

er, and just at evening discovered St. Agnes' light ahead. Proudly she dashed along the billows, and with the setting of the watch, a lantern rose to her ensign peak, and a heavy cannon mingled its notes with the thunder of the elements around. A larger ship now rose upon the horizon astern, and soon a light gleamed high over her peopled deck. A bright flash soon showed that the cannon of the three decker had answered the signal of her consort, and then the thick haze of the evening storm hid them from each other's view.

'Forecastle, there!' thundered the officer of the deck.

'Ay, ay, sir,' answered the master's mate.

'Keep a bright look out ahead, sir.'

'Aye, aye, sir.'

The captain now came upon deck; long and anxiously he looked towards the light, and then as his eye rested upon a break in the waters ahead, he said:

'There they are, the black devils! Mr. Catharpin, send the best men to the wheel.'

'Aye, aye, sir,' said the first lieutenant, and soon a hardy set of old quarter masters grasped the spokes.

'Man the relieving tackles,' thundered the captain, they were manned instantly; the ship answered her helm promptly, the crested billows broke all around her, but not a wave had dared to kiss her decks.

'The storm increases, sir,' said the first lieutenant, touching his hat.

'Furl the top-sails and set the trysails; roared the commander, above the howling of the blast. Dark forms glided up the rigging like shadows, and soon the top-sails were furled, the trysails at the same time caught the wind, and the spanker almost started from the bolt rope.

'Have axes laid by the masts: this is no time for idlers—call all hands,' said the captain.

'All hands,' cried the boatswain.

'All hands,' shouted his mates, and all hands stood upon deck. Then might one man look another in the face, and read wonder and terror mingled together there.

'We have carried away the spanker, sir,' shouted the captain of the after guard, as he went across the deck like lightning, in a fold of the tattered canvas.

'Let it go and be d—d,' said the officer of the deck.

'Cant over the spanker boom, you lubber; brace the yards to the wind,' shouted the captain, and away they went like the turning of the spokes of a wind-mill wheel.

'Here she comes,' shouted the star-board cat-head watch, as he jumped from his post, and landed upon the cook's head, who had at that moment popped it out of the galley-hatch, to catch a view of the surrounding country, which, according to the Lishman's geography, was plaguey near an island, for it was entirely surrounded by water.

'Gorry mighty, slipped a sea with short jacket and breeches,' said Cuff, as he rolled down on to the gun deck, with his tormenter in the slack of the astonished look-out-man's unmentionables, who followed him like a clap of thunder after a flash of black lightning.

'You be buttered, you son of a sea-cook,' said Jack, kicking the Guineaman's shin with his storm-stay-sail boots, and cutting his toasting-fork adrift with his knife. 'A pretty affair you are, to interfere with a man on duty; why, dy'e see, if you had been down in your smoke house I should have had a decent fall, and been upon duty with a whole spanker sheet again; but you, you old woolly-headed son of Nebuchadnezzars's grand marm, when she eats grass, with Heshick, Twoshick, and to bed they went; you must get in my way, and injure my feelings with your two pronged sceptre, and be blessed to you. Belay there your black jaw or I'll cheapen your ivory.'

After this burst of natural eloquence, Jack went upon deck, while the darkey hobbled to the galley muttering, 'Oh ho, Mr. Jack, never you mind, I'll sweeten your broff, yet—yah! yah! yah!'

While this rough and tumble was carried on below, we must not for one moment suppose the hubbub above had ceased. When the cat-head watch sang out 'here she comes,' he had no allusion to a sea. A moment more, and the three decker was near at hand—on one side, and stretching out to leeward, was the black ledge, and to windward was their consort, unmanageable, in the act of running them down. 'Hard up your helm,' shouted the officer of the deck, but it was too late, the Culloden came sweeping down like a deer before the hounds. Her main-mast tottered in its step, her topsails hung in tatters—the jib hung flapping at her sides—the waters gurgled along her careering guns—and then, to complete the horror of the scene, the men at the wheel were thrown senseless upon the deck. She broached to for a moment, then away went her topmasts and flying jib, and down came her mainmast, with an awful crash.

'We are lost!' shouted an old seaman, to his messmate in the Corvette's rigging.

'There is no hope,' said the captain, as he stood calmly amid a dozen officers, holding on to the companion railing—'good bye, gentlemen—God bless you—you have done your duty.'

'Oh God,' shrieked a sailor's wife, as she ran across that sorrowful deck, and pressed her infant to her breast—my husband! my child! At this moment the captain of the Corvette sprang to her side, he looked at the old quarter-master, her husband, who stood at the wheel—'No hope,' said the old sea dog; 'farewell Bess, and my darling.' It was enough; in a moment the sailor's wife and child were launched into the deep, and floated astern on a grating, while the captain, with a fixed look, stood at his quarters.

'Crash came the Culloden upon her consort, and in a moment the Corvette went down in the dark waters, and the heavy three decker passed over her. Will was the yell that rose above that midnight wane to heaven—dreadful was the gurgle of the billow as it closed over 'penon, spar, and rail.' A moment, and she rode the billow like a thing of life—another, and the sea-snake crawled through her port holes, and slimy things sported upon her decks of glory.

'Breakers ahead!' shouted the master of the Culloden, as she coursed along on her cruise of death.

'We cannot weather them unless we clear the wreck,' said the commodore.

'Cullodens away clear the wreck,' thundered the first lieutenant, and throwing down the trumpet, he caught an axe, and headed the gallant waisters.

Away went the wreck with a tremendous crash; a single sea broke over the poop, sweeping it as though a fire had passed over it, and then the old three decker hauled her wind, and shot past the ledge like a flash of light.

'We are clear,' said the commodore, drawing a long breath—'can you see any thing of our consort's wreck?'

'A white mass is floating upon the water to windward, sir,' cried the signal mid-shipman.

'It is a woman and child,' said the quarter-master; let us save her. An hundred persons, officers and men, now hung over the sides with ropes—the seaaving become much smoother inside the reef—and soon the quarter-master's widow and child lay dead upon the vessel's deck.

'No hope,' said the doctor of the Culloden, turning away from the bodies with eyes filled with tears.

'Let them be buried with their messmates,' said the commodore, in a husky voice. The bodies were soon sewed up

in one hammock, and then, with a seaman's prayer, they were launched forth to join the swollen hundreds that danced upon the agitated billows, cold in death.

Morning came, and with it a calm; the ocean was like a sleeping mill-pond; the light-house stood solitary in the distance—the Culloden lay at anchor in shore without a spar—a part of the wreck rested upon the Dead Man's Ledge—upon its tall-rail a lonely heron perched—and the wave, as it gently broke against the foot of the rocks and washed the sand from the stern, showed to the gaze of the beholder the name of the gallant Blenheim.

'Mr. Nipecheese,' said the first lieutenant, with a leer of his eye, 'I believe you had better tell that story to the marines.'

'You be d—d,' said the purser, in a low voice, and then the mess went to bed.

#### Capture and Death of a Mammoth Alligator.

The subjoined is the account, from Silliman's journal, of the destruction of a huge Alligator. It will be found exceedingly interesting.

In the course of the year 1831, the proprietor of Halabala informed me that he frequently lost horses and cows on a remote part of his plantation, and the natives assured him they were taken by an enormous alligator, who frequented one of the streams which run into the lake. Their descriptions were so highly wrought that they were attributed to the fondness for exaggeration, to which the inhabitants of that country are peculiarly addicted, and very little credit was given to their repeated relations.

All doubts as to the existence of the animal, were at last dispelled by the destruction of an Indian, who attempted to ford the river on horseback, although entreated to desist by his companions who crossed at a shallow place higher up. He reached the centre of the stream, and was laughing at the others for their prudence, when the alligator came upon him. His tecta encountered the saddle, which he tore from the horse, while the rider tumbled on the other side into the water and made for the shore. The horse, too terrified to move, stood trembling where the attack was made. The alligator, disregarding him, pursued the man, who safely reached the bank, when he could easily have ascended, but rendered fool-hardy by his escape, he placed himself behind a tree, which had fallen partly into the water, and drawing a heavy knife, leaned over the tree, and on the approach of his enemy, struck him on the nose. The animal repeated the assault and the Indian his blows until the former, exasperated at the resistance, rushed on the man, and seizing him by the middle of the body, which was at once enclosed and crushed in his capacious jaws, swam into the lake. His friends hastened to the rescue; but the alligator slowly left the shore, while the poor wretch, writhing and striking in his agony, with his knife upheld in his clasped hands, seemed, as the others expressed it, "held out as a man would carry a torch." His sufferings were not long continued, for the monster sank to the bottom, and so in after re-appearing alone on the surface, and calmly basking in the sun, gave to the horror-stricken spectators the fullest confirmation of the death and burial of their comrade.

A short time after this event, I made a visit to Halabala, and expressing a strong desire to capture or destroy the alligator, my host readily offered his assistance. The animal had been seen, a few days before, with his head and one of his fore feet resting on the bank, and his eyes following the motion of some cows which were grazing near. Our informer likened his appearance to that of a cat watching a mouse, and in the attitude to spring upon his prey when it should be within his reach.

Hearing that the alligator had killed a horse, we proceeded to the place, about five miles from the house. It was a tranquil spot, and one of singular beauty, even in that land. The stream, which a few hundred feet from the lake narrowed to a brook, with its green banks fringed with the graceful bamboo, and the alternate glory of glade and forest, spreading far and wide, seemed fitted for other purposes than the familiar haunt of the huge creature that had appropriated it to himself. A few cane huts were situated a short distance from the river, and we procured from them what men they contained

who were ready to assist in freeing themselves from their dangerous neighbor. The terror which he had inspired, especially since the death of their companion, had hitherto prevented them from making an effort to get rid of him; but they gladly availed themselves of our preparations, and with the usual independence of their character, were willing to do whatever example should dictate to them. Having reason to believe that the alligator was in the river, we commenced operations by sinking nets, upright across its mouth three deep, at intervals of several feet. The nets, which were of great strength, and intended for the capture of the wild buffalo, were fastened to trees on the banks, making a fence to the communication with the lake.

My companion and myself placed ourselves with our guns on either side of the stream, while the Indians with long bamboo-boos, felt for the animal. For some time he refused to be disturbed; and we began to fear that he was not within our limits, when a spiral motion of the water, under the spot where I was standing, led me to direct the natives to it; and the creature slowly moved on the bottom towards the nets, which he sooner touched, than he quietly turned back and proceeded up the stream. This movement was several times repeated, till having no rest in the enclosure, he attempted to climb up the bank. On receiving a ball in the body, he uttered a growl like that of an angry dog, and plunging into the water, crossed to the other side, where he was received with a similar salutation, discharged directly into his mouth. Finding himself attacked on every side, he renewed his attempts to ascend the banks; but whatever part of him appeared was bored with bullets, and feeling that he was hunted, he forgot his own formidable means of attack, and sought only safety from the troubles which surrounded him.

A low spot which separated the river from the lake a little above the nets, was unguarded, and we feared that he would succeed in escaping over it. It was here necessary to stand firmly against him; and in several attempts which he made to cross, we turned him back with spears, bamboo, or whatever first came to hand. He once seemed determined to force his way, foaming with rage, and rushed with open jaws and gnashing his teeth, with a sound so ominous to be despised, appeared to have his full energies aroused, when his career was stopped by a large bamboo thrust violently into his mouth, which he ground to pieces, and the fingers of the holder were so paralyzed that, for some minutes he was incapable of resuming his gun.

The natives had now become so excited as to forget all prudence, and the women and children of the little hamlet had come down to the shore, to share in the general enthusiasm. They crowded to the opening, and were so unmindful of their danger that it was necessary to drive them back with some violence. Had the monster known his own strength, and dared to have used it, he would have gone over the spot with a force which no human power could have withstood, and would have crushed or carried with him into the lake about the whole population of the place.

It is not strange that personal safety was forgotten in the excitement of the scene. The tremendous brute galled with wounds and repeated defeat, tore his way through the foaming waters, glancing from side to side in the vain attempt to avoid his fate, then rapidly plunging up the stream, he grounded on the shallows, and turned back frantic and bewildered at his circumscribed position. At length, maddened with suffering and desperate with continued persecution, he rushed furiously to the mouth of the stream, burst through two of the nets, and I threw down my gun in despair, for it looked as though his way, at last, was clear to the wide lake. But the third net stopped him, and his teeth and legs got entangled in all. This gave us a chance of closer warfare with lances, such as are used against the wild buffalo. We had set for this weapon at the commencement of the attack, and found it much more effective than guns. Entering a canoe, we plunged lance after lance into the alligator, as he struggled in the water, till a wood seemed to be growing from him, which moved silently above, while the body was concealed below. His endeavors to extricate himself, lashed the water into foam, mingled with blood, and there seemed no end to his vitality or decrease to his resistance, till a lance struck him directly through the middle of the back, which an Indian, with a heavy piece