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SURPRISING A LEOPARD



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A GENTLEMAN named Winton, a Civil Engineer on the Grand Indian Peninsular

Railway, stationed near Nassick, about one-hundred and twenty miles north-east of Bombay, communicates to a friend in England the following deed of extraordinary courage and endurance :

“ A thrilling incident has just occurred in this vicinity, that might be called a phase of life in the jungle, and recalls the chivalric deeds of olden time. The adventurous circumstance occurred to Mr. Goody, our manager of the timber works for the construction of the Railway, who left Nassick on the 8th inst. on a short journey of inspection to the village of Oombroola, which he reached about six o'clock in the evening, at that time quite light, and had his tent pitched by his attendants adjoining the native dwellings. While inspecting some timber within a stone's throw of it, he perceived what he imagined to be a tiger, stealing out of a dense thicket of cactus plants, facing him, and advancing at a slow determined pace, its glaring eyes fixed intently upon him at only a few paces distant, impatient for the coming struggle. No pause, but a

moment's reflection for him, ere the powerful leopard—as such it proved to be—had reduced the space to a few feet, and the momentary reflection of the brave fellow was, “It's all up with me now; if



I run, I cannot escape; he will spring upon my back, and I shall rise from the earth no more.” “I'll face him!” was his instant resolution; and he bent to receive him.

A smothered yell, and the brute had made its spring, its jaws extended, for the death gripe, on its victim, who was struck down with the force of the shock. Then man and leopard rolled over, in the mad struggle for life and death. An instant, and the man was uppermost; the hot fetid breath from its wide mouth panted in his face, its horrid jaws extended to grasp his throat, while the rapid blows from its formidable paws, as they tore at his form, tested terribly his resolute hold, and he with naught to parry its wild strength but a light riding whip in his clenched hand. Instant though it was, sternly had the Briton resolved to conquer, as he thrust his left arm down the brute's open throat and seized its tongue, then with the other arm forced down his riding whip as well.

Completely discomfited by this sudden surprise, the leopard freed itself and turned to retreat from his now prostrate opponent, when he encountered a party of natives, who, having fled in terror at his appearance, had, by this time, returned

to the rescue with heavy canes. Ere these had time to form an attack, or even to oppose its course, the ferocious brute, with a yell, sprang upon one of the group, and bore him with a shriek of terror to the earth. A moment of suspense, and the wild shock had left the form of the



feeble native mangled and lifeless. The brute then bounded away towards a herd of buffaloes, which it attacked. Poor Goody, whom the natives had discovered, was no sooner raised and sensible, than with a cheer he led the pursuit, and soon overtook his enemy in deadly conflict with the buffaloes, which in sustaining the attack had wounded their assailant. The brave pursuer was the first up, and dealt

the wild brute a blow on the skull that stunned it, when the hitherto terrified natives fell upon it and dispatched it. The victor then turned to think of himself. Scarce had he surveyed the conquest ere he sank fainting from the loss of blood ; his left arm, which had been down the leopard's throat, was fearfully mangled and hung useless ; his thigh bitten through, his body torn all over and streaming with blood, and his clothes rent in shreds from his body. In this condition he was carried by the Gharrywallahs to his tent, and was only kept alive during the night by being rubbed from head to foot.

The following morning he was carried on a litter twenty miles to his home in Nassick. The slain leopard, borne on branches, preceded him in triumph, attended by a troop of natives, each of whom was envious of bearing the lion-hearted victor. The gauzy covering of the wounded man contrasted forcibly with the appearance of the dead leopard—the led horse of the wounded man with empty

saddle—the train of slim and white-clad natives, looking more distinct as they emerged from the overshadowing palms, presented a picture that seemed to interpret the sad history, and impressive enough appeared the simple *cortege* as it wound slowly through the rocky defiles along the road to Nassick. As you may imagine, the sufferer was in a most deplorable condition, and remained for a long time in great danger. My friend who sends me the details describes the animal as an unusually large leopard, while the natives persist it was a tiger. It measured seven feet long, and stood upwards of two feet six inches high. Its skin is now spread out in my late room at the palace of Nassick.”

