

THE MAN EATER.

Years ago when I was younger than now I was in a foreign country roughing it with my rifle for a companion, and the wild-woods for my home, except when I chanced to stop among the natives.

One day I had been rambling alone through the forest and tangled undergrowth in search of game until I was hot and weary, - finally I chanced to come out upon the sea when the sun was sinking in the west. Just below me on the beach an old tree seemed to have been washed up upon the shore and jutting out from it was a long, low, dry sand bar running out in the sea for a quarter of a mile or more, and connected to the beach by a narrow neck but little higher than the water. The sea was perfectly calm, and lay like a great sheet of glass, only that here and there over its surface light ripples showed signs of a passing breeze. The old tree trunk offering a seat for a quiet rest lured me to the spot and I sat down leaning my repeating rifle on the projecting roots, which furnished a lazy back to my seat, and threw off my heavy hunting belt.

Here it was decidedly an element of safety to have the rifle always at hand, for dangerous animals might be met at any moment. After sitting drowsily for sometime enjoying the very slight breeze that cooled my heated brow, and the tranquil afternoon stillness I noticed some curious little fish ~~which were watching me~~ ~~and I noticed that they~~

fish playing in the shallow water on the sands almost at my feet

After watching them ~~then~~ for a moment I discovered that they had run out into this shallow water to escape some larger fish that were lurking just beyond. Then I fell to musing on the wonderful ways of nature - the strong continually feeding on the weak and ever and anon the weak overcoming the strong by force of numbers - nature's peace is continuous war-

As I looked again at the little fish my attention was attracted to other tiny creatures along the margin of the sand, and a little further out was a cluster of curiously marked algae growing and among this ~~there~~ there seemed to ~~be~~ be some form of animal or fish life that was strange to me. I went to it and as I approached all was still. I ~~stopped~~ stooped down to examine the growth, - wondering what had become of the creatures I had seen moving above- and found that on the bottom were numerous very large ~~Hydra~~ *Hydra fusca* spreading their tiny arms about and collecting infusoria that were swimming through the water. As I got down close to see better I found that ~~the~~ there were many varieties of these, large enough to be made out with the naked eye and numerous others were brought in sight by my pocket lense. ~~Becoming interested in the~~ Becoming interested in the curious little beings, especially in the appearance of so many strange forms, I moved on from place to place examining the bottom and the varied forms of minute life, animal and vegetable, in which the sand bank was unus-

Suddenly Parrot

usually rich, ~~Suddenly I started~~, from bending over the margin of the water with a sense of impending danger and, on the beach was crouched a tawny beast almost as large as a Bengal Tiger with its eyes fixed upon me. Instinctively I clutched for my rifle. Not till that moment had I realized that I had wandered some three hundred feet from my resting place, leaving my trusty rifle leaning against the roots of the old tree, and the the wily beast at that moment advanced to the spot and stood glaring at me from behind the self same roots. At this moment it crossed my mind that the villagers, a few miles down the coast, had besought me to help them to destroy a creature that had killed several of their number, was ^I possible that I had been ~~entrapped by the very beast I had gone out to~~ ^{entrapped by the very beast I had gone out to} ~~kill~~ ^{slay}. I cast the thought almost overwhelmed my senses. I cast a quick ^{glance} around me. - I was cut off from the shore, but worse than all, from my rifle, by this beast which occupied the only point of land ~~connecting the sand bar with the main land.~~ ^{connecting the sand bar with the main land,} only point of land connecting the sand bar with the main land, casting my eye quickly over the half dried sand I could discover nothing what ever with which to defend myself, and finally thrust my hand in my pocket for my pen-knife (for my my broad leather belt contained my hunting ~~my~~ knife and pistol which were with my rifle) - ~~we~~ was a hunter ever so completely dis armed.

While I was making this hasty survey of my very uncomfortable position the beast had slipped out from behind the roots of the tree and advanced a few paces lying flat upon its belly, which showed only too plainly that it meant mischief.

For a few minutes I stood facing him trying to collect my thoughts and find some means of circumventing the beast.

I could swim plung into the sea and swim. Yes, but where should I go. A glance over the surface of the sea showed no resting ^{place} except the long line of shore, and if the tiger was really intent on making a meal of me he could easily be crouched ready for a spring at any moment point at which I might choose to land. Not a boat nor even a floating piece of a wood was in sight. Still ever and anon as I glanced hurriedly about, the beast crept ^{on and still facing him} backwards. ~~As I did on~~ ^{I walked back-ward} and still facing him I walked backwards. As I did so I noted that just here the water was deep close upon the ground sand on which I stood ^{was} favorable for a plunge and I instinctively decided upon this course should the creature make a rush, but I would face him clear around the sand bar if he kept crawling after me in the way he was now doing, and this might bring me back to my rifle. With this thought I was endeavoring to keep about the same distance between myself and the beast, and casting furtive glances in this direction and that for other

means of escape. Suddenly I noted that I was coming to a point where the water shoaled off very gradually from the sand which would render a plunge to escape by a charge if the beast, impracticable; and casting a glance behind me I found that I could not go on but a few rods further. I stopped, almost in despair. At the best the sea offered but slight hope of escape but what other hope was there. The sweat began to stand out in great beads on my face. I racked my brain for means of coping with the beast, which was now very slowly and cautiously crawling closer to me. My whole frame was ^{now} one moment in a tempest of rage at my folly in leaving my rifle and belt, and the next sinking in despair. Oh if I only had that belt with its brace of revolvers and hunting knife! In this condition I retreated another step or two. My foot touched something hard - I scarcely dared take my eyes off the approaching beast to look down, but felt with the other foot and heard a sound of metal in contact with the nails of my boot heel. Quickly I stooped and saw what appeared to be an old roman shield partially covered with the sand. As I pulled it up I saw under it a long sword - seizing both I was again facing the beast in ^{an instant} ~~the instant~~, but in the interval he had materially lessened the distance between us; but stopped short as I again faced him. Still closely watching the tiger I carefully examined

the sword and shield. The first was in a good condition and an excellent weapon. The ^{shield} was formed of some light firm wood covered, or faced, with brass. I thrust my arm through the stay and grasped the hand hold and carried it about my body with a feeling that is perfectly indiscible. I had never before had such an implement in my hand. It was oblong and large enough to cover my body and as I threw it between myself and the beast before me, my feeling arose to something akin to exaltation - No more thought of taking to the water - But suddenly a new feeling came over me - What invisible power had placed these implements of defence and offence in my hand at this opportune moment - I being purposely tried by some invisible power - By what power had I been tempted to examine examine the tiny creatures along the sands, why were the strange beings there at all, had I been guided into this trap for a purpose, was my courage being put to the test. Had it been prearranged that I should fight the beast before me, life against life in this manner so strange to me. How came this old roman shield and sword here - None such are used by the scant dwellers on these shores. These thoughts and much more passed through my mind in flashes as light penetrates space. During the examination of these implements the tiger had not moved but had watched my every movement with seeming interest. But his expression was less savage, and I

was determined to fight my mind was now clear and busy with the manner of the combat. All my knowledge of the class to which the animal before belonged was rapidly reviewed, seeking every advantage. Every fiber of my brain was in the utmost state of activity, and alertness- every muscle on the stretch. I stood with one foot forward waiting for the rush of the beast- seconds grew into minutes but still he did not move. I grew impatient - My purpose now was that the beast should make the attack, which I should repel by catching him on the shield and hurling him to the earth and then I should follow him up with the sword in the moment of his discomfiture. I suddenly walked boldly out toward the center of the sand. As I did so the beast turned out from the water showing his whole broad side but did not come closer. Then I noted his size and weight more closely, and it was ^{with} a thrill of victory that I ^{noted that I} should be the heavier weight and with equal momentum must overthrow the beast if I should catch his charge on my shield. I stopped short facing my antagonist. He did the same - we stood face to face again until seconds grew into minutes.

I stepped quickly forward - he only crouched lower drawing his hind feet well under him. Sprang backward, he lay still. ~~his hind feet were under him - he sprang forward, he lay still.~~
~~The sun was sinking out of sight darkness was coming on~~
 apace - I grew desperate, and as he should no haste to attack me I endeavored to pass around so as to gain my rifle, but he always interposed. I rushed at him as if to attack and sprang

back when suddenly as I run backwards the beast sprang forward with
 a tremendous howl- with a shout I sprang forward to meet him
 with all my energy and speed- I saw him rise from the ground
 in his final spring full at my chest with front feet extended
 and uncovered teeth. Throwing my self forward with all my
 strength I quickly covered my body with the shield. Then came
 a tremendous crash and I was hurled backward several paces but
 kept my feet. The beast lay full length on the sand thirty
 feet away having been hurled heels over head. I tried to
 rush forward and pin him to the earth with my sword but I could
 not move. Now cried I, mentally, is my opportunity, but not a
 muscle could I move. The beast gasped - on quick or he will
 be up - but not a muscle could I move. That fearful shock
 had paralyzed me, my every nerve of motion. I stood with the
 point of my sword in the sand at my feet leaning on the shield
 and could feel the warm blood trickling from my nose and mouth
 and with all my energy bent to movement, not a muscle would
 obey my will. The beast was ~~at~~ gathering himself - he has
 raised his head, he glares at me, he gathers his feet under
 him, still I cannot move a muscle - my mouth fills with blood. He
 turns towards me with a savage growl, still the blood trickles
 down my face. Oh for the power of movement, one movement of
 the use of my muscles - see he is gathering for another spring
 - yet I stand riveted to the spot - He rushes forward with a

deep roar . At that moment all my muscles start as a spring
 released, and I throw myself forward with a shout and again
 comes the terrible crash as the beast is caught on my shield
 and again he is hurled headlong ~~on~~ the sand. Recovering quick-
 ly from the shock I spring forward (with my sword but) the beast
 sliding to his feet, rather than rising, in time to to ~~evade~~
 evade my thrust, ~~can~~ with a muttering howl, and I ran after him
 with all my might . Away we went over the sand toward the
 the beach - his course lead directly by the fallen tree, on
 past it he went and up the rise towards the bush , As I came
 to the spot I threw aside sword and ~~shield~~ and seizing my rifle
 fired . In my great haste my first shot went wild but
~~and I awoke with a start as the beast sprang high in the air and I~~
 with the second the ~~beast~~ beast sprang high in the air and- I
 awoke with a start . My land lord was knocking on my bed-room
 door saying "Breakfast is ready doctor "-- Twas all a dream.