





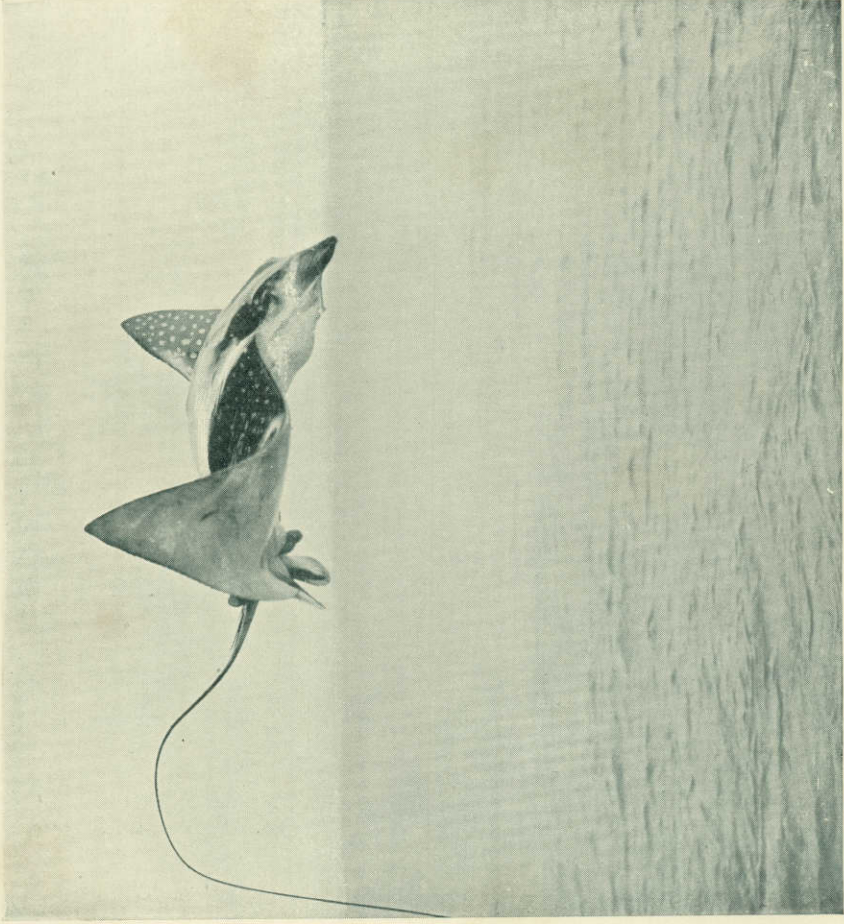




THE GIANT FISH OF  
FLORIDA







A WHIP RAY LEAPING.



THE GIANT FISH  
OF  
FLORIDA

*W. A. P. ...*

BY  
J. TURNER-TURNER

WITH 48 ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE

THE sea has its big game as well as the land, and there are some of us—the name of Mr. W. H. Grenfell, M.P., at once occurs in this connection—who have derived much sport from its pursuit. Whether, as Mr. Grenfell and others would seem to indicate, the tunny of the Mediterranean, which is identical with the tuna of American waters, may yet be recognised as a sporting fish by British anglers has to be seen ; meanwhile the coast of America, and more particularly that of Florida and Mexico, is the recognised resort of those who angle for the biggest that the sea has to give.

In this volume I have endeavoured to lay before fellow sportsmen at home some of the charms of fishing for tarpon and the other rangers of the Gulf. The tarpon, of course,

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stands first ; indeed, there are many visitors to those parts who will fish for nothing else, thus losing many excellent opportunities of sport on days that are too rough for them to get out on the tarpon grounds. No attempt has been made at anything in the nature of an exhaustive list of the sea fish of Florida, which might easily have been gathered from one or other of the American standard works on the subject, such as the invaluable volumes by Jordan and Evermann, published under the auspices of the United States National Museum. Only fish that are likely to attract the notice of the angler have been figured and briefly described, and this from the sporting rather than from the natural-history point of view. Nor have I devoted much space to the remaining fauna of the coast and islands ; although a few conspicuous birds like the cormorant and pelican, and an occasional reptile, such as the turtle and alligator, the pursuit of which may pass an otherwise wasted hour, have claimed a place in these notes.

Much interest attaches to the realistic photographs with which these pages are illustrated. One of the first anglers in this country to inspect them was Mr. F. G. Aflalo, a fishing enthusiast to whom I am indebted in no small measure for the final arrangement of my notes, and he at once pronounced them to be certainly the most remarkable in their own way that had ever passed through his hands. They are all from the natural (not mounted) fish, and the effects were obtained by a simple, though careful, arrangement of pegs and sheeting.

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I think that I may claim for them a correctness that, while combining the impressions of both, could never have been obtained by either the brush or camera unaided. My thanks are also due to Professor George A. Boulenger, who, with Mr. Aflalo, identified as far as possible the subjects of my photographs.

There are but one or two really successful photographers of living fish under water, and these artists must obviously confine their efforts to comparatively small fish in the confinement of aquarium tanks. Now, a considerable observation of fish at home and abroad under every variety of conditions has persuaded me (though I hardly expect the statement to pass unchallenged) that the narrow confines of the aquarium tank tend to cramped and unnatural attitudes in the subjects; and this contention seems to me abundantly substantiated by a careful comparison of the otherwise excellent photographs from time to time published, and the best studies of the best fish painters. My own system of illustration combines the two, and in great measure, I venture to think, obviates many of the faults of both. Constant observation of the fish in their natural habitat impresses on me their every attitude, and, while unfortunately not possessed of the necessary talent to transfer these groups to canvas, there is no insuperable difficulty in the way of pegging the various subjects in just the positions they assumed before my eyes an hour or two earlier. The camera does the rest.

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Tarpon fishing is still in its infancy. New methods and grounds will be discovered. Meanwhile, it is a congenial task to tell the story of the big fish of Florida seas, not from hearsay or printed reports, but from personal and vivid experience.

J. T. T.

*Cavalry Club, Christmas, 1901.*

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