance, when the two others arrived dragging the female, whose skull had been shattered by the ball: this time, at least, the skin was unbroken.

Bermudes complimented me on my courage, in what he persisted in calling tiger-hunting. I, however, disclaimed anything like bravery. The hunters seemed disposed to pass the night near the boot which they had so well earned; and preferring the open air to my close chamber, I agreed to keep them company if they would light a fire. My wish was soon gratified; we stretched ourselves on the moss near the blazing wood, and before many minutes had elapsed, were sound asleep.

On awakening the next morning, I found

the two companions with their shirt sleeves tucked up to the elbows, and stained arms, busily engaged in flaying the two jaguars. When they had completed their task, which was performed with the dexterity acquired by long practice in similar operations, they threw the skins over their shoulders, and we all took the way to our original quarters, where our arrival was hailed with prolonged congratulations. Bermudes and his comrade received the usual reward of ten dollars each skin; and the 'Killer-of-Seven' would now have to add another number to his surname.

#### A CAPITAL ANECDOTE.

'Several years ago the—th Regiment, U. S. Regulars were quartered at A—, near Niagara Falls. Among the privates of the gallant Regiment was B—, a tall, lank, red-haired Vermonter, who was always in some scrape or other. One day he obtained leave to take a day's shooting on the Canada side. He went early in the morning, and hunted all day with very poor success. Late in the afternoon he was slowly wending his way home ill pleased with his success, when he saw seated on a tree within easy shooting distance a large crow. To level his gun and fire was the impulse of a moment, and down tumbles the crow almost at his feet. Now it happened that the crow was a tame one, and a pet of General C— who was one of the wealthiest landowners in C—, and who owned the property on which B— stood. And it so happened that the General was an unseen witness of the death of his favorite. Enraged at the loss he determined to punish the offender in a manner that he would be likely to remember. So coming forward in a friendly manner, he nodded to B—, who saluted him in return.

'You've got a fine gun there,' said the General.

'Yaas,' said B—, handing it to the General, 'that's just the neatest double-barrelled gun around these diggins.'

The General turned the gun round and examined it carefully, then putting the barrel that was still loaded at full cock to his shoulder, and pointing it at B—, said:

'You have wilfully shot the greatest favourite I had and now you've got to eat it!'

'B—, explained, and begged, and prayed, but to no purpose; the General was unmoved by his entreaties, and told him he must eat or die. B— once more turned his eye piteously toward the General, but the cold, wicked eye glancing along the gun-barrel convinced him (as he afterwards said) that there was fire in it. So with a groan he picked up the crow and shutting his eyes commenced his disagreeable meal. He worried down three or four mouthfuls, and then stopped, unable to eat any more of the disgusting carrion; and the General, thinking he had gone far enough, told him that would do; and after advising him to be more careful in future what he shot, handed him his gun and told him he could go. As soon as B— got his gun in his hand he turned fiercely upon the General.'

'It's my turn now! You eat the remainder of the crow!'

In vain the General stamped, and swore, and finally prayed to be let off. B— was as firm as he himself had been a few minutes before. Nothing would satisfy the enraged soldier but that the General should eat the whole of what was left, and which he had to do before B— let him off.

The next day the General went up to B—'s Colonel, and complained that he had been grossly insulted by one of his soldiers the day previously.