

THE

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A Magazine

OF

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, ADVENTURE, AND AMUSEMENT.

“Read, not to contradict and refute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.”

BACON.

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THE WILD HUNTSMAN.

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Who and what I am is of very little consequence to you, my reader. You will please, for the time being, to consider me as a man in the prime of life, of middle stature, with a frame combining the muscles of the Farnese Hercules with the elastic agility which one may suppose belonged to Antinous. You will be also good enough to gift me with unalterable presence of mind, a quick eye, nerves as highly tempered as watch-springs, and an insatiable thirst for blood.

This may seem a somewhat savage avowal, and stray policemen reading this sheet may find their detective faculties suddenly aroused by this atrocious frankness; but reader and policeman may rest in peace. It is not for my fellow-being's blood that I crave. The objects of my pursuit sleep in thick cane-brakes and impenetrable jungles, or prowl on moonless nights around the village huts, with muffled tread, and stomachs hungering for human food.

In other words, I am a hunter. I illustrate, with tiger, rhinoceros, and bear, the old adage of "Two can play at that game."

They hunt my brother-men, and I hunt them; and as they have not yet learned the art of forging rifles, and *couteaux-de-chasse*, and casting bullets, I generally get the best of it in the end.

I propose, therefore, that you shall accompany me on a hunting tour.

You need not tremble so; no hurt shall come to you. I will thread the jungle and face the brindled tiger. It is I who will navigate through the calm solemn icebergs, and let the white bear hug me until he feels my long knife cleaving his big heart in twain. It is I who will crouch by the margin of the dark Indian lake at nightfall, and send my steel-pointed bullet through the huge brain of the trumpeting elephant. You shall survey me from some peaceful spot hard by, while you smoke your *cabana*, in calm condition of mind, and speculate on the chances of the combat.

And if it should so happen that we should find no game on the hunting grounds, as it sometimes occurs, I will fill up your valuable time by relating such anecdotes of the chase as I can remember.

Where shall we first go? Have you any choice? None! Then take my hand and come with me.

The sky above us seems flat, cold, and solid. Every object around us wears a blue corpse-like tint. A huge shroud seems to cover the earth and the sea, and everything partakes in form of the angularity of death.

The air is so calm, the sea so pulseless, that one might imagine one's self in the early days of creation, before all was perfected. Nothing seems finished.

The wild fantastic shapes of the icebergs rise out of the quiet sea, rocking slowly to and fro, like huge imperfect monsters just heaving with the throes of life. The landscape that stretches away to the dull horizon possesses no vitality. No patch of green, or even brown vegetation breaks the grey uniformity of the scene. Here and there, floating slowly, with one of the invisible currents that thread these polar seas, huge cakes of ice move silently along. They have become detached from the main mass that extends for miles through the desolate ocean, and are gliding calmly to their death in the warmer waters of the gulf-stream.

If you observe attentively, you will perceive what seems to be, in the distance, another very small piece of ice moving somewhat rapidly towards one of the large cakes, and, curiously enough, in an opposite direction. While you are speculating on the apparent paradox that carries these two fragments contrary ways, you see, to your surprise, what you took to be the smaller piece of ice lift itself out of the water, and scramble up on the large ice-cake, with its white, shaggy coat dripping with the brine.

Your little ice-cake was nothing less than the head of a white bear, who was swimming to a resting-place, perhaps in the vague hope of surprising any luckless seal that should be so incautious as to show his nose above water.

The white bear is one of the most formidable of carnivorous animals. M. Gerard de Vera, an old polar traveller, states that he has seen a white bear that measured twenty-three feet in length. When you add to this enormous size, muscles of cor-

responding power, and a loose, thick hide, almost impenetrable to ordinary weapons, you can form some idea of the terrible inhabitant of those icy regions, whose natural courage is heightened into an appalling ferocity by the difficulty of procuring food in the desolate haunts that he frequents.

I once had an encounter with a white bear, which, despite of the *sang froid* with which from long habit I have been accustomed to look upon my adventures with wild animals, nevertheless makes me shudder when my memory reverts to it.

At the period of my life to which I refer, I was a passenger in a Scotch whaling vessel which was bound from Aberdeen to the coast of Labrador. I had always been possessed with a desire to taste the life of the Polar Seas, and had taken this means of gratifying my desire.

I will not inflict on you the details of the voyage, but take up the narrative at the point when, owing to a series of accidents and the fact of our having penetrated farther north than we intended, we were locked in the ice close to the entrance of Baffin's Bay.

The situation was not pleasant. We were tolerably well provided with preservatives against the cold, but our ship was small—about 250 tons burden—and our provisions rather too scanty for our sustenance during the three months' imprisonment which we should inevitably have to endure before the spring would break up the ice by which we were surrounded. We naturally in such a strait had recourse to hunting, and as I was an excellent Nimrod, we did not want for fresh meat as long as I could fall in with foxes and seals. Seal and fox meat, by-the-way, is not what the men who frequent Delmonico's would exactly choose for their dinners; but when one is shut up in a small vessel, with nothing but salt pork and mouldy biscuits to subsist on, the fresh juices oozing from the steak of an Arctic fox, broiled on the cooking-stove, possess a flavour which the *blasé habitué* of French restaurants can have but little knowledge.

By degrees, however, even the scanty animal life which enlivened those ice-covered shores disappeared. It is a phenomenon well known in Arctic life, that the animals frequenting the Polar Seas are exceedingly fickle in their habits, and that in a single day foxes, wolves, and seal will suddenly disappear in the most mysterious manner, and leave no trace behind. We on board the "Annie Laurie"—which

poetic name our ship bore—soon began to experience the effects of want of proper food. As we could not be certain within several weeks of the exact time of our liberation from the ice, the captain commenced apportioning out in very small rations our little stock of provisions. It was in vain that I tramped over hammock and floe in search of game. Not a living thing disturbed that frozen solitude. In addition to this, under the pressure of the ice, the seams and joints of all portions of our vessel commenced opening to such an extent that we began to have serious fears as to whether we should ever be able to keep her above water when we were once more free.

While we were in this condition, worn and gaunt with want of food, and cursing the fate which had imprisoned us in this desolate latitude, our fainting energies were aroused by the attack of an enemy, who, if not more potent than hunger, was certainly more rapid in its assaults.

The captain, the first mate, a Norwegian sailor, and myself, were sitting one day in the cabin, gloomily warming ourselves at the insufficient stove and musing over the probabilities of an early spring, when our attention was attracted by a scratching apparently against the side of the vessel. Our eyes turned simultaneously in the direction of the sound, and to our horror we discovered one of the cabin windows torn out, and the huge head of a white bear, with one paw gripping the side of the frame-work, protruding through the aperture. His eye burned with the lust for blood, and he glared on us with the savage air which seemed to say—"Ye are my prey, and cannot escape me." My first impulse was to look for a weapon. In one of those rapid glances, which a man in peril of his life only can give, I saw in a second every defensive arm in the cabin. There were two guns in one far corner; a hatchet lying on the floor; and near me a long sharp spear, which we had used for killing seals.

In an instant the spear, being the nearest weapon, was in my hand, and I rushed at the bear, feeling convinced that if he once got in at the window we were lost. Gathering all my force, I made a savage thrust at his broad shaggy breast; the long blade of the spear was buried in the deep fur, and a jet of blood spouted over the handle.

The next moment the bear, with a sudden turn of his head, caught the ashen shaft

of the spear in his teeth, and snapped it in two, as if it had been a stick of sugarcandy. Just then, Jarl, the Norwegian, discharged one of the guns at the intruder, and the ball struck him immediately under the eye, leaving in place of that organ a bloody orb that rolled upon us with sightless fury.

The captain also discharged his musket, but owing to terror he shot wide of the mark. There remained for us now nothing but the hatchet. This the man who possessed it seemed utterly unable to use, so, knowing that no time was to be lost, I wrenched it from his hand and ran at the wounded bear, who now, irritated to a pitch of fury that was positively appalling, had forced his way still farther through the window.

I trust that I shall never again feel so like a fiend as I did at that moment. A frenzy for battle seemed to possess me."

Like the *Chourineur* in the "Mysteries of Paris," I "saw blood." I swung my hatchet over my head and buried it with a venomous "thud" in the bear's left paw. He roared with pain, and then without an instant's hesitation I brought my weapon down upon his broad, rugged forehead. But a white bear's skull is harder to split than most people imagine.

Conceive my dismay when, immediately on the blade striking upon the *os frontis*, the head of the weapon flew off, and, passing through the window, struck the ice outside, and went sliding off for several yards, as if it was enjoying its liberty. My heart sank.

The men around me seemed paralysed with terror, for all knew the power and ferocity of the white bear. The animal itself seeming to divine that my resources were exhausted, uttered a horrible growl, and, glaring with that awful bloodshot eye, braced himself against the side of the window preparatory to heaving his huge body inside.

There was not a moment to lose. Despite of my physical terror, I felt at that instant my brain suddenly clear as if by magic. I remembered that there was no weapon which the white bear dreaded so much as fire. With a single leap I was beside the stove, which, as all who have seen a stove in the Arctic regions well know, was red-hot.

Hastily seizing a seal-skin that happily lay on the floor, I wrapped it round the fiery cylinder, so as to keep my hands from being scorched, and exerting all my

strength, tore it from its fastenings. Then running to the window, through which the bear had almost effected his entrance, I launched the entire stove and its burning contents at his head. The door burst. There was a shower of live coals which poured over the savage brute's head and body, and with a howl of pain and baffled rage he dropped from the window, and sullenly moaning, trotted across the gray hummocks of the ice, until we lost sight of him in the distance.

The only injuries I sustained were some slight burns on each hand, and my companions, and the crew—who came running into the cabin after all was over—were profuse in their admiration of my courage and presence of mind.

I determined in my own mind, however, never to fight a bear with a red-hot stove again, as such a missile is not fatal, and I confess that in my then hungry condition I longed for a steak from those heavy buttocks that I watched wistfully as they disappeared in the dim horizon.

It may interest you to know that when the ice broke up we reached St. John's, Newfoundland, without much difficulty, in spite of our leaky condition; and my adventure with the bear was the great topic of conversation while we remained in port.

Tiger stories are nearly as celebrated for their imaginative qualities as the "Fish stories" of this country.

No man, who has been either to India or the Cape of Good Hope, returns without a portfolio of the most astonishing stories of slain tigers, which they retail after dinner with much gusto—each repetition suggesting new and admirable details; until at length the story becomes like the Yankee's jack-knife, which had at first a new handle, and then a new blade, but still remained the same knife. I have heard these astounding anecdotes related as personal experiences by beardless ensigns at mess-tables; they having been quartered on outpost duty in India for a few months in the year, during which time the majority of them slaughtered great quantities of jungle fowl and perhaps never saw a tiger.

But there is no lack of tiger stories among native servants, and a young man with a good memory may collect a stock which shall, after his return, last him his entire European life.

No man, on beholding the body of a tiger, can form any conception of the extent of his muscular power. His body

seems too long, his legs too short and thick; yet he is a living hurricane, the rapidity of his motion being scarcely surpassed by that of the bullet by which he falls. The tiger is always athirst, not for water, but blood. When the lion has devoured his prey of human flesh he is appeased and reposes. Not so the tiger. After a hideous repast of bones and mutilated limbs he begins to feel an appetite, and roams the country in search of a fresh prey and a new festivity.

The tiger is seldom more than seven feet in length from the muzzle to the butt of the tail. But some travellers must undoubtedly have seen tigers as large as buffaloes. For instance, M. Lalande-Magon, who had made frequent voyages to the Cape of Good Hope, has stated that he measured one which was fifteen feet long.

Unfortunately M. Lalande-Magon forgot to mention that the tail was included in his measurement. The royal Bengal tiger in the Jardin des Plantes, at Paris, measures only seven feet and a half, not including the tail.

While hunting in the neighbourhood of Bombay, in the year 1851, I received intelligence that a large tiger had ensconced himself about five miles from my bungalow.

As it was my first tiger, I was impatient to encounter him; so calling to my aid two very dear friends who were living with me, we set out in all possible haste for the rendezvous.

We found the beast lodged in a deep ravine, quietly picking the bones of a wretched Malay whom he had killed that morning, and of whose corpse he adroitly formed a rampart as soon as he perceived us, carefully watching us from behind it.

In our precipitation, or rather in our carelessness of danger—a carelessness which nothing but ignorance could excuse—the only arms we had brought with us were long boar spears, and short heavy hunting-knives.

With these weapons we considered that it would be madness to descend into the ravine where he was banqueting on his horrible food.

The tiger on his side seemed thoroughly impressed with all his advantages, and had made up his mind to give battle to us nowhere but in the narrow space in which he had lodged himself. He also seemed to comprehend perfectly that we had nothing but cold steel to attack him with.

After a little while he rose, and casting

a contemptuous glance at us, gravely promenaded up and down the little ravine.

He was taking gentle exercise after dinner.

I could not stand this disdain, so I commenced flinging stones at him, in the hope of inducing him to quit his fortress. This he declined doing, and took no more notice of our taunts and insults than if we had been a parcel of little boys.

An hour passed in this way.

To return home without having attacked the tiger was impossible. Our honour was at stake.

In an instant I made up my mind.

“I will go down into the ravine,” I said; “let all who love me follow me.”

“But,” remonstrated one of my friends, whom I will call Gaston, “it is certain destruction. We have no fire-arms.”

I was determined.

George, my other friend, joined in Gaston’s remonstrance, but without avail. Then, seeing me buckling myself up for the fight, they, like good friends, declared their intention of joining me.

“That’s right!” I cried, as they signified their resolve. “This confounded tiger wants to keep us off and on until night, when he, being able to see in the dark, can make an easy prey of us. Let us, while we have daylight, finish the fellow.”

We skirted the course of the ravine about a hundred paces, and then commenced our descent. We found his majesty, a splendid tawny monarch he was, still enjoying his stroll, only now instead of looking like a *bon vivant* in search of digestion, he looked like a sentinel on the *qui vive*. We moved cautiously on, three of us abreast, with our lances couched like bayonets, and advancing foot by foot.

The combat was about to commence. I whispered to my companions—

“Attention, Gaston! Attention, George! Union is strength. If we separate, not one of us will ever see Bombay again. Now, make ready! He is scratching up the earth. He’ll be upon us in a second!”

I was right. The tiger deliberated for an instant and then sprang.

Our three lances met him at the same moment. One pierced his shoulder, another ripped up his belly so that the entrails protruded, while the last absolutely entered his mouth and came through his jaw.

The shock was so tremendous that we all rolled backward; but I instantly cried to the others to recover their positions,

leaping myself into a defensive attitude. The three of us were once more in the twinkling of an eye elbow to elbow. It was in vain that the tiger writhed and beat against our *cheval de frise*; the spears were buried in his body, and every movement only drove them deeper. Seeing that the brute was now almost thoroughly helpless, we, by a common instinct, rushed upon him with our poniards to finish him.

Gaston, with an incredible rashness, attacked him in front.

Alas! he knew not what even an expiring tiger can accomplish. Almost in his death-throe he seized poor Gaston by the arm and bit it completely off above the elbow. It was his last effort, and in a few moments more he expired.

It was a victory that cost me dear. My dear friend Gaston died a few days after from the effects of the operation which it was necessary to have performed on his arm.

He sleeps under a palm-tree in the English burying ground at Bombay.

It is an unpleasant fact that a tiger-hunt is generally fatal to some of the parties engaged in it.

During the night, and in the midst of a frightful storm at Singapore, in the year 1819, an enormous tiger marched coolly into the great bazaar and quietly waited for the awaking of the inhabitants, as if he had been on terms of the most intimate friendship with the human race.

A grocer in opening his shop was the first to perceive the ferocious animal, and having barricaded himself in his house, gave the alarm to his neighbours. The tiger responded to this warning by an angry growl, and in a few moments the entire neighbourhood was alive and resolved on the destruction of the animal.

Captain Fielding, an English officer, placed himself at the head of twenty Sepoys armed with muskets, while a huge crowd of the natives followed him, brandishing sticks, and spears, and pistols.

At their approach the tiger rose and slowly retreated, like a foe who does not wish to fight, but who will not betray any cowardly terror.

Captain Fielding, separating himself from his party, advanced alone upon his savage antagonist, who, apparently surprised at such insolence, cast a glance of mingled astonishment and rage at the rash intruder.

Fielding in a moment saw the fatal error that he had committed. He saw that a royal tiger was not a foe to be approached

carelessly, and, while trembling at the danger in which he stood, he, nevertheless, with his finger on the trigger of his rifle, bravely kept his position.

On his part the tiger, thinking perhaps that if he could avoid the fatal bullet which lay at the bottom of the rifle barrel, that followed his every motion, it would be as well, still retreated slowly, always, however, facing his enemies as if he was determined in any event not to die alone.

Presently, by these manœuvres, he found himself in a very narrow street of which one end was closed. Fielding was not slow to avail himself of this lucky chance, and taking deliberate aim fired at the tiger. His bullet took effect in the eye, and the wounded animal roared so frightfully that the entire crowd tumbled one over the other in their hurry to escape, and in less than two minutes Captain Fielding found himself entirely alone with the savage brute, who tore up the ground with his powerful nails while he vainly tried to lick up the blood that flowed from his wound.

Fielding, throwing away his rifle, drew a pistol, while he held a poniard in his left hand. Like a flash of lightning the tiger sprang upon him; the captain, who felt that his life depended on his aim, fired deliberately, just as his antagonist was descending on his shoulders. The ball was fatal, going right to the animal's heart, and with a smothered growl he rolled over on the pavement; but he was avenged. In that brief instant one stroke of his resistless fore-paw had broken the unfortunate officer's neck, and when the cowardly natives returned, the two foes were found dead, within a couple of yards of each other.

How do you like rattlesnakes? They are pleasant company, are they not? The strange rustling sound—somewhat like the noise produced by shaking a piece of parchment—with which they move, the rapidity of their evolutions, the almost certain death which results from their bite, must render them specially agreeable to all those who lead a forest life in those countries where they abound.

I have myself killed a sufficient number of rattlesnakes to supply all the Stockholm watchmen with rattles for the full term of their natural lives.

All that is necessary to accomplish the death of a rattlesnake is coolness and a moderately long stick. If the snake is struck a smart blow on the spot where head and neck join, the vertebral column.

is paralysed, and you can finish him at your leisure.

The island of Martinique is infested with rattlesnakes.

I once knew a planter, living in the interior of the island, whose lands were so overrun with these venomous reptiles that the greater part of his slaves deserted him and sought refuge in the vast forests that cover the island.

The only slaves that remained were a few who were in irons at the time of the flight of their companions, and were awaiting punishment for some misdemeanour, and those slaves who hoped to escape chastisement by promising to devote themselves to the extermination of the snakes.

Among the negroes in captivity was one named Pegu, who was condemned to receive three hundred strokes of the rattan. The hour for his punishment arrived. His master came forth to witness the bloody scene.

Pegu was standing near the whipping-block awaiting the moment when his hands and feet should be fastened to it, when he perceived a rattlesnake gliding toward him through the grass.

He did not stir. The rapid death following the serpent's bite was preferable to the lingering one which he felt awaited him under the overseer's cane.

The serpent coiled itself ready to strike, when at this moment the planter caught the peculiar sound of the rattle, and leaped terror-stricken on one side.

The snake, attracted by the motion, changed his intention, and, fancying that the planter was about to attack him, glided rapidly toward the unhappy man, who, paralysed with fear, remained rooted to the ground.

Pegu, seeing his master's peril, leaped forward, and catching the snake's tail with one hand, caught him by the neck with the other, and, after a quarter of an hour's compression, succeeded in choking him.

An hour afterward Pegu received his three hundred lashes, and died that night under the punishment. Such is gratitude in Martinique!

A most affecting incident happened in this same island while I was staying there, passing most of my time in the forests, or with that wild race of cattle-hunters known as *Boucaniers*.

A fine athletic negro named Golo, belonging to a wealthy planter who lived about thirty miles from Saint Pierre, was desperately enamoured of a pretty mulatto

lass, named Juanita, living on the next plantation.

But Juanita was a coquette, and cruel as coquettes generally are.

Having a tinge of white blood in her, she looked down from an exalted height on poor Golo, who was as black—black, in fact, than the ink with which I am now writing.

She treated him shamefully, giving him an ounce of hope and a ton of bad treatment.

Still Golo did not despair, but pressed his suit on every opportunity. At last Juanita, finding her lover so pertinacious that he must either be finally rejected or accepted, told him one day that she had a passion for rattlesnake's tails. That she valued them in proportion to their length, but that as yet she had never been able to get a tail which consisted of twelve rings. Now if he brought her a tail with twelve rings she would be his.

Golo's heart sank, but still he determined to undertake this dangerous task. What was there he would not peril to gain Juanita? Day after day Golo, with a burning brand of pine-wood in one hand, and a short sabre in the other, traversed the forests listening for the ominous rattling of the snakes.

In point of numbers his success was prodigious; for there is no better method of killing the rattlesnake than the one Golo adopted—thrusting the burning torch in his face, and, as he detests fire, he is easily decapitated in the moment of his confusion.

Nevertheless Golo could not find a single tail with twelve rings on it.

He had some with eight, nine, and even one which had eleven; but when he laid this last before Juanita she was still inexorable, and declared that even eleven and a half would not content her.

At last one day, when, almost despairing of success, Golo was crossing a nopen space, his ear was caught by a particularly loud and sonorous rattle.

He stopped, and perceived an enormous rattlesnake gliding toward him.

Its eyes were glowing with an intense fire; its bifurcated tongue was agitated with an inconceivable rapidity of motion.

The gray and yellow scales on its head and back glistened with a changeful lustre, like some silken surface on which light was playing.

Golo felt that the hour was come when he should either win Juanita or perish.

The size and whole appearance of the snake convinced him that he had twelve or more rings in his tail, and he awaited his approach with a beating heart.

The snake came gliding on, and when within about three feet coiled himself for a spring.

Golo now seized the opportunity, and dashing his torch into the animal's jaws, severed the head from the body at a single blow.

It was with a throb of delight that he discovered, on stooping down to examine his prize, *thirteen* rings in the snake's tail. While he was separating them from the carcass he felt a slight pricking sensation in his heel.

Turning round quickly, he discovered to his horror that he had placed his foot on the snake's severed head, in which the muscular action still continued, and that, all lifeless as it was, it had bitten him.

Golo now knew that he was a dead man, and his sole object was to see Juanita before he expired.

Catching up his prize, which he had purchased with his life, he rushed across the fields with the speed of despair.

Every moment he felt the poison working more fatally in his veins, until at last swollen, breathless, speechless, and frothing at the lips, he rushed into Juanita's presence.

He could no longer articulate, but holding out to her the thirteen rattles in his swollen hand, and fixing on her one last look of devotion, he rolled on the floor at her feet, and after a few gasps breathed his last.

I wonder if the heralds ever dream that their favourite unicorn is, in reality, one of the ugliest animals that ever existed. How astonished would the British nation be if some king-at-arms, of a natural-history tendency, were to publish an edition of the royal heraldic bearings, with a faithfully drawn rhinoceros supporting one side of the shield, instead of the elegant but mythical animal which now does his duty. I think that the fine old British lion on the other side would be rather astonished at such company. He would miss that graceful combination of the antelope and the sword-fish which has for centuries helped him to sustain the famous old shield.

It is now settled, I believe, that the rhinoceros is the original unicorn, although a large number of the species have two horns, and some travellers have said that they have met them with three. This, it strikes

me, was a waste of material; what could a rhinoceros possibly want of three horns? It was a luxurious superfluity, just as the three and four pronged forks have, in these effeminate days, superseded the ancient and respectable two-prong.

I have had the pleasure of meeting several rhinoceroses in various parts of the world on terms of close intimacy, but the most disagreeable acquaintance I ever had among the species I met near Chandernagore, in 1849. I had been strolling along the banks of a small stream, looking for jungle-fowl and wild-ducks, and such trifling game, and the only weapon which I had with me was a double-battered fowling-piece, loaded with small shot.

While I was musing over the prospects of a game supper, I was aroused from my reverie by a heavy galloping that shook the earth as if a giant were abroad.

I turned, and beheld a black rhinoceros, with his head lowered, coming toward me at full speed. Where he had come from I don't know to this hour—perhaps he had been sleeping in some thick bushes, or washing his hide in the river—but at any rate there he was, and at that moment I would have taken even a Spanish quarter for my life. Small bird-shot would be of little effect on an animal whose hide is so tough that it takes a steel-pointed bullet to penetrate it, and other weapon I had not.

In this strait, I thought the best thing I could do would be to run to cover, where at least I would have a little time to think over my best means of escape.

There was a large tree a few yards off, so, exerting all my speed, I ran for it, and enconced myself behind its huge trunk, just in time to see the sharp horn of the rhinoceros take a slice of the bark off on the very spot where my coat-tails had just fluttered.

Now commenced a horrible game of skill. The rhinoceros, who is as cunning as a cat, tried every stratagem to catch me. Every time that he rushed round the tree I slipped to the opposite side of the trunk, and so baffled him. Then he would try the plan of pursuing me vigorously round and round the tree, in one direction, for a minute or so, and suddenly, when at full speed, stopping short, and turning rapidly in the opposite direction, so as to catch me as I came round.

But, quick as he was, I was too agile for him, and I caught glimpses of his small eyes glaring with disappointed rage.

I was still, however, as far from escape

as ever. I was nearly exhausted, and the villainous rhinoceros was as fresh and fiendish as ever. If he pursued these tactics much longer I must surely fall an easy prey.

Suddenly, in the extremity of my need, a bright thought struck me. What if I could blind him!

My shot was useless as a mortal weapon, for his body was cased in a suit of ball-proof mail; but there were his eyes. They were unshielded.

To resolve was to act. I unslung my gun from my back, and peeping cautiously round the tree, beheld my friend watching for me with his small red eyes.

I instantly took aim and fired at his right eye, and as he rushed toward me gave him the contents of the other barrel full in the left.

Fortunately I was successful with both shots.

The rhinoceros, with furious bounds here and there, sought blindly for me in all directions. He stamped his powerful hoofs upon the ground, until it fairly cracked beneath the blows. He would rush wildly for a yard or two, and then stop, confused and enraged by the perpetual darkness in which he found himself.

I left him in his frenzy, and, hastening home for a rifle and assistance, returned and put a bullet through his heart. During my absence he had never stirred ten yards from the spot where I left him, but had paced round and round in a little circle, until a ring, like that in a circus, had been formed on the sod.

Reader, my space is exhausted—for the present farewell.

AMUSING AND INSTRUCTIVE CHEMICAL EXPERIMENTS

—:o:—

EXPERIMENTS WITH MERCURY.

Mix a few grains of potassium and sodium, then add a drop or so of mercury and shake the mixture—which will instantly burst into flame.

TO FREEZE MERCURY.

Quicksilver, or mercury, may be frozen by any ordinary freezing mixture, a very good one being muriate of lime and snow; and the readiest mode is to throw a little quicksilver in the freezing mixture, when it will congeal in a few minutes. In congealing it gives out a portion of caloric, or heat, equal to what would raise its temperature, in the fluid form, to 152° Fahrenheit. Frozen mercury can be flattened with a hammer; it is somewhat flexible, and may be stretched without breaking; it has also a crystalline form. Great care should be exercised in handling it when frozen, as it gives a sensation like a wound from a rough-edged instrument, or as if the finger had been squeezed violently; the portion in contact with the frozen mercury becomes white and numb, and if it were to remain in contact gangrene would no doubt take place. These ill effects are removed by rubbing the part with snow.

COLOURED GAS.

Gases as a rule are colourless, but if a few grains of iodine are put in a flask, or test tube, and heat gradually applied, the iodine becomes vaporised and the whole interior of the glass vessel assumes a most beautiful violet colour—of course it is not a coloured gas, but merely the iodine in vapour, which will condense on the sides of the vessel when allowed to cool, in the form of black crystals.

If the least portion of iodine, say one grain, is mixed with one pint of warm water, and a little starch in a fluid state added, the whole assumes a beautiful blue colour.

COLOURED FLAMES.

Spirits of wine or naphtha when lit may be coloured variously, according to the chemical employed; thus if a red flame is wished, it is only necessary to place in the spirits a few grains of nitrate of strontia, and if it is placed in an iron ladle, which is at the same time held over a spirit-lamp to increase the heat, it burns so much better.

To produce orange-coloured flame, use dry muriate of lime.

Emerald green is produced by placing nitrate of copper in the spirit.