

ALLIGATORS ON THE GANGES.

The bank of the Ganges opposite Monghyr has not the least pretensions to beauty; its low, flat, swampy shores, intersected with reedy inlets, are the haunts of multitudes of alligators, which in the hot seasons may be seen sunning themselves by the side of the huge ant hills erected upon the sand banks, appearing above the surface of the water. Some of these animals attain a prodigious size; they are exceedingly difficult to kill, in consequence of the adamantine armor in which the greater part of their bodies are cased. Even when the balls penetrate less guarded points, they are so tenacious of life as to cause a great deal of trouble before they can finally be dispatched. One which had received eight balls, and was supposed to be dead, after having been tied to the bamboo of a budgegaw for a whole day, exhibited in the evening, so much strength and fierceness, as to be a dangerous neighbor. Many of these monsters are fifteen feet long, and swim fearlessly past the boats, lifting up their terrific heads, and raising their dark bodies from the water as they glide along. Though not so frequently as in former times, when the echoes of the river were less disturbed by the report of fire-arms, natives are still the victims of that species of alligator, which lies in wait for men and animals, venturing too near their haunts. In many that have been killed the silver ornaments that have been worn by women and children, have been found, a convincing proof of the fearful nature of their prey. An alligator, it is said, will sometimes plunge amidst a group of bathers at a ghaut, and singling out one of the party, dart into the middle of the stream, defying pursuit by the rapidity of its movements against the current, through which it will fly with the velocity of an arrow, and having reached deep water, it sinks with its victim into the abyss of the river. Sportsmen, the younger portion especially, delight in waging war against these giants of the stream, as they lie wallowing in the mud in shallow places, and presenting the defenceless part of their bodies to marksmen. In the Sunderbuns, where the creeks and natural canals of the Ganges wind through the forests, whose margin almost mingles with the stream, alligators are sometimes engaged in deadly encounter with the tiger. A battle of this kind, witnessed by a missionary, is described to have been a drawn one, for, although the tiger succeeded in drawing his unwieldy adversary into a jungle, after an hour or two the alligator was seen to emerge and regain the water, not very materially injured by the conflict it had sustained.

A DANGEROUS SITUATION.

When passing near the Riet river gate, and while our oxen were grazing, Van Wyk, the colonist, related to us the following interesting circumstance: "It is now," he said, "more than two years since, in the very place where we stand, I ventured to take one of the most daring shots that ever was hazarded. My wife was sitting inside the house, near the door, the children were playing about her, and I was without, near the house, busied in doing something to a wagon, when suddenly, though it was mid-day, an enormous lion appeared, came up, and laid himself down in the shade, upon the threshold of the door. My wife, either frozen with fear, or aware of the danger attending any attempt to fly, remained motionless in her place, while the children took refuge in her lap. The cry they uttered attracted my attention, and I hastened towards the door; but my astonishment may be well conceived, when I found the entrance to be barred in such a way.

Although the animal had not seen me, unarmed as I was, escape seemed impossible, yet I glided gently, scarcely knowing what I meant to do, to the side of the house, up to the window of my chamber, where I knew my loaded gun was standing.

By a most fortunate chance I had set it in the corner close to the window, so that I could reach it with my hand; for as you may perceive, the opening is too small to admit of my having got in; and still more fortunately, the door of the room was open, so that I could see the whole danger of the scene.

The lion was beginning to move, perhaps with the intention of making a spring. There was no longer time to think; I called softly to the mother not to be alarmed, and invoking the name of the Lord, fired my piece. The ball passed over my boy's head, and lodged in the forehead of the lion, immediately above his eyes, which shot forth as sparks of fire, and stretched him on the ground, so that he never stirred more.

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