

## TANTALUS—TEXAS.

"If I may trust your love," she cried,  
"And you would have me for a bride.  
Ride over yonder plain, and bring  
Your flask full from the Mustang spring;  
Fly, fast as ever eagle's wing  
O'er the Llano Estacado!"

He heard, and bowed without a word,  
His gallant steed, he lightly spurred;  
He turned his face, and rode away  
Toward the grave of dying day,  
And vanished with its parting ray  
On the Llano Estacado.

Night came and found him riding on,  
Day came, and still he rode alone;  
He spared not spur, he drew not rein  
Across that broad, unchanging plain  
Till he the Mustang spring might gain  
On the Llano Estacado.

A little rest, a little draught  
Hot from his hand, and quickly quaffed;  
His flask was filled, and then he turned  
Once more his speed the magnum spurned,  
Once more the sky above him burned,  
On the Llano Estacado.

How hot the quivering landscape glowed!  
His brain seemed boiling as he rode;  
Was it a dream, a drunken one,  
Or was he really riding on?  
Was that a skull that gleamed and shone  
On the Llano Estacado?

"Brave steed of mine, brave steed!" he cried,  
"So often true, so often tried,  
Bear up a little longer yet!"  
His mouth was black with blood and sweat,  
Heaven! how he longed his lips to wet  
On the Llano Estacado!

And still, within his breast, he held  
The precious flask so late filled.  
Oh, for a drink! But well he knew  
If empty it should meet her view,  
Her scorn; but still his longing grew  
On the Llano Estacado.

His horse went down. He wandered on,  
Giddy, blind, beaten and alone.  
While on a cushioned couch you lie,  
Oh, think how hard it is to do  
Beneath the cruel, cloudless sky,  
On the Llano Estacado.

At last he staggered, stumbled, fell,  
His day had come, he knew full well,  
And raising to his lips the flask,  
The end, the object of his task,  
Drank to her, more she could not ask.  
Ahi! the Llano Estacado!

That night in the Praesidio  
Beneath the torchbights' wavy glow,  
She danced, and never thought of him,  
The victim of a woman's whim,  
Lying, with face upturned and grin;  
On the Llano Estacado.

—Joaquin Miller.

## THE TIGER'S BREATH.

BY HENRY W. FRENCH.

"Why do you put me up in a tree,  
Omerkahn, while the barsa saheb stands  
on the ground? Do you think me a  
coward?"

Omerkahn touched his closed hands  
solemnly to his dark forehead as he replied, "The bravest man, saheb, is not  
safe to face the tiger, till he has felt the  
tiger's breath."

I had heard that proverb before, but  
never supposed that it really meant any  
more than my own nursery rhyme about  
salt on the diekey bird's tail. There  
was no help for it, however, for Omer-  
kahn was conducting the hunt, so I ac-  
cepted his proverb as a polite way of  
assuring me that in reality he did not  
consider me a coward, and disposed of  
myself upon the branch where he di-  
rected, merrily resolving to be on the  
alert till I showed the stolid Hindoo his  
mistake, and then gave him a piece of  
my offended mind.

This was my first experience, and I  
felt as brave as anyone has a right to  
under such circumstances. I was a  
novice in India and my host, the "barsa  
saheb," as he was called about his plan-  
tation, had taken me into the hills for an  
initiation.

No sooner had we arrived at his plan-  
tation than there came an appeal from  
the nearest village that he rid them of  
a man-eating tiger that had settled in  
their neighborhood. Omerkahn was  
the native superintendent of my host's  
farm and at once received his orders to  
organize a hunt.

There were several guests, all well  
mounted, and early in the morning we  
rode out to the village. The tiger had  
been located in a jungle two miles away.  
He had made an extraordinary raid the  
night before, taking both a man and a  
calf before he was satisfied, and there  
was no doubt about finding him en-  
sconced in his lair, sleeping of the  
effects.

Omerkahn arranged us, first in a half-  
circle, 200 yards from the jungle, while  
he, at the head of a hundred or more  
natives, entered the dense grove from  
the opposite side. They were the beaters,  
and with sticks and torches and tom-toms  
and strong lungs they began the greatest  
racket possible. They were arranged in  
a long line and worked their way toward  
us, intent on frightening the tiger out of  
the jungle into our semi-circle, where,  
according to the position in which he  
appeared, we were to have our turns at  
shooting.

It was an hour of intense excitement,  
each hoping the tiger would show him-  
self in his particular division, but the  
beaters came out without finding him at  
all. They were thoroughly exhausted  
and declared that the tiger was not there.

"But I tell you that he is!" exclaimed  
our host, impatiently. "No tiger ever  
started on a pilgrimage after such a sup-  
per as he had last night."

He dismounted, and leaving his horse  
with a coolie he deliberately entered the  
jungle on foot. Seeing this, we all fol-  
lowed his example, in spite of a caution  
from Omerkahn.

The barsa saheb was an experienced  
tiger hunter, and in half an hour he  
pointed to a dark spot under some bushes,  
saying to a coolie, "Throw a stone in  
there."

The stone disappeared without strik-  
ing anything.

"There's a hole there at all events,"  
the barsa saheb muttered, himself creep-  
ing a little nearer and throwing in a  
large stone with all his strength.

Suddenly the air began to tremble.  
There was no distinct sound, but it was  
like the first breath of a great organ.

"He is there," said the barsa saheb,  
and it was then that Omerkahn hastily  
placed his forces, which resulted in my  
being safely lodged on the limb, with  
what I considered a doubtful compi-  
ment.

Then the order was given to burn him  
out, and while Omerkahn and one or  
two coolies built a fire as close to the  
mouth of the cave as possible, the barsa  
saheb took a position beside the trunk of  
a tree directly in front and perhaps  
ten feet away.

The jungle was so thick that not a  
ray of sunlight fell anywhere about us.  
The muzzle of the gun was in the

creature's way. He caught it in his jaws  
and gave it a savage jerk. The involuntary  
action of his muscles in clutching the  
rifle, to prevent its being torn away,  
pulled the trigger. The tiger recoiled  
and with one spasm fell dead upon the  
ground. The bullet had pierced the roof  
of his mouth and lodged in his brain,  
thanks only to himself.—[St. Louis Re-

view.]

## ABOUT CORNCOBS.

A Chapter on the Many Uses to Which  
They Can Be Put.

It was like twilight, and the fire lit it  
up with a frightful, ghostly glare, while  
on every side sounded the cries of  
frightened birds and animals.

As soon as the fire was burning well  
the coolies crept away, while Omerkahn  
caught some of the blazing sticks, threw  
them directly into the mouth of the  
cave and sprang back. He was gone  
too quick. I saw the barsa saheb's rifle  
leap to his shoulder. His acute ear had  
caught a change in those deep, rumbling  
notes to which we were becoming  
accustomed.

In his haste the Hindu had stumbled  
and fallen upon his back. The next instant  
the very ground seemed to shake as  
the air had trembled before. There  
was a terrific crash, like a sharp peal of  
thunder. A huge form burst from the  
shrubbery half concealing the entrance  
to the cave and a royal Bengal tiger was  
literally girding through the air. He  
swept like a dark cloud over the darting  
flames and prostrate form of Omerkahn.  
His huge fore paws were extended. His  
eyes were shut. His great jaws, which  
had so recently crushed the life out of a  
human being, were stretched wide open.  
His long, savage teeth gleamed in the firelight as he passed over it.

He was not leaping toward me. He  
could not by any possibility reach me,  
yet the sound of that roar and the sight  
of that huge, tawny body as it swept the  
flames filled me with such terror as I  
never felt before. It caught my breath  
away. My heart stood still. I clutched  
my rifle, utterly helpless.

No, I was not to be trusted to face a tiger.  
There was no doubt of that. In blank astonishment I saw the barsa saheb  
standing calmly by the tree. I saw the  
ferocious beast came abreast of him.

I saw him lean behind the tree as he  
fired, and the next instant, with a wild yell,  
the tiger struck the ground not five feet from where the barsa saheb  
had stood. For a moment it lay collied  
where it fell, a great mass of fur, then  
gave one fearful contortion and stretched  
itself to its full length, shuddered and died.

Even then I trembled from head to  
foot as I climbed down from the tree,  
and hardly dared to approach the lifeless  
mass.

I did my best to be markedly civil to  
Omerkahn through the rest of the day,  
and quietly made up my mind that it  
would take more than a feeling a tiger's  
breath to make me face to face a tiger.

It is strange how easy it is to leap  
from one conclusion to its opposite; but  
I had an opportunity to discover another  
mistake a short time afterward.

Mounted on elephants, my friend and  
I were making a trip into the interior  
toward my destination. The weather was  
so hot that we rode early in the morning  
and just before dark. I was sitting in my howdah, half asleep from the  
effect of the heat and the peculiar  
motion of the elephant, when I was suddenly  
roused by a shrill shriek from the elephant,  
accompanied by a quick jerk, a sharp ejaculation from the mahout sitting  
on his head and a loud cry from my friend,  
who was riding, not far behind. Opening my eyes, the first thing I saw was a tiger in midair, apparently flying directly toward me.

"I'll begin to climb in a second," my  
friend shouted, hurrying on behind,  
while my own elephant moved faster and  
faster in an effort to dislodge his burden.

One who has never faced a tiger will  
doubtless think it simple cowardice,  
though I have met many old tiger  
hunters who have recounted the same  
experience at the start—yet, had it not  
been for that warning call from my  
friend, I positively doubt if I should  
have once thought of my rifle. As it  
was, I lifted it mechanically to my  
shoulder. I did not trouble myself about  
the aim, for I could not take my eyes  
from that savage face. I was thoroughly  
numbened and bewildered. My hand  
shook so that more than once my finger  
slipped from the trigger before I mastered  
strength enough to pull.

The moment the report sounded the  
mahout turned the elephant sharply to  
one side. That is one of the common  
regulations of tiger hunting with ele-  
phants, when the tiger is lodged, in  
order to throw him off before he can do  
any damage in case he is not instantly  
killed. It was new to me, however, and  
I was not prepared for it. As the tiger  
came within an inch of following him,  
I could move quickly enough. A fresh  
cartridge was in place in no time; but  
the elephant had not gone twenty feet  
when the tiger lunged, tore the earth for  
an instant, precisely as I have seen a cat  
attempt to tear a rug, then made two cat-  
like bounds and another flying leap,  
landing, in spite of the elephant, within  
six inches of the mahout, sitting upon  
the howdah and held on.

The next I knew my friend was shout-  
ing again.

"Look out for him!" he cried. "He's  
only wounded. He'll spring! Load quick  
and finish him the minute he lands!"

So long as I was not facing the tiger I  
could move quickly enough. A fresh  
cartridge was in place in no time; but  
the elephant had not gone twenty feet  
when the tiger lunged, tore the earth for  
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six inches of the mahout, sitting upon  
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The native lost his turban and only  
wounded, and I stood there at all events."

"There's a hole there at all events,"  
the barsa saheb muttered, himself creep-  
ing a little nearer and throwing in a  
large stone with all his strength.

The tiger began to crawl toward me.

"Shoot! shoot!" my friend yelled, and  
I tried to; but though the hammer was  
already raised and the rifle pointed in  
the direction of the tiger, I could not  
even lift it to my shoulder. I could not  
even pull the trigger where it was.

The tiger and another step. One great  
pace rested on my boot. I could feel the  
sharp claws cutting through the leather.  
I could feel the hot breath on my hands  
as it came rasping out of that yawning  
thrust. I heard my friend's voice again  
and realized that he had come up close  
beside me, but this time I could not  
distinguish a word he said. I could see  
nothing, hear nothing, feel nothing, but  
that tiger.

"Give it to him! Give it to him!"

my friend shouted. I heard his words  
as though they came from a phonograph  
and had no connection with me. I knew  
the danger I was in, and that there was  
no time to lose, but I was absolutely  
powerless.

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