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A caravan in the forest attacked by fierce buffaloes

WHEN MAN MEETS THE BEAST

WHAT happens when an unarmed man meets a lion? Man has conquered the world and mastered the beast, but still there are times, in these days of travel and exploration, when men come suddenly upon the path of a wild beast. In some parts of the earth wild life still lives on the edge of civilisation, and fierce animals, whose ancestors the early men fought, still stand in the path to challenge man if he dares to invade the forest and the plain.

Europe, in places, still teems with wolves; the tiger roams from India to Manchuria; the lion lords it over a great part of Africa; the leopard is feared and hated alike in Africa and India; America has the deadly jaguar and puma; bears inhabit both the Old World and the New. A man unarmed in the wilderness today is as helpless against these savage creatures as his forefathers were. Firearms are our greatest protection.

India has a terrible death-roll every year as the result of the war of the tiger upon mankind. The natives are naturally timid, a fact that the tiger soon learns. Many tribes believe that a human soul is imprisoned in the body of the tiger, and this makes them more than ever unwilling to slay their deadly enemy. A belief of this sort is, as we all know, very old. A tiger does not attack human beings from the beginning of its career. Many a tiger goes through life without killing a man. Some

take naturally to the crime, but generally there is some sort of cause for it. Perhaps the tiger, coming out in the evening when a native is driving cattle home, attempts to seize a cow or a calf. The native seeks to drive it away, and the tiger kills him at a blow. At once its fear of man is gone. It finds him the easiest of all creatures to kill, and from that time human beings are its prey.

Now, in Africa, when a lion takes to eating men, the more warlike tribes sally out in a great hunting party, and kill the enemy, though they may have to sacrifice several lives of men in the attempt. The native of India, however, is of different temperament. Unless some European comes along with a gun, he will tamely submit to the frightful work of the tiger, so that one tiger has been known to kill over a hundred people in one district.

Even with the best of firearms, man is often no match for the tiger, which is in many respects an enemy to man more to be feared than the lion. Though without such a fine armour of defence as the lion has in its shaggy mane and collar, the tiger has a more powerful jaw, and even a more terrible grip than the king of beasts; and the horror of an encounter with a tiger is heightened by the swiftness with which the creature acts.

The suddenness of a tiger's attack is, however, trying to the nerves of the bravest man. Sir Edward Bradford,

who lived to tell the story of his adventure at the table of King Edward and to command the police of London, had a horrifying experience of the speed with which a tiger, from being hunted, becomes the hunter. A tiger which he had been stalking was wounded, and crept along the dry bed of a river. Sir Edward sought to get down to the same level, but lost sight of the animal as it went round a rock. The tiger had, however, climbed up an unseen cattle-track, and, on reaching his level, charged furiously at Sir Edward, who tried to shoot the animal dead. Then a most unhappy thing occurred: a twig from an overhanging tree caught the trigger, and prevented the gun from firing.

A MAN IN A TIGER'S GRIP

The tiger seized Sir Edward by the left arm, and pulled him down and lay on him. The brave man had nerve enough to lie perfectly still, in order that one of his men, armed with a gun, might approach and fire, killing the brute as it lay upon him. Sir Edward lost his left arm below the elbow, but he was so keenly anxious to save his life at all costs that he did not feel the least twinge of pain. The mind in such a moment is so active in inventing ways of escape that it rises superior to physical suffering. It may not be so in every case, of course, but we know from many instances that this merciful provision of Nature is not uncommon.

This same merciful unconsciousness of pain was experienced by Livingstone, who had one of his arms badly bitten by a lion, yet felt nothing of it at the time. His brain was working so hard at a plan of escape that there was no room for thought of pain. Experiences like these and close observation of battles between animals have made careful thinkers believe that Nature is not so cruel as some people have thought; that animals killed by other animals do not suffer in their death conflict, but lose their lives in a painless struggle.

THE MAN WHO TOLD A LION TO STOP

But, whatever the facts may be, the terror of a conflict with a wild animal is hideous enough to make us pity the man who must endure it. A lion met by daylight is never so terrible as if encountered at night. A man of good nerve may get the better of lions when

the sun is up, without firing a shot. Lord Randolph Churchill rode into a troop of seven lions, but they did not attack him. Another man was charged by a lioness which had been injured, and was, therefore, doubly savage. He had not time to reload his gun, but he stood still and faced the charging beast. He cried in a loud voice to her, "Halloo, there, steady, steady!" The lioness slackened her pace, puzzled, and a little alarmed. She was not used to the human voice, particularly a voice used in a tone of command. She came on again, however, and this time the man flung his arms above his head, and shouted still louder and still more firmly. This completely upset the lioness's nerve, and, instead of springing on the man, she stopped, and allowed him slowly to retreat, when she turned tail and disappeared.

There is another story of the way in which a hunter met a troop of lions when his gun was empty. The only thing handy was his telescope, and he flung this with all his might at the lions, yelling at the same time at the top of his voice. A cat will flee from the garden if we pretend to throw a stone at him, and these big cats in the African wilds were no more courageous. At the sight of the flying telescope they fled. To see a man throw a thing is probably to an animal like some terrible magic.

A MAN WHO WAS TAKEN IN HIS SLEEP

But men do not often escape so lightly as this. A lion once jumped into an encampment, and seized a sleeping man. His cries aroused other men, and the lion was beaten off; but two or three hours later the lion crept silently back to the tent, and carried the man off, his comrades being unable to rescue him. The poor man was an English official who had been journeying to Uganda, where the lion has played sad havoc with human life.

Great Britain spent six years in building a railway through Uganda. The railway begins at Mombasa, on the coast, and ends 584 miles inland, at the great lake Victoria Nyanza. It runs through the heart of the wilds, where lions and leopards and other ferocious animals abound. It was a strange picture, the coming of this railway into this dark, mysterious land, where the conditions of life had scarcely changed since the dawn of creation.

TRAVELLERS IN THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD



A POLAR BEAR DEFENDING ITS YOUNG AGAINST ARMED TRAVELLERS IN GREENLAND



THE TERRIBLE SPRING OF THE LION UPON ITS PREY

IN THE PATH OF THE RHINOCEROS



THE END OF A BLACK RHINOCEROS, WHICH CAN GALLOP LIKE A HORSE



THE GREAT WHITE RHINOCEROS CHARGING A PARTY OF TRAVELLERS

animal, ready to use its powerful jaws and claws with terrible effect. As a rule, leopards do not eat human beings—they are content to kill them; but once they begin this frightful pursuit, they are as much to be dreaded in Asia and Africa as the worst of man-eating tigers and lions. Not long ago two friends were sitting with a dog in an East African farmhouse at night, when a monster leopard sprang through the open window. Dazzled by the light in the room, it tried to make its way through the doorway, but managed, unfortunately, to shut the door instead. Then the leopard turned upon the farmer, and, knocking from his hand a chair which he had picked up, dealt him a blow on the scalp.

The poor man had no firearms ready, and could only fight with his fists. This had little effect, but the farmer's dog rushed to his assistance, and boldly attacked the leopard, driving it towards the door, which the farmer had now managed to open. Feeling a draught of cold air rush in, the leopard sprang for the opening, and bolted out of the room, with the dog still hanging to its leg. Outside the house the wild animal must have given the tame one a bad shaking, for the dog raced back into the farm, hurt, but proud that it had saved its master, who was in time completely cured of his wounds.

JAGUARS, PUMAS, AND SHARKS

The jaguar and the puma are to America what leopards are to Asia and Africa. The jaguar is merciless to human beings, killing where it does not need food. Its terrible ferocity was proved at Santa, a town in America. Into this centre of civilisation a jaguar strolled one evening, and walked into an open church. Presently a priest made his way in, and was immediately killed. A second priest went to seek him, and he, too, was killed. A third priest followed, but he, by rushing from pillar to pillar, managed to avoid the spring of the jaguar, and made his way to the door. Banging it behind him, he escaped, and gave the alarm. Part of the roof of the church was removed, and through the opening men were able to shoot the cruel beast within.

Jaguars and pumas are the worst animal foes of farmers on the American continent, for these great cats cause terrible destruction among horses and cattle. Long, long ago, South America

had native horses, but when the first Europeans landed in the country there was not a horse to be seen in the land. It is now thought that the jaguar and puma were responsible for the destruction of the early American horses. Horses were wild in those days, and so did not have the protection of men.

A MAN'S FIGHT WITH A CROCODILE IN AN AFRICAN RIVER

In the water the animal most feared by man is the shark, but there is a fresh-water creature much more terrible than the shark, and that is the crocodile, which, when its victim struggles, swoops down upon him with a rush, and seizes him with its frightful jaws. It is not often that an unarmed man escapes from such an encounter, but one scarred native of Northern Nigeria lives to boast of a victory over a crocodile. He was the servant of an Englishman, and one night fell overboard from a boat into the river. Being a powerful swimmer he was able almost to reach the shore, but just as he gained shallow water a huge crocodile seized him by the legs. With a convulsive kick, the man freed his legs, but the monster fastened its jaws upon his head.

There was a frantic struggle. The crocodile was hungry and fierce, but the native saved himself by remembering an old lesson. He groped for the eyes of the crocodile, and managed to thrust his thumbs into them. The crocodile instantly let go, and the man then dragged himself ashore. He was found in the morning, and taken to a hospital. After he was cured the brave man travelled in search of his master, found him, and re-entered his service. He took with him a precious trophy, six teeth of the crocodile, which had broken off in the struggle, and became fixed in his scalp.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE EARLY MEN

Struggles of this kind still happen from time to time in various parts of the world which civilisation has not yet conquered. They give us an idea of what must have happened in the days when the first men fought with beasts for life upon the earth. The nature of wild beasts has not changed, nor has their strength weakened. Man is lord of earth by the power of his brain, which has enabled him to make weapons more deadly than the brute force with which he is still compelled at times to do battle.