THE GREAT MIGRATION

talking refuge in it, will there remain even to die in his den. If the wound has been a fatal knowing this habit of the  
animal, our hunters perceived that they had no chance of again setting their eyes up on the bear, except by cutting down   
the tree; and they resolved to adopt this method, and fell the great sycamore to the ground. The darkey was despatched  
to the plantation; and soon returned with half a dozen of the brethren, armed with axes pouchskin heading the sable  
band. Without further delay the chopping began; and the white chips flew out from the great trunk in all direction. In   
about an hour’s time the sycamore came crashing down, carrying a number of smaller trees along with it. The hunters.  
Who expected that the bear would at once spring forth, had taken their position to cover the mouth of the cavity with  
their guns; but to their surprise, the tree fell, and lay as it had fallen. Without any signs of bruin. This was strange  
enough; for, as the negroes alleged, in all similar cases the bear is certain to charge out upon the fall of a tree that  
contains him a sapling was now obtained, and inserted into the cavity at first with caution, but after a time it was   
punched in with all the force that pouchskin could put into his arm. He could feel the bear quite distinctly; but poke the  
animal as he might, it would not stir. It was suggested that they should cut into the trunk at a place opposite to where  
the bear was encased and then they could drag him out at will; and, although this would cost a good deal of trouble, it   
appeared to be the only mode of reaching the obstinate animal. This course was followed, therefore; and a cross section  
being made of the hollow trunk, the shaggy hair was at length reached, and then the body of bruin, who was found to be   
dead as a nail they no longer wondered that he had paid no heed to the punching of the pole. The bullet of alexis had   
traversed his huge body in a longitudinal direction, until it had lodged in a vital part, and of course, it was this that had  
deprived him of life. He would therefore, have died all the same, and in this tree den, too, whether they had pursued him  
or not. Our hunters learnt from their negro assistants a singular fact in relation to the black bear, and that is, that the  
tree cavity in which the animal often takes shelter, or goes to sleep, is rarely of greater width than his own body in most  
cases it is so narrow, that he cannot turn round in it nor has it any lair at the bottom wide enough for him to lie down  
upon. It follows, therefore, that he must sleep in a standing position, or squatted upon his hams. It is attitude he   
makes his descent into the cavity, and in the same way comes down the trunk of the tree, when at any making his  
departure from his den. From this it would appear that the upright attitude is as natural to this animal, as that of resting  
on all fours, or even lying prostrate on the ground; for it is well known that farther to the north where the winters are  
more severe, and where the black bear hybernates for a short season he often takes his nap in a tree cavity. Which his  
body completely fills, without the possibility of this turning round in it one precaution he takes, and that is, to scrape off  
all the rotten wood around the sides of the cavity; but for what purpose he exercices this curious instinct, neither hunter  
nor naturalist can tell. Perhaps it is that the projections may not press against his body, and thus render his couch  
uncomfortable our young hunters found this bear one of the largest of his species, and his skin, after the mud had been  
 washed off, proved to be an excellent specimen. Of course, they coveted no other; but for all that they had the pleasure  
of being present at the death of several bears. Killed in the great hunt that came off on the appointed day. A deer chase  
was also got up for their special entertainment during which a cougar was treed and killed an event of rarer occurrence  
than even the death of a bear; for the cougar is now one of the scarcest quadrupeds to be met with in the forests of  
north american. Another entertainment which, the planter provided for his guests was barbecue a species of festival  
peculiar to the backwoods of america, and which on account of this peculiarity, deserves a word or of description. The   
squatter’s bargain. As we have just said, the barbecue is a festival which especially belongs to the backwoods settlements,  
although it has now become known even in the older states, and often forms a feature in the great political meetings of  
an election campaign losing, however, much of its true character in the elaborate adornments and improvements   
sometimes bestowed upon it. When alexis and Ivan strolled down in the early morning to the quiet glade which had  
been selected as the scene of this rural festivity, they found there a noisy and bustling crowd. A monstrous fire of logs   
enough to roast not only a single ox, but a hecatomb of oxen, was blazing near the edge of the glade, while a half dozen   
chattering negroes were busy digging a great pit close by. This pit, when entirely excavated, measured some or feet in   
length, by or in width, and perhaps in depth; and was lined with smooth flat stones. As soon as the logs had ceased to  
flame and smoke, and were fast falling into a mighty heap of glowing ruddy coals, they were shovelled hastily into the pit.  
Another party of negroes had been busy in the woods, searching out the slender of the pawpaw (asimina

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