THE GREAT MIGRATION

Issues from the spurs of the andes there were they most likely to accomplish the object of their expedition, and thither  
determined they to go. Having procured mules and a guide, they proceeded onward; and after a journey of days in which,  
from the difficulty of the roads, they had travelled less than miles they found themselves among the foot hills of the  
andes the giant cotopaxi with his snowy cone towering stupendous above their heads. Here they were in the proper  
range of the bears a part of the country famous for the great numbers of these animals and it only remained for them to  
fix their headquarters in some village, and make arrangements for prosecuting the chase. The little town of napo, called  
after the river, and situated as it is in the midst of a forest wilderness, offered all the advantages they required; and,  
choosing it as their temporary residence, they were soon engaged in searching for the black bear of the cordilleras  
Eating a negro’s head. According to their usual practice, they had hired one of the native hunters of the district to act as  
a guide, and assist them in finding the haunts of bruin. In napo they were fortunate in meeting with the very man in the  
person of a mestizo, or half blood indian, who followed hunting for his sole calling. He was what is termed a tigrero, or  
tiger hunter which title he derived from the fact that the jaguar was the principal object of his pursuit. Among all  
spanish americans mexicans included the beautiful spotted jaguar is erroneously termed tigre (tiger), as the puma or  
couguar is called leon (lion). A hunter of the jaguar is therefore denominated a tiger hunter, or tigrero. There are no  
puma or lion hunters by profession as there is nothing about this brute to make it worth while but hunting the jaguar is,  
in many parts of spanish america, a specific calling; and men make their living solely by following this occupation. One  
inducement is to obtain the skin, which, in common with those of the great spotted cats of the old world, is an article of  
commerce, and from its superior beauty commands a good price. But the tigrero could scarce make out to live upon the  
sale of the skins alone; for although a london furrier will charge from to guineas for a jaguar’s robe, the poor hunter in  
his remote wilderness market can obtain little more than a tenth part of this price notwithstanding that he has to risk his  
life, before he can strip the fair mantle from the shoulders of its original wearer. It is evident, therefore, that jaguar  
hunting would not pay, if there was only the pelt to depend upon; but the tigrero looks to another source of profit the  
bounty. In the hotter regions of spanish america, the brazils as well there are many settlements to which the jaguar is not  
only a pest, but a terror. Cattle in hundreds ae destroyed by these great predatory animals; even full grown horses are  
killed and dragged away by them but is this all are the people themselves left unmolested no. On the contrary, great  
numbers of human beings every year fall victims to the rapacity of the jaguars. Settlements attempted on the edge of the  
great montana in the very country where our young hunters had now arrived have, after a time, been abandoned from  
this cause alone. It is a well known fact that where a settlement has been formed, the jaguars soon become more  
plentiful in that neighbourhood: the increased facility of obtaining food by preying on the cattle of the settlers, or upon  
the owners themselves accounting for this augmentation in their numbers. It is precisely the same with the royal tiger of  
india, as is instanced in the history of the modern settlement of singapore. To prevent the increase of the jaguars then, a  
bounty is offered for their destruction. This bounty is sometimes the gift of the government of the country, and  
sometimes of the municipal authorities of the district. Not unfrequently private individuals, who own large herds of   
cattle, give a bounty out of their private purses for every jaguar killed within the limits of their estates. Indeed. It is not  
an uncommon thing for the wealthy proprietor of a cattle estate (hacienda de ganados) to maintain one or more tigreros  
in his service just as gamekeepers are kept by european grandees whose sole business consists in hunting and destroying  
the jaguar. These men are sometimes pure Indians, but, as a general thing, they are of the mixed or mestizo race. It need  
hardly be said that they are hunters of the greatest courage. They require to be so; since an encounter with a full grown  
jaguar is but little less dangerous than with his striped congener of the indian jungles. In these conflicts, the tigreros  
often receive severe wounds from the teeth and claws of their terrible adversary; and, not unfrequently, the hunter  
himself becomes the victim. You may wonder that men are found to follow such a perilous calling, and with such slight   
inducement for even the bounty is only a trifle of a dollar or differing in amount in different districts, and according to  
the liberality of the bestower. But it is in this matter as with all others of a like kind where the very danger itself seems  
to be the lure. The tigrero usually depends upon fire arms for destroying his noble game; but where his shot fails, and it  
is necessary to come to close quarters, he will even attack the jaguar with his machete a species of half knife half sword,  
to be found in every spanish american cottage from California to chili. Very often the jaguar is hunted without the gun

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