

## TIGER-HUNTING IN JAVA.

THE tiger has always been the type of ferocity and stealthy cruelty; and the annals of the chase furnish no stories more exciting than those which relate to the varied means employed by the hunters of different nations to destroy this terrible enemy of their flocks and herds, an enemy whose cunning is only equalled by its rapacity.

In India, the officers of our army and other Europeans, principally Englishmen, contrive to wage perpetual, and not altogether unsuccessful, warfare against the foe, although the loss of human life from the attacks of savage beasts is still somewhat startling. Notwithstanding that during two years the Government paid 14,386 rupees for the destruction of 4225 wild animals, there were killed in 1859 six men, one woman, and 467 children, besides 119 cases of injury; and in 1860, nine men, four women, and 482 children, besides 110 cases of injury. Of the number of animals destroyed in these two years, forty-seven were tigers, of which twelve were killed in 1859 and thirty-five in 1860.

The native herdsmen of the countries infested by these deadly foes have many original and ingenious devices, some of which exhibit the courage of the hunters and others their marvellous faculty of keeping themselves out of harm's way.

One of the former is practised in India, where the herdsmen who discover a carcass half devoured by a tiger at once construct near the spot a bamboo platform or scaffold some 18 ft. high, to the top of which mounts a man of strength and courage sufficient for the task, armed with a matchlock loaded with a slug of iron, and that thick-backed, keen-edged sword called a "tulwar." There he waits alone until the tiger comes back to his prey, and, upon the first favourable opportunity, fires upon the enemy, who, should he be only wounded, and afterwards attempt to leap upon the stage, must be cut down with the "tulwar" or dispatched by the matchlocks of the party who have retired to a safer vicinity.

Others of the more timid natives resort to poisoning the carcass of the stolen bullock, and those of an inventive genius construct traps, some of which are remarkable for their simplicity. One of these is similar to the ordinary brick bird-trap made by our own country boys, and consists of a sort of box formed of strong stakes, and with a looking-glass placed in such a position that the tiger will see his own reflection, and, with feline curiosity, advance to inspect it, and ultimately clamber into the inclosure. Once there, the heavily-weighted lid shuts upon him, and he is soon despatched. The plan of the people of Oude is simpler still. They catch their tigers there with birdlime of a very powerful description. Having discovered the track to the beast's lair, they spread this birdlime upon the broad leaves of the praus-trees, and, strewing the smeared leaves about, retire to await the result. Let but the tiger tread upon one of these leaves, and his destruction is almost certain; for, in his efforts to disengage it from his paw, he becomes so angry that he is sure to plaster his hide and tail with two or three more of the offensive impediments. Then he begins to bite, and roar, and roll, and is easily destroyed by a shower of bullets.

A simpler and perhaps a bolder method is to construct a strong bamboo cage, with the bars pretty far

apart, and to carry it to the jungle, where the hunter, armed with the tulwar, gets inside and waits for his antagonist. Once smelling the man, the tiger will attempt to get at him through the bars of the cage, and, rearing himself against their slippery surface, receives the sharp and heavy weapon full upon him or has it thrust through his heart.

In Java these bamboo screens or cages are used for hunting the tiger, but there they are employed by several men in concert, who go out with the intention of surprising the dreadful brute into a helplessness which leads to his death. A Dutch farmer, having received a nocturnal visit from the enemy, summons several Malays to his assistance, and at once endeavours to track the robber to his lair. Having succeeded, he summons his party, and each of these Malay attendants provides himself with a number of bamboos strongly strung together like a hurdle, and carried in the same way as the Roman fasces, or a ramoneur of modern times. Arrived at the tiger's den, the men advance under cover of their bamboo hurdles until the prey is not only surrounded but immensely astonished at the extraordinary phenomenon which presents itself; then they gradually inclose him with the light but slippery wall, and while he crouches in mingled wrath and terror, a bold and experienced hunter enters behind and dispatches him with the terrible Malay "creese." Then the rest emerge from behind their screens; the trophy is borne home on a triumphal bier, and his skin adorns the couch of the chief of the expedition.

It is one of the Royal pastimes of Java to organise a fight between a tiger and a buffalo trained for the purpose. It is a savage and sickening spectacle, the tiger being generally kept for days without food; while, if it should flag in coming to the contest, it is frequently stimulated by fire and scalding water to renewed exertions certain to end in death, mostly by the horns of the practised buffalo, or, if victorious, by the bullets of the guards. Melville, in his narrative of life in Java, says that in some districts much infested by tigers there is a regularly-organised tiger guard, whose business it is to keep watch at night, and without whom it is never considered safe to travel after dark.