

halling in one of its forks, he lumps his back, bushes his hair, bows downward with gleaming eyes, and utters a sound somewhat like the purring of a cat, though far louder. The crack of the hunter's rifle usually puts an end to these demonstrations, and the cougar drops to the ground either dead or wounded. It only the latter, a desperate fight ensues, between him and the dog, with several of whom he usually leaves a mark that distinguishes them from the rest of their lives.

The scream of the cougar is a common phrase. It is not very certain that the creature is addicted to screaming although noises of this kind heard in the nocturnal forest have been attributed to him. Hunters, however, have certainly never heard him, and they believe that the scream talked about proceeds from one of the numerous species of owls that inhabit the deep forests of America. At short intervals, the cougar does make himself heard in a note when somewhat resembles a deep-drawn sigh, or as if one were to utter with an extremely guttural expression the syllables: 'Co-oa,' or even 'Cougar.' Is it from this that he derives his trivial name?

Some years ago, while residing in Louisiana, I was told a squatter's story, which I have reason to believe to be true in every particular. I had it from the squatter himself, and that is my reason for endorsing its truth, as I knew the narrator, and creature though he was, to be a man of undoubted veracity. As an incident of hunter-life, the story may possess some interest for the general reader; but to the naturalist it will be equally interesting, as illustrating a curious trait in the character of the cougar, as well as other preying animals, when under the influence of fear—the fear of some common danger. These lose at all times their ferocity, and will not molest even those animals upon which they are accustomed to prey. I have observed this forbearance often times myself, but the story of the squatter will fully illustrate it. I shall give it in the language that fell from his own lips as nearly as I can remember it:—

'Wal, stranger, we hev floods lyur in Loopyanny, sich as I guess, you've never seed the like o' in England. England ain't big enough to hev sich floods. One o' em ud kiver yur whole country, I hev heern said. I won't say that ar's true, as I ain't acquainted with yur jography. I know howsomdever, the're mighty big freshets lyur, as I sated a shirk more'n a hundred mile across one o' em, whar that war'n't nothin' to be seen but cypress tops peepin' out o' the water. The floods, as ye know, come in every year, but them ar big ones only once in a while. Wal, about ten years ago, I located in the Red River bottom, about fifty mile or ther about below Nacatoosh, whar I built me a shanty. I hed left my wife an' two young critters in Mississippi state, intendin to go back to 'em in the spring, so, ye see, I war all alone by meself, exceptin' my ole mare, a Collins's axe an' o' coorie my rifle.

'I hed finished the shanty all but the chickin' on the buildin' o' a chimney, when what shed come on but one o' em terration floods. It war a big one, when it began to make its appearance. I war asleep on the floor o' the shanty, an' the next mornin' I hed o' it war the feel o' the water sinkin' through my ole blanket. I had been a-dreamin', an' thort it war rainin', and then agin I thort that I war bein' drowned in the Mississippi; but I want many seconds awoke, till I gossed what it war in reality, so I jumped to my feet like a started buck, an' groped my way to the door. A sight that war when I got thar, I hed cleared a piece o' ground around the shanty—a kuppel o' acres or better—I hed left the shanty a good three feet high; thar war't a sump to be seen. My clarin', stumps an' all, war under water; an' I could see it shinin' among the trees all round the shanty. Of course my first thoughts war about my rifle; an' I

turned back into the shanty, an' laid my claws upon that quick enough. I next went in search o' my ole mar. She war'n't hard to find; for if ever a critter made a noise, she did. She war tied to a tree close by the shanty, an' the way she war a squatin' war a caution to cats. I found her up to the belly in water, pitchin' an' flounderin' all round the tree. She had nothin' on but the rope that she war hitched by. Both saddle an' bridle hed been washed away; so I made the rope into a sort o' halter, an' mounted her barebacked. Jest then I began to think whar I war a-goin'. The hul country appeared under water, an' the nearest neighbor I hed lived across the parairy ten miles off. I knew that his shanty sot on high ground, but how war I to get thar? It war night, I mout lose my way, and ride chuck into the river. When I thort o' that, I concluded it mout be better to stay at my own shanty till mornin'. I could hitch the mar inside to keep her from boin' floated away, an' for meself, I could climb on the roof. Howsomdever, while I war thinkin' on this, I noticed that the water war a-deepenin', an' it jest kum into my head, that it ud soon be deep enough to drown my ole mare. For meself I war'n't frightened. I mout a clomb a tree, an' stayed-thar till the flood fell; but I shed a lost the mar, an' that critter war too vallyable to think o' sich a sacryfize; so I made up my mind to chance crossin' the parairy. Thar war'n't no time to be wasted—me'era minnit; so I gin the mar a kick or two in the ribs, an' started.

'I found the path out to the edge of the parairy easy enough. I hed blazed it when I fust come to the place; an', as the night war not a very dark one, I could see the blazes as I passed between the trees. My mar knew the track as well as meself, an' swalttered through at a sharp rate, for she knew too thar war'n't no time to be wasted. In five minutes we kim out on the edge o' the parairy, an' jest as I expected the hul thing war kivered with water; an' lookin' like a big pond. I could see it shinin' clear across to the other side o' the openin'. As luck ud hev it, I could jest git a glimpse o' the trees on the fur side o' the parairy. Thar war a big clump o' cypress, that I could see plain enough; so I knew this war close to my neighbor's shanty; so I gin my critter the switch, an' struck right for it. As I left the timber, the mar war up to her hips. Of course, I expected a good grist o' heavy waddin', but I hed no idee that the water war a-gwine to git much higher; thar's whar I made my mistake. I hedn't got more'n a kuppel o' miles out, when I diskivered that the thung war a-risin' rapidly, for I seed the mar war a-gettin' deeper an' deeper. Twan't no use turnin' back now. I ud lose the mar to a dead certainty, if I didn't make the high ground; so I spoke to the critter to do her best, an' kep on. The poor best dedn't need any whippin'—she knew as well as I did meself thar war danger, an' she war a doin' her darndest, an' no mistake. Still the water riz, an' kep a-risin', until it come clear up to her shoulders. I begun to get skeart in earnest. We war'n't more a half across, an' I seed if it riz much more we ud hev to swim for it. I war'n't far astray about that. The minit arter it seemed to deepen suddin', as if thar war a hollow in the parairy. I heerd the mar give a loud goof, an' then go down, till I war up to the waist. She riz agin the next minit, but I could tell from the smooth ridin' that she war off the bottom. She war swimmin'; an' no mistake.

'At fust I thort o' headin' her back to the shanty; an' I drew her round with that intent; but turn her, which way I would, I found she could no longer touch bottom, I guess; stranger I war in a quandairy about then. I gin to think that both my own an' my mar's time war come in earnest, for I hed no idee that the critter could iver swim to the other side, specially with me on her back, an' particularly as at that time these hyer ribs had a sight more griskin' upon 'em than they hev now. I want much under two hundred at the time, an' thar ar no light weight I reckon. Wall I war about reckonin' up, I hed got to thinkin' o' Mary an' the childer, and the old shanty in the Mississippi, an' a heap o' things that I had left unsettled, an' that now come into my head to trouble me. The mar war still pluggin' ahead; but I seed

she war sinkin' deeper an' deeper, an' fust loosin' her strength, an' I know she couldn't hold out much longer. I thort at this time that if I got off o' her back, an' tuk hold o' the tail she mout manage a little better. So I slipped backwards over her hips, an' gruppel the long hair. It did do some good, for she swum higher; but we got mighty slow through the water, an' I had but little hopes we should reach land.

'I war towed in this way about a quarter o' a mile, when I spied somethin' floatin' on the water a leetle ahead. It hed growed considerably darker; but thar war still light enough to show me that the thung war a log. An' indee now I entered my brain-pan, that I mout save meself by takin' to the log. The mar ud then have a better chance for herself; an' maybe when casc'd o' draggin' my carcass, that war a-keepin' her back, she mout make footin' somehow. So I waited till she got a little closer; an' then, lettin' go o' her tail, I clasped the log, an' crawled on to it. The mar swum on apparently 'thout miskin' me. I seed her disappear through the darkness; but I didn't as much as say good-by to her, for I war afraid that my voice might bring her back agin, an' she mought strike the log with her hoofs, an' whammel it about. So I lay quiet, an' let her hev her own way.

'I want' long on the log till I seed it war a-driftin', for thar war a current in the water that set to blo sharp across the parairy. I had crawled up at one end, an' got stridelegs; but as the log dipped considerable, I war still over the hams in the water. I thort I mout be more comfortable towards the middle, an' war about to pull the thung more under me, when all at once I seed thar war somethin' clumped up on t'other end o' the log. Twan't very clear at the time, for it had been a-growin' cloudier ever since I left the shanty, but twar clear enough to show me that the thung war a varmint: y hat sort. I couldn't tell. It mout be a bar, an' it mout not; but I had my suspects it war cyther a bar or a painter. I want' left long in doubt about the thing's gender. The log kep making circles as it drifted, an' when the varmint kim round into a different light, I caught a glimpse o' its eyes. I knew them eyes to be no bar's eyes; they war painter's eyes, an' no mistake. I reckon, stranger, I felt very queery jest about then. I didn't try to go any nearer the middle o' the log; but instead o' that, I wriggled back until I war right plum on the end of it, an' could git no further. Thar I sot for a good long spell 'thout movin' hand or foot. I darn't make a motion, as I war afraid it mout tempt the varmint to attack me. I hed no wecpun but my knife; I had let go o' my rifle when I slid from my mar's back, an' it had gone to the bottom long since. I want' in any condition to stand a tussle with the painter now; so I war determined to let him alone as long's he ud me.

'Wal, we drifted on for a good hour, I guess, 'thout cyther o' us stirrin'. We sot face to face; an' now an' then the current ud set the log in a sort o' up an' down motion, an' then the painter an' I kept bowin' to each other like a pair o' bob-sawyers. I could see all the while that the varmint's eyes war fixed upon mine, an' I never tuk mine from his'n; I know'd twar the only way to keep him still.

'I war jest prospectin' what ud be the endin' o' the business, when I seed wo war a-gettin' closer to the timmer; twan't more than two miles off, but twar all under water 'ceptin' the tops o' the trees. I war thinkin' that when the log shed float in among the branches, I mout slip off, an' git my claws upon a tree, 'thout sayin' to my travellin' companion. Jest at that minit somethin' appeared dead ahead o' the log—It war like a island, but what could hev brought a island thar? Then I recollects that I hed seed a piece o' high ground about that part o' the prairy—a sort o' mound that hed been made by Injuns, I s'pose. This, then, that looked like a island, war the top o' that mound, sure enough. The log war a-driftin' in sich away that I seed it mout pass within twenty yards o' the mound. I determined then, as soon as we shed git alongside, to put out for it, an' leave the painter to continue his voyage 'thout me.

'When I fust sighted the island I seed somethin' that I hed tuk for bushes. But thar war'n't no bushes on the mound—thar I know'd: How-