

OUR PAGE OF SPORTS.

RHINOCEROS HUNTING.

"ALL that night we slept as peacefully as though we had been in a comfortable hotel, and as soon as the time arrived prepared for our journey in search of a rhinoceros.

"In the front of the waggon we hung the two lion skins as trophies of our valour,

"We had now arrived at the foot of some mountains and so continued our journey across them, and then descended into an extensive plain covered with three thorn shrubs and abounding in pit-falls for catching wild animals.

"After travelling about eight miles over the plain we again fell in with the river, and then winding again down the road came upon the bones of a rhinoceros which our bushmen informed me had been shot by one of their countrymen, who had got possession of a gun and had learnt the use of it.

"Here I fell in with a herd of hannas or elanets, and so commanding the caravan to follow I singled out one and putting lightning to his speed, I made after him.

"It was an exciting chase of about two miles, and I was fortunate enough to bring him down, the caravan soon after coming up. We soon had him skinned, and cutting the meat into slices, laid it on the bushes to dry, an operation soon performed by the sun. The rest we cooked for our present uses, and then proceeding a few miles further found it necessary to halt for the night, which passed without any incident worth recording.

"We had scarcely proceeded four miles the next day, when we fell in with four wandering bushmen, who, to my great delight, informed me that the day before they had fallen in with three large rhinoceroses and offered to point out the spot, which information having been rewarded by presents, caused great joy, setting them dancing, singing, and pointing to the skins of the dead lions.

"It was, therefore, agreed that we should set out on the morrow, and the bushmen we had fallen in with should act as guides to conduct us to the haunts of the animals I so ardently desired to see.

"I was much struck by seeing on the head of one of the men (the chief I presume) an unusually large fur cap.

"It was made of spring buck skin, of a shape far extending behind the head and intended to have as much as possible the appearance of that animal's back. This was for the purpose of deceiving the game and of enabling the wearer as he creeps along between the bushes to approach the animal within reach of his arrows; it is called a *be creeping cap* (Bekruip Muts), and is only worn when in pursuit of game.

"The next morning we started in pursuit, of the rhinoceros, and had not proceeded far, when to my great surprise, we came upon a large kraal.

"It was full of men, women, and children, who having been informed of our intention to hunt the rhinoceros, came out to meet us.

The sun was then two hours' high, our road leading us right through the kraal.

"We were stopped by the crowd, who gathered round us and who seemed half crazy with joy. It was a laughable scene.

"Old women skipping and dancing about with clots

"Stop a minute, massa, little Breenk see de fun too."

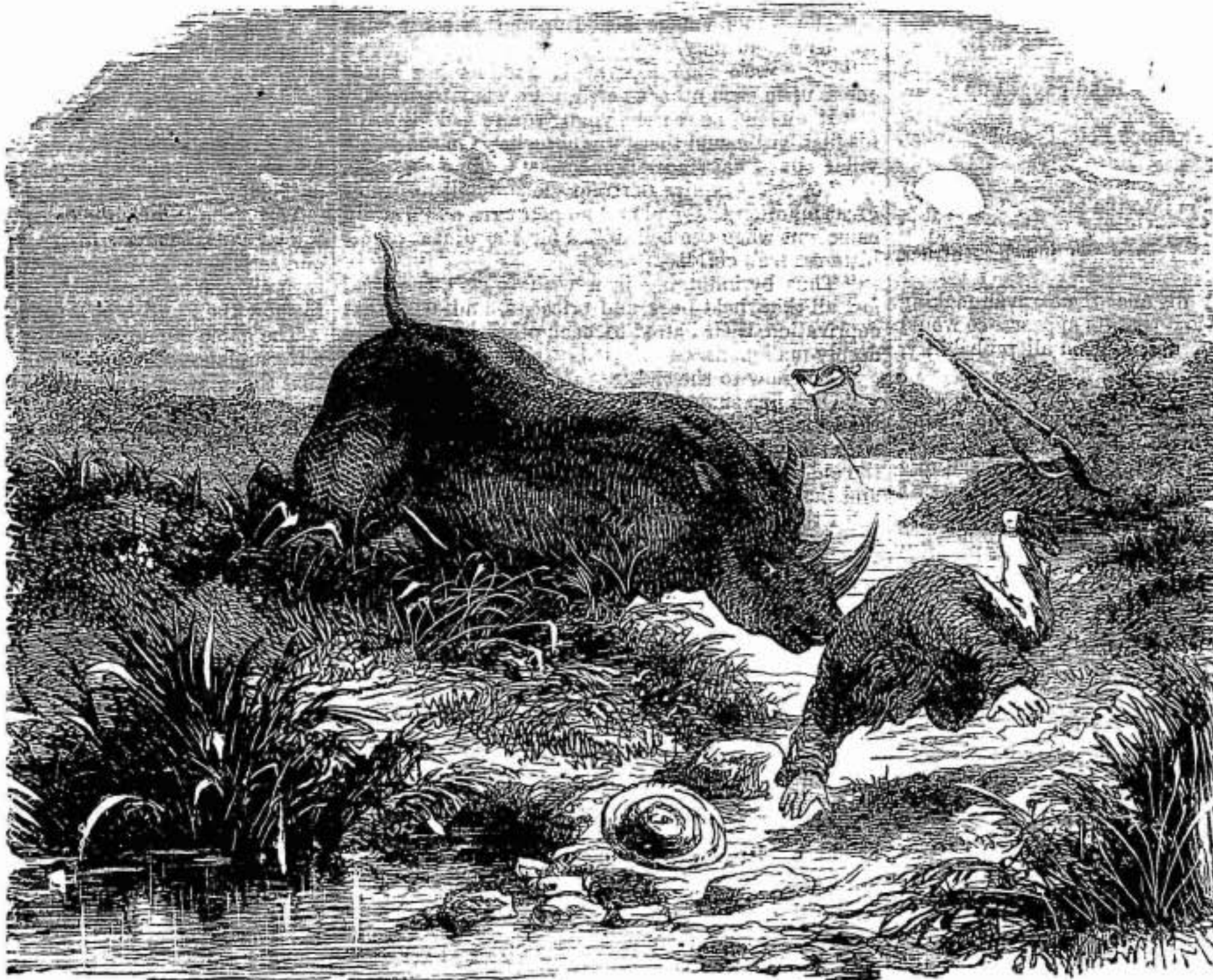
"The voice was that of the merry little negro, who having recovered from the claws of the lion, was jumping and skipping as usual.

"I assented to his accompanying me, but cautioned him to be very careful.

"Oh, massa, me be berry careful,' and so saying, we started.

"In approaching them, it is necessary to do so against the wind; their sense of smell and hearing is so keen and nice, that they can tell at any great distance when a man is approaching them or not, and then they instantly take alarm, and move off to some more sequestered spot.

"But the dangerous part of the game is that, when they are thus disturbed, they sometimes become furious, and take it into their heads to pursue their enemy, and then if they once get sight of the hunter, it is impossible for him to escape, unless he possesses great coolness and presence of mind, which in such a case is not always to be found. Knowing all this,



"MY FOOT SLIPPED, AND I WENT HEADLONG."

of red ochre hanging from their hair, and a tremendous protuberance of petticoat behind; laughing and clapping their hands, and all jabbering to me at the same time, without the slightest possibility of my understanding them. Then a number of old men, their faces daubed with red ochre, came dancing about me, stopping my horse and the whole retinue with their extravagant gestures.

"But when it was announced that the rhinoceros was close upon us, they shouted, and sang out loudly, and made room for us to pass, which we gladly did, trotting off at full speed.

"On we went briskly, while the bushmen kept steadily on before us, and at such a pace that I could scarcely keep up with them; the road was so thickly covered with stones and large fragments of rock, that my horse could hardly keep his footing, so that I was obliged to call out to them to slacken their pace.

"The beautiful ease of motion, and the flexibility of those men, quite astonished me.

"Onward we went, and the sun was just setting when we reached the western edge of the mountain; great care was required in descending the rugged, pathless side of it, and we were fortunate in accomplishing it before twilight was withdrawn.

"In half-an-hour after this, having ridden at least fourteen miles since leaving the kraal, we arrived at the spot where the rhinoceros was lying.

"As the hunting of this animal is attended with great danger, I resolved to rest for the night, and so, enjoining upon my people the necessity for the greatest silence, we were all of us soon at rest.

"The sun had scarcely risen, when I sprang up, leaving the rest of the camp buried in a deep repose.

As the mist arose from off the plains, I could see in the distance two animals like large hogs feeding.

"My game,' said I, as I threw my rifle over my shoulder, placed my haversack round the other, and started off.

little Breenk and I went carefully to work.

"We took a long circuit against the wind, and in so doing had to ford a pretty deep stream, the shallowest part was up to my arm-pits; so I crossed first, holding my trusty rifle well above my head, and telling the nigger boy I would return for him. Having landed the rifle safely, I forded the stream again and got the mischievous imp on my shoulders, bidding him sit quiet. It was of little use telling him that.

"He jerked and jumped about to such an extent that I lost my footing, and down we went, narrowly escaping with our lives.

"A good ducking in the country we were in did not matter much, and so, when we landed, we laughed heartily at the fun.

"It was now time to look after the rhinoceroses, and ascending a small part of the bank, I sighted them still quietly feeding.

"I was well aware of their imperfection of sight, and, therefore, had nothing to fear on that score.

"After many long tracks I got, as I thought, well within shot, and lying down, prepared accordingly.

"The animal out of the two I selected was a male of large size, and at him I made up my mind to let drive.

"I looked to my rifle, and saw that all was right.

"But suddenly a yell broke forth from the boy, as if bitten by something.

"It was so; and the mischief was done. The great male rhinoceros wheeled round as well as his unwieldy body would let him, and in another moment he was dashing at us.

"I fired at him, but the ball flew aside, as harmless as though it had been sent against a granite wall.

"On he came, and was close upon me. I, therefore, threw the rifle into some thick bushes, the haversack went flying after it; and just as I had gained the stream, my foot slipped and I went headlong into it, Master Rhinoceros just missing me.

"I kept under water for some distance, and when I popped my head up he was some little distance off, and appeared to be very anxiously looking after his friend—myself.

"I managed to swim further down the stream, and then landing, made my way back along the tall grass, so as to completely outflank him.

"The next thing I had to hunt after was the rifle and the haversack, and so I crawled carefully to the bush where I had thrown it.

"Happily it was there uninjured, and so was the haversack.

"But where was little Breenk?

"I dare not call—not even whistle—and so I listened.

"Suddenly I heard a noise in the bush, and looking up, thought some reptile was lurking in it.

"I levelled my rifle.

"When all at once a black head popped up in the bush.

"'Massa, massa, don't shoot Peter!' said a voice. 'Him not a rhiao.'

"It was Peter Breenk, with his face splendidly tattooed by his excursion into the bush.

"Motioning him to be quiet, for I saw the animal moving off, I determined to make my last attack upon it.

"I could see in the distance the caravan making towards me, and I knew that its appearance would considerably disturb it, and that, in all probability, it would make off.

"I examined well my rifle, saw that both barrels were well charged, and then awaited the fitting opportunity.

"It was not long in coming; its great head rose in the air as if scenting something, and its horn I could plainly see.

"It for a moment turned its head aside, leaving the eye open and unprotected.

"I took a cool, deliberate, deadly aim, and fired.

"To my surprise the immense mass rolled upon the earth, and the last of its dying agonies were received by little Peter Breenk and the caravan, the latter having just arrived.

"It was not long before the bushmen and the rest of the men had congregated round him; and then the work began.

"One party lighted fires, while another party was well engaged cutting up, broiling, eating, and talking.

"Upon cutting into him, we found that he had been wounded before, for a couple of bullets were found in his hide, or as some have called, armour, clearly proving that it is not wholly impenetrable.

"The meat was most delicious, resembling in almost every respect our English beef, and the tongue itself would have delighted the greatest epicure as a most dainty dish.

"The reflection of our fires, for here in this country it is seen to a great distance, drew a number of the persons living in a kraal not far off.

"And I directed they should be well supplied, a wish that was carried out. They seemed to me to have most voracious appetites, they eat until nature appeared to be more than satisfied, then smoked and rested for a short time, returning to the charge with renewed vigour, both of teeth and stomach.

"Night had long set in, and having seen that the fires were well supplied with fuel, and set a faithful watch, I lay down to enjoy a repose I very much needed, after the chase and capture of my first rhinoceros."

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Next week our Page of Sports will describe an adventure with a Crocodile.