CHAPTER II

SOUTH AFRICA FIFTY YEARS AGO

By W. Cotton Oswell

WILLIAM COTTON OSWELL: A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

By Sir Samuel W. Baker

One man alone was left who could describe from personal experience the vast tracts of Southern Africa and the countless multitudes of wild animals which existed fifty years ago in undisturbed seclusion; the ground untrodden by the European foot; the native unsuspicious of the guile of a white intruder. This man, thus solitary in this generation, was the late William Cotton Oswell. He had scarcely finished the pages upon the fauna of South Africa when death seized him (May 1, 1893) and robbed all those who knew him of their greatest friend. His name will be remembered with tears of sorrow and profound respect.

Although Oswell was one of the earliest in the field of South African discovery, his name was not world-wide, owing to his extreme modesty, which induced him to shun the notoriety that is generally coupled with the achievements of an explorer. Long before the great David Livingstone became famous, when he was the simple unknown missionary, doing his duty under the direction of his principal, the late Rev. Robert Moffat, whose daughter he married, Oswell made his acquaintance while in Africa, and became his early friend.

At that time Oswell with his companion Murray allied themselves with Livingstone to discover a reported lake of the unknown interior, together with Mrs. Livingstone and their infantine family. This expedition was at the private cost of Oswell and Murray; but, in grateful remembrance of the assistance rendered by Livingstone in communicating with the natives and in originating the exploration, Oswell sent him a present of a new waggon and a span of splendid oxen (sixteen animals), in addition to a thorough outfit for his personal requirements.

Livingstone, in the 'Zambesi and its Tributaries,' dwelt forcibly upon the obligation imposed upon him by Oswell's generosity; but, having submitted the manuscript to his friend for revision, Oswell insisted upon disclaiming the title of a benefactor. After the discovery of the Lake 'Ngami by Livingstone and his party, Oswell received the medal of the French Geographical Society; he was therefore allied with Livingstone, who was the first explorer of modern times to direct attention to the lake system of Africa, which has been developed within the last forty years by successive travellers.

Oswell was not merely a shooter, but he had been attracted towards Africa by his natural love of exploration, and the investigation of untrodden ground. He was absolutely the first white man who had appeared upon the scene in many portions of South Africa which are now well known. His character, which combined extreme gentleness with utter recklessness of danger in the moment of emergency, added to complete unselfishness, ensured him friends in every society; but it attracted the native mind to a degree of adoration. As the first-comer among lands and savage people until then unknown, he conveyed an impression so favourable to the white man that he paved the way for a welcome to his successors. That is the first duty of an explorer; and in this Oswell well earned the proud title of a 'Pioneer of Civilisation.'

As these few lines are not a biography, but merely a faint testimony to one whose only fault was the shadowing of his

own light, I can sincerely express a deep regret that his pen throughout his life was unemployed. No one could describe a scene more graphically, or with greater vigour ; he could tell his stories with so vivid a descriptive power that the effect was mentally pictorial ; and his listeners could feel thoroughly assured that not one word of his description contained a particle of exaggeration.

I have always regarded Oswell as the perfection of a Nimrod. Six feet in height, sinewy and muscular, but nevertheless light in weight, he was not only powerful, but enduring. A handsome face, with an eagle glance, but full of kindliness and fearlessness, bespoke the natural manliness of character which attracted him to the wild adventures of his early life.

He was a first-rate horseman, and all his shooting was from the saddle, or by dismounting for the shot after he had run his game to bay.

In 1861, when I was about to start on an expedition towards the Nile sources, Oswell, who had then retired from the field to the repose of his much-loved home, lent me his favourite gun, with which he had killed almost every animal during his five years' hunting in South Africa. This gun was a silent witness to what its owner had accomplished. In exterior it looked like an ordinary double-barrelled rifle, weighing exactly ten pounds ; in reality it was a smooth-bore of great solidity, constructed specially by Messrs. Purdey & Co. for Mr. Oswell. This useful gun was sighted like a rifle, and carried a spherical ball of the calibre No. 10 ; the charge was six drachms of fine-grained powder. There were no breech-loaders in those days, and the object of a smooth-bore was easy loading, which was especially necessary when shooting from the saddle. The spherical ball was generally wrapped in either waxed kid or linen patch ; this was rolled rapidly between the hands with the utmost pressure ; the folds were then cut off close to the metal with scissors, and the bullet was again rolled as before. The effect was complete ; the covering adhered tightly to the metal, which was now ready for

ramming direct upon the powder-charge, without wads or other substance intervening. In this manner a smooth-bore could be loaded with great rapidity, provided that the powder-charge was made up separately in the form of a paper cartridge, the end of which could be bitten off, and the contents thrust into the barrel, together with the paper covering. The ball would be placed above, and the whole could be rammed down by a single movement with a powerful loading rod if great expedition should be necessary. Although the actual loading could thus be accomplished easily, the great trouble was the adjustment of the cap upon the nipple, which with an unsteady horse was a work of difficulty.

This grand old gun exhibited in an unmistakable degree the style of hunting which distinguished its determined owner. The hard walnut stock was completely eaten away for an inch of surface ; the loss of wood suggested that rats had gnawed it, as there were minute traces of apparent teeth. This appearance might perhaps have been produced by an exceedingly coarse rasp. The fore-portion of the stock into which the ramrod was inserted was so completely worn through by the same destructive action, that the brass end of the rod was exposed to view. The whole of this wear and tear was the result of friction with the 'wait-a-bit' thorns !

Oswell invariably carried his gun across the pommel of his saddle when following an animal at speed. In this manner at a gallop he was obliged to face the low scrubby 'wait-a-bits,' and dash through these unsparing thorns, regardless of punishment and consequences, if he were to keep the game in view, which was absolutely essential if the animal were to be ridden down by superior pace and endurance. The walnut stock thus brought into hasty contact with sharp thorns became a gauge, through the continual friction, which afforded a most interesting proof of the untiring perseverance of the owner, and of the immense distances that he must have traversed at the highest speed during the five years' unremitting pursuit of game upon the virgin hunting-grounds of Southern

Africa. I took the greatest care of this gun, and entrusted it to a very dependable follower throughout my expedition of more than four years. Although I returned the gun in good condition, the ramrod was lost during a great emergency. My man (a native) was attacked, and being mobbed during the act of loading, he was obliged to fire at the most prominent assailant before he had time to withdraw his ramrod. This passed through the attacker's body, and was gone beyond hope of recovery.

There could not have been a better form of muzzle-loader than this No. 10 double-barrel smooth-bore. It was very accurate at fifty yards, and the recoil was trifling with the considerable charge of six drams of powder. This could be increased if necessary, but Oswell always remained satisfied, and condemned himself, but not his gun, whenever a shot was unsatisfactory. He frequently assured me that, although he seldom fired at a female elephant, one bullet was sufficient to kill, and generally two bullets for a large bull of the same species.

Unlike Gordon Cumming, who was accustomed to fire at seventy and eighty yards, Oswell invariably strove to obtain the closest quarters with elephants, and all other game. To this system he owed his great success, as he could make certain of a mortal point. At the same time the personal risk was much increased, as the margin for escape was extremely limited when attacking dangerous game at so short a distance as ten or fifteen paces. When Oswell hunted in South Africa, the sound of a rifle had never disturbed the solitudes in districts which are now occupied by settlers. The wild animals have now yielded up their territory to domestic sheep and cattle ; such are the rapid transitions within half a century ! In those days the multitudes of living creatures at certain seasons and localities surpassed the bounds of imagination ; they stretched in countless masses from point to point of the horizon, and devoured the pasturage like a devastating flight of locusts. Whether they have been destroyed, or whether they have migrated to far distant sanctuaries, it is impossible to determine ;

but it is certain that they have disappeared, and that the report of the rifle which announces the advance of civilisation has dispersed all those mighty hosts of animals which were the ornaments of nature, and the glory of the European hunter. The eyes of modern hunters can never see the wonders of the past. There may be good sport remaining in distant localities, but the scenes witnessed by Oswell in his youth can never be viewed again. Mr. W. F. Webb, of Newstead Abbey, is one of the few remaining who can remember Oswell when in Africa, as he was himself shooting during the close of his expedition. Mr. Webb can corroborate the accounts of the vast herds of antelopes which at that time occupied the plains, and the extraordinary numbers of rhinoceros which intruded themselves upon the explorer's path, and challenged his right of way. In a comparatively short period the white rhinoceros has almost ceased to exist.

Where such extraordinary changes have taken place, it is deeply interesting to obtain such trustworthy testimony as that afforded by Mr. Oswell, who has described from personal experience all that, to us, resembles history. He was accepted at that time as the Nimrod of South Africa, 'par excellence,' and although his retiring nature tended to self-effacement, all those who knew him, either by name or personal acquaintance, regarded him as without a rival; and certainly without an enemy: the greatest hunter ever known in modern times, the truest friend, and the most thorough example of an English gentleman. We sorrowfully exclaim, 'We shall never see his like again.'

INTRODUCTION

By W. Cotton Oswell

I have often been asked to write the stories of the illustrations given in the chapters on South Africa, but have hitherto declined, on the plea that the British public had had quite enough of Africa, and that all I could tell would be very old. As I now stand midway between seventy and eighty I trusted I might, in the ordinary course of nature, escape such an undertaking; but in the end of '91 the best shot, sportsman and writer that ever made Africa his field—I refer to my good friend Sir Samuel Baker—urged me to put my experiences on paper; and Mr. Norton Longman at the same time promising that, if suitable, he would find them a place in the Badminton volume on 'Big Game,' I was over-persuaded, made the attempt, and here is the result.

The illustrations are taken from a set of drawings in my possession by the best artist of wild animal life I have ever known—Joseph Wolf. After describing the scene, I stood by him as he drew, occasionally offering a suggestion or venturing on two or three scrawling lines of my own, and the wonderful talent of the man produced pictures so like the reality in all essential points, that I marvel still at his power, and feel that I owe him most grateful thanks for a daily pleasure. Many of the scenes it would have been impossible to depict at the moment of their occurrence, so that even if the chief human actor had been a draughtsman he must have trusted to his memory. Happily I was able to give my impressions into the hands of a genius who let them run out at the end of his fingers. They are rather startling, I know, when looked through in the space of five minutes; but it must be remembered that they have to be spread over five years, and that these are the few accidents amongst numberless uneventful days. I was once asked to bring these sketches to a house where I was dining. During dinner the servants

placed them round the drawing-room, and on coming upstairs I found two young men examining them intently. 'What's all this?' one asked. 'I don't know,' the other replied. 'Oh, I see now,' the first continued, 'a second Baron Munchausen; don't you think so?' he inquired, appealing to me. We were strangers to each other, so I corroborated his bright and certainly pardonable solution; but they are true nevertheless. I have kept them down to the truth: indeed, two of them fall short of it. I am very well aware that there are two ways of telling a story, one with a clearly defined boundary, the other with a hazy one, over which if your reader or hearer pass but a foot's length he is in the realms of myth. I think I had my full share of mishaps; but I was in the saddle from ten to twelve hours a day for close upon five seasons, and general immunity, perhaps, induced carelessness. I may say now, I suppose, that I was a good rider, and got quickly on terms with my game. I was, however, never a crack shot, and not very well armed according to present notions, though I still have the highest opinion of a Purdey of 10-bore, which burnt five or six drachms of fine powder, and at short distances drove its ball home. This gun did nearly all my work. I had besides a 12-bore Westley-Richards, a light rifle, and a heavy single-barrelled one carrying two-oz. belted balls. This last was a beast of a tool, and once—I never gave it a second chance—nearly cost me my life, by stinging, without seriously wounding, a bull elephant. The infuriated brute charged nine or ten times wickedly, and the number might have been doubled had I not at last got hold of the Purdey, when he fell to the first shot. We had no breech-loaders in those days, save the disconnecting one, and that would have been useless, for we had to load as we galloped through the thick bush, and the stock and barrel would soon have been wrenched asunder or so strained as to prevent their coming accurately into contact again.

The Purdey gun has a second history which gives it more value in my eyes than the good work it did for me. I lent it

to Baker when he went up the Nile, and it had the honour, I believe, of being left with Lady Baker to be used, if required, during her husband's enforced absences. Baker returned it to me with a note apologising for the homeliness of the ramrod—a thornstick which still rests in the ferrules—adding that having to defend themselves from a sudden attack, his man Richarn, being hard pressed whilst loading, had fired the original ramrod into a chief's stomach, from which they had no opportunity of extracting it.

I am sorry now for all the fine old beasts I have killed ; but I was young then, there was excitement in the work, I had large numbers of men to feed, and if these are not considered sound excuses for slaughter, the regret is lightened by the knowledge that every animal, save three elephants, was eaten by man, and so put to a good use. I have no notes, and though many scenes and adventures stand out sharply enough, the sequence of events and surroundings is not always very clear. If my short narrative seems to take too much the form of a rather bald account of personal adventure, I must apologise ; and I may add that the nature and habits generally of the animals I met with are now so well known, and have over and over again been so well described by competent writers, that my relations with a few individuals of their families must be the burden of my song.

I spent five years in Africa. I was never ill for a single day—laid up occasionally after an accident, but that was all. I had the best of companions—Murray, Vardon, Livingstone—and capital servants, who stuck to me throughout. I never had occasion to raise a hand against a native, and my foot only once, when I found a long lazy fellow poking his paw into my sugar tin. If I remember right, I never lost anything by theft, and I have had tusks of elephants, shot eighty miles from the waggons, duly delivered. One chief, and one only, wanted to hector a little, but he soon gave it up. And with the rest of the potentates, and people generally, I was certainly a *persona grata*, for I filled their stomachs, and

thus, as they assured me, in some mysterious way made their hearts white.

There is a fascination to me in the remembrance of the past in all its connections : the free life, the self-dependence, the boring into what was then a new country ; the feeling as you lay under your caross that you were looking at the stars from a point on the earth whence no other European had ever seen them ; the hope that every patch of bush, every little rise, was the only thing between you and some strange sight or scene—these are with me still ; and were I not a married man with children and grandchildren, I believe I should head back into Africa again, and end my days in the open air. It is useless to tell me of the advantages of civilisation ; civilised man runs wild much easier and sooner than the savage becomes tame. I think it desirable, however, that he should be sufficiently educated, before he doffs his clothes, to enjoy the change by comparison. Take the word of one who has tried both states : there are charms in the wild ; the ever-increasing, never-satisfied needs of the tame my soul cannot away with.

But I am writing of close upon fifty years ago. Africa is nearly used up ; she belongs no more to the Africans and the beasts ; Boers, gold-seekers, diamond-miners and experimental farmers—all of them (from my point of view) mistakes—have changed the face of her. A man must be a first-rate sportsman now to keep himself and his family ; houses stand where we once shot elephants, and the railway train will soon be whistling and screaming through all hunting-fields south of the Zambesi.

FIRST EXPEDITION TO AFRICA

Reduced from 12 st. 2 lb. to 7 st. 12 lb. by many attacks of Indian fever caught during a shooting excursion in the valley of the Bhavany River, I was sent to the Cape as a last chance by the Madras doctors ; indeed, whilst lying in a semi-comatose state, I heard one of them declare that I ought to have been dead a year ago ; so all thanks to South Africa, say I ! I gained strength by the voyage, and, shortly after reaching Cape Town, hearing that a Mr. Murray, of Lintrose, near Cupar Angus, had come from Scotland for the purpose of making a shooting expedition to the interior, I determined to join him. The resolve was carried out early in the spring of 1844 (the beginning of the Cape winter) ; we started out from Graham's Town to Colesberg, buying on the way horses, oxen, dogs, waggons, and stores, crossed the Orange River, and set our faces northwards. We were all bitten in those days by Captain —afterwards Sir Cornwallis—Harris, whose book, published about 1837, was the first to give any notion of the capabilities of South Africa for big game shooting, and, Harris excepted, 'we were the first that ever burst into that "sunny" sea'—as sportsmen. Murray was an excellent kind-hearted gentleman, rather too old perhaps for an expedition of this kind, as he felt the alternations of the climate very much ; and no wonder, for I have known the thermometer to register 92° in the shade at 2 P.M., and 30° at 8 P.M. I was younger, and though still weak from the effects of fever, the dry air of the uplands daily gave me vigour, and the absolute freedom of the life was delightful to me. Just at first I had to become accustomed to the many little annoyances of missing oxen, strayed horses, &c. ; but when our waggons became our *home*, and our migratory state our life, all anxious care vanished. Things would be put right somehow ; there was no use worrying ourselves ; what had been yesterday would be to-morrow. What though

the flats between the Orange and Molopo Rivers were full of sameness, they were also full of antelope, gnu, and quagga. These, with the bird and insect life, were all fresh, and made the world very bright around us. These upland flats have been so often described, that I will not bore the reader unnecessarily with an account of them, and besides, I am not writing of the country or its appearance, but have merely undertaken to try and give some idea of the game that once held possession of it; and, indeed, I doubt very much if I could convey any notion at the present time of what it was some fifty years ago, for all the glamour of the wildness and abundant life has long passed away.

On these plains the springbucks were met with in vast herds; for an hour's march with the waggons—say two and a quarter miles—I once saw them to the left of the track, along a slightly rising ground, thicker than I ever saw sheep. I suppose they must have been *trek bokken*; that is, a collection of the herds over an extended area on the move for pasturage. The Hottentot waggon-drivers shot many of them, frequently killing two at a time, they were so closely packed. They were to be counted only by tens of thousands. Formerly, they used often to invade the northern outlying farms of the Boers, and destroy their crops; and though shot in waggon-loads, they would still hang about as long as there was a green blade of anything. They were nearly as bad as the locusts, a flight of which we saw, by the way, a few days after leaving Kuruman, near the 'Chooi,' or large natural salt-pan. We were at breakfast, when far down on the south-east horizon I noticed a wreath as of dark smoke rising rapidly, broadening as it advanced. In a very short time it enveloped us in the form of a locust storm; the whole earth and air were full of them; tens of myriads settled, and myriads of myriads rode on clanking in mimicry of armed cavalry, and crackling like a flame devouring the stubble. Look which way you would—nothing but locusts; they did not hide the sun, but they so obscured his rays that you could look straight at him.

No simile seems so apt to me as that of a heavy snow-storm with large flakes, and this uninterruptedly for two or three hours. Though the land before them was not exactly as the Garden of Eden, verily behind them it was a desolate wilderness. As the cold of night came on, they collected on the bushes in enormous masses, eight or ten feet through, for warmth, weighing them completely to the ground, and they took flight again the next morning after the sun was well up. For two days my oxen never put their heads down; there was nothing found for them to eat. The swarms pass through waste and cultivated land alike, bringing dearth and destruction, and men's hearts fail; but the adversary has arrayed his forces against them, and through the dense flights sweep the wedge-shaped squadrons of the *springkhän vogel*, or locust birds: dark and long of wing like swifts, with white patches beneath the pinion. As squadron after squadron wheels and passes over you, the husks of the locusts fall like hail. The birds are in very large numbers and do their work deftly; before long the air above you is clear, and though the evidence of the curse is upon the earth, and remains, the locusts themselves are soon got rid of, for everything on two legs and four eats them. The Bushmen follow the flights, feed on them, dry them, and keep them in store. One night, Livingstone and I lost our way, and seeing the light of a fire, made for it. Around it sat a family of Bushmen; so, heralding our approach from a safe distance, for fear of a flight of arrows, we introduced ourselves. They welcomed us, and offered us guides and a snack of dried locusts. I ate two or three, and they were not so nasty; something like what old shrimp-shells without the insides might be. These insects are bad enough in their winged, but worse in their early wingless, form, when, as the dreaded '*foot-gangers*' of the Dutch farmer, they roll in living waves over his land, defy all attempts at extermination from their multitude, climb walls, quench lines of small fires placed in the hopes of turning them, cross rivers, millions jumping in, and millions getting over on the living raft. In

both the winged and wingless state they are wonderfully described in chapter ii. of Joel.

On these choois, of which there are many, some of them twenty miles long and half as broad, the effect of mirage is more wonderful than I have ever seen it elsewhere. What seems an antelope grows into an elephant, and with the waving of the gauze returns to its actual form—a bush. By nearly all these salt-pans there is a spring which may perhaps have once played its part in their formation, or be the relic of the cause.

At one period of its history, Africa must have been a better watered country than it is now. In the driest tracts, in the waterless woods, you light unexpectedly on deep eroded channels, coming no whither and going nowhere. It gave me the impression that there had been a gradual uplifting of the surface, and a consequent sinking away of the old torrents and streams. The Bushmen and the elephants dig in these courses for water, which is now never seen on the surface, though the sides are sometimes worn away by its former action, twenty feet down. Over a large area the rainfall is exceedingly small, and in it the trees and grass have adapted themselves to their surrounding conditions. The former all send down long tap-roots through the upper soil to the close substratum, utilising them as the Bushman does the reed in his sucking-holes mentioned elsewhere; the latter grows with fleshy roots, and from the joints are thrown out delicate fibres ending in small tubers which, through the excessive drought and heat, act as reservoirs of moisture, thus sustaining vitality and enabling a bright green carpet to be spread two days after the fall of the rain. The animals, instinct led, follow the waterfall of the storm, and migrate to and fro in narrow zones. The birds do likewise; one beautiful hawk—happily called from his graceful movement *Molela shoquan*, 'he flows as he turns'—is a most assiduous attendant in the green-room of nature. But the thunderstorms are very partial. For two days I have passed through country so drought-stricken that

the bushes were leafless, the twigs dry, the grass dust, the ground iron, and all animal, bird, and even insect life completely absent. In those two days we felt and knew the abomination of desolation, and so did our poor beasts.

Nothing particular happened during our journey between the two rivers. We shot and trekked—one day much like another—and stopped a short time at Kuruman, the station of that grand old patriarch of missionaries, Mr. Moffat, where we received all the kindly hospitality, attention and advice possible from him and Mrs. Moffat—verily the two best friends travellers ever came across. I shall never forget their affectionate courtesy, their beautifully ordered household, and their earnest desire to help us on in every way. He advised us to go to Livingstone, who was then stationed at Mabotsé, 220 miles or so to the northward, and obtain from him guides and counsel for our further wanderings.

We were once nearly in trouble, however, after leaving Kuruman. We had crossed a little stream called, I think, the Meritsani, and one of our men, while cooking some tit-bit of an antelope Murray had shot far away from the camp, carelessly set the grass on fire. Luckily we saw it two miles off, and by clearing the ground, and burning the stubble round the waggons, we escaped. It was a wonderful sight to watch the wall of smoke and flame as it licked up the grass and bush and coiled itself in folds about the tree stems ; birds, insects, and beasts fleeing before it. As it approached our clearing, the heat was intense, and we had some difficulty in restraining the frightened horses and oxen ; but the roaring rolling flame came within thirty yards of us, and then as it touched the edge of our charmed circle died away into nothingness, its disappointment seeming to goad it onward to right and left.

The flat open country held till we reached the Molopo River. The sketch very correctly represents this little stream when we first saw it, and gives a good general idea of the 500 or 600 miles we had come. Seven different kinds of animals were within view, some, especially the quaggas

and the buffaloes, in large herds—springbucks, hartebeests, gnus, &c., filling in the picture; together there could not have been fewer than 3,000. I shot a couple of buffaloes for the camp, and then inspanning passed ahead towards the ridge of low hills, fifteen miles beyond, and running east and west; they told of a coming change of scenery, and the next day we stood on the top of them—to the south 600 miles of rolling plain, very similar to that immediately below, lay between us and the southern sea; but to the north the scene was changed, the well-wooded and watered valley of the Ba-Katla, a broken country full of game, was stretched out before us—in those days a hunter's paradise. For the first time tracks of rhinoceros, giraffe, and other unknown creatures were abundant, and we longed to cultivate the closest relations with them.

Without any just cause I thought myself a better sportsman than my companion, and determined to seek my game alone, in the hope that I might be the first to bag a rhinoceros. All day long I followed, with an attendant Hottentot, a trail of one of these animals, neglecting inferior game, but my experience in African woodcraft was small then, and I believe now that the spoor may have been a week old. At last, tired and disgusted with my want of success in not coming up with the object of my search, I shot an antelope, and returned rather earlier than usual to the waggons, which had been ordered to outspan under the range of hills. It was still daylight when I reached them, and there sat my friend Murray, quiet, cool and calm, very calm indeed. He greeted me with a nod and a smile, and asked me what I had killed? 'A buck,' I answered. He said nothing, but kept on smiling serenely. Presently I noticed a group of Kafirs sitting round their fire, and eating as only Kafirs can eat. 'What are those brutes gorging themselves with?' I asked my quiet friend. 'Oh, only some of the rhinoceroses I shot this afternoon.' I noted the plural, the iron entered into my soul, but I merely said: 'Ah! indeed!' in an easy nonchalant way I flattered myself, as if

the shooting a rhinoceros was a matter of supreme indifference to me in those days, and walked to my own waggon.

Next morning at breakfast my friend offered to show me where the rhinoceroses lived. I was quite meek now, and ready to be introduced to this entirely imaginary locality. At that time we had not to go far to find, and had hardly left the camp a quarter of an hour, when the leading Kafir pointed out a great ugly beast rubbing itself against a tree eighty yards from us. I was off my pony in a second, determined to get to close quarters as soon as, and if possible sooner than, my companion. We both stalked to within twenty yards without being seen, and knelt down, I with the stump of a small tree before me ; we fired together, and while the smoke still hung, I was aware of an angry and exceedingly plain-looking beast making straight at me through it. Luckily he had to come rather uphill to my stump, and his head was a little thrown back, when, within five feet of the muzzle of my gun, he fell, with a shot up his nostril, the powder blackening his already dingy face. This was a *borili* (or sour-tempered one) ; as a rule, the only really troublesome fellow of his family. I remember thinking my first introduction promised a stormy acquaintance, and hoping there might be gentler specimens, who rather liked being shot, or at all events did not resent it so violently. I got two or three times into serious trouble with these lumbering creatures ; but the stories shall be told as they crop up. I may mention here, however, that success in rhinoceros shooting depends very greatly upon the sportsman's kneeling or squatting. I lost many at first by firing from a standing position. The consequence was, that the ball only penetrated one lung, and with the other untouched the beast runs on for miles, unless, of course, the heart happen to be pierced ; whereas, fired from a lower level, the ball passes through both lungs, and brings him up in 100 or 200 yards. A rhinoceros very seldom drops to the shot. Of all I killed, but two fell dead in their tracks. Exclusive of the Quebaaba (*R. Oswellii*), which was probably a variety of the mahoho,

(*R. Simus*), and of which we killed three and saw five, there were three kinds—the Mahoho, the *R. Africanus*, and the *R. Keitloa*.[1] I say 'were,' for whilst I write I hear that the dear old mahoho is extinct. I am very sorry. He was never, I believe, found north of the Zambesi, but between that river and the Molopo, of which we have just spoken, he was formerly in great force. Poor old stupid fellow, too quiet as a rule, though, when thoroughly upset (like a good-natured man in a passion) reckless, he was just the very thing for young gunners to try their 'prentice hand on, and directly the Kafirs got muskets he was bound to go; though, considering the numbers there used to be, I hoped he would have lasted longer. He had no enemies to fear, save man and the hyæna, and the first without fire-arms would have made but little impression on him; for, although sometimes taken in the pitfalls, he was never, so far as I know, killed by spears. The hyæna, when hard pressed for food, would occasionally attack the male, who is formed like the boar, and eat into his bowels from behind; but it was a long business, and not by any means always successful. The 'Cape wolf' must have been very hard set before he attempted it.

I have seen these long-horned, square-nosed creatures in

[1] Another seems to have been evolved recently, if I may draw that inference from a highly-coloured print I see in the shop-windows intituled: 'An African rhinoceros hunt.' A gentleman, on a fiery rearing steed, is engaging the enemy at very close quarters, and, unless he is a left-handed gunner, on the impossible side, as he is riding in the same direction as his quarry, and at its *near* shoulder. He may not be answerable for this position of affairs; it looks awkward, but he appears content, and holds his gun firmly by the middle, muzzle in air. The rhinoceros is the interesting figure in the picture, for he is *mailed*, like the Asiatic variety, and is either a late discovery, or an escaped specimen from the travelling show of some African Wombwell.

Rhinoceroses are puzzles to others besides artists. An old yeoman farmer, many years ago, lay dying near my house; to amuse him I sent some sketches and odds and ends, and received a message thanking me, but putting me straight as to those *two*-horned creatures being rhinoceroses; the rhinoceros had but *one* horn, he had seen it in a book, and it was no use my saying it had two, for it hadn't. I suggested to him that we wanderers, who went far afield for hunting and shooting, had a hand in making the books, but he wouldn't have it, and died a firm believer in one horn.

herds of six and eight, and when in need of a large supply of meat for a tribe, have shot six within a quarter of a mile, with single balls. They had a curious habit which helped the sportsman, and has no doubt led to their too rapid extinction. If you found four or five together, and wounded one mortally, he would run off with the others until he fell, and then the survivors would make a circular procession round him until the gun was again fired, and another wounded. Off they would go again, halting and repeating the performance when the second fell, and so on to the end. The female was an affectionate mother, never deserting her calf, but making it trot before her, until she was mortally wounded, when she seemed to lose her head and shot on in advance, and we then always knew she would not go fifty yards further. Though they were a very meditative inoffensive lot, there was a point at which they drew the line. I once saw Vardon pull a mahoho's tail; this, however, was taking too great a liberty, and if I had not been near he might have suffered, but, as the heavy brute swung round to give chase, a ball at very close quarters stopped him. We have often been obliged to drive them from the bush before camping for the night. They apparently mistook the waggons for some huge new beasts, and were very troublesome; but this hallucination was not confined to the mahoho. A borili in a great passion away to the east of the Limpopo, charged Livingstone's waggon, smashing his iron baking-pot. The borili is fidgety, apparently always in bad health, and constantly on the look out for a tree to scratch his mangy hide against. He has, too, an evil habit of hunting you like a bloodhound. He is the smallest of the three, with a short, snubby head, and a well-defined prehensile lip.

The keitloa, or more equal horned variety, is a mixture in form and temper between the mahoho and the borili; much larger than the latter, with differently shaped body, head, and horns, and less development of lip. The mahoho and quebaaba live on grass, the end of the latter's horn from its downward curve being abraded by contact with the ground as he feeds.

The borili eats bush alone, and the keitloa a mixed diet of grass and bush.

I could never understand the great power and strength of a rhinoceros' horn. It is sessile on the bone of the snout, but not part of, or attached to it ; apparently it is only kept in its place by the thickness of the skin, and yet, as I mention hereafter, a white rhinoceros threw me and my horse clear up into the air. Of course, the enormous muscles of the neck bore the brunt of the lift, but the horn did not suffer in any way. It is quite intelligible that the fact of it not being cemented to the bone would render it less liable to fracture at the base, and in itself it is tough enough, though consisting only of agglutinated hair ; but I am only wondering that, attached as it is, it should possess the necessary rigidity for the work it does. It is occasionally used in the most determined way by rhinoceroses who have mutual differences to adjust. The Kafirs pare it down into hafts for their battle-axes. Of strips of the hide we made horse-whips, as the Egyptians do man-whips of that of the hippopotamus.

For his bulk the rhinoceros, especially the borili, is a quick mover in a hard trot and sometimes a galiop. The whole tribe are heavies, taking their pleasure, if any, very sadly. The hippopotamus, an even more ungainly beast, has the decency to remain most of his time in the water, but the 'chukuru' thinks it behoves him to bask in the sunlight and parade his ugliness. Standing motionless is the routine of his life, a scrub now and then against a tree his *délassement*—a very solid, stolid brute !

These creatures appear to me to be out of time, to have belonged to a former state of things, and to have been forgotten when the change was made. Often have I sat upon a ridge and looked at them as they moved solemnly and clumsily on the plain below, wondering how they still came to be in this world, and it has occurred to me how delightful it would have been to watch the pre-Adamite beasts in the same way, and learn their manners—which, I fear, were bad—as they came

and went, no other man to interfere with your preserves, the world all to yourself and your beastly companions! How they would fight, and wallow, and roar, and how very cunning you would have to be to escape being eaten! I am afraid in my dreams two or three large-bored, hard-hitting guns have figured as *desiderata*; indeed, under such circumstances, I should not see the fun of doing king with a celt for a sceptre and half a dozen flint-headed arrows as a standing armament.

The rhinoceros would be even easier of approach than he is were it not for his attendant bird, a black slim-built fellow very like the king crow of India, who, in return I take it for his food, the parasitic insects on the chukuru, watches over his fat friend and warns him of the coming danger by springing up in the air and alighting smartly again with a peck on his back or head. This puts him on the alert, and he does his best, by sniffing and listening, to find out the point from which he is threatened, for his ears are quick and his scent excellent; but, as you are below wind of him, sound and smell travel badly, and his vision is by no means first rate. The natives by a figure transfer the connection between the bird and the beast to themselves, and when they wish to emphasise the great affection they bear you, or the great care they intend to take of you, address you as 'my rhinoceros,' an elliptical expression by which they mean to convey that they are your guardian birds. They are not always quite unfailing. Going out from Kolobeng after elephants I had heard of in the neighbourhood, I passed an old rain-doctor, whom I knew well, making rain with his pot on the fire, and his herbs and charms on the bubble. 'Chukuru ami, where are you going?' he asked. 'To shoot elephants,' I replied. 'I was just making rain, but as you are my chukuru, I put it off till to-morrow.' Is it necessary to say I was wet through in half an hour? A fine heavy thunderstorm was brewing whilst he was boiling. This rain-making is the Kafir's pet superstition—the power is hereditary—believed in by the maker and his fellow-countrymen. Conditions difficult to keep are imposed, such as that

the women are not to speak one word when at work in the fields : if the rain fails, why of course the women spoke !

We travelled very slowly towards Mabotsé, Livingstone's station, and on our arrival there received every kindness and attention from him and Mrs. Livingstone, guides to the country to the north, with advice as to route, &c. Livingstone had not long got over his lion mishap—get over it altogether, indeed, he never did—the overlapping end of the broken humerus was visible enough when the body was brought home. The story of the accident was fresh with him and the Kafirs when we reached Mabotsé. A lion had killed an ox near the village, and the Ba-Katla turned out, as they always did when the lion deserted his game, and attacked their herds. Each man, as is usual in a hunt of this kind, carried two or three assegais and a plume of ostrich feathers on a pointed six-foot stick. The lion was tracked to his sleeping place, and the men made a ring round it, gradually closing the space between man and man as they advanced. Presently the quarry was roused and sat up, and then a spearman, taking a few steps in advance, threw his assegai. The thrower is generally charged, but the animal's attention is immediately taken off by a second spearman and second assegai, and so on until, poor beast, it is killed. Accidents seldom occur in fairly open ground, as the men support one another very coolly and effectively. In rocky places the sport is dangerous ; sometimes, however, even in favourable spots, the man is pressed closely by the beast, and he then as he runs plants the stick with the plume firmly in the ground and dodges away from it ; the lion, half-blinded by rage, sees something before him, and springs at the ostrich feathers, giving the man a chance of escape. In Livingstone's case they had lost the lion after wounding it, and were looking for it ; the dear old Doctor caught sight of its tail switching backwards and forwards. Up and off went a gun that would hardly have killed a strong tomtit. Livingstone was spun over eight or ten feet, and the lion was standing over him. The brute took his arm in its mouth and put a heavy paw on

the nape of his neck, from which he pushed it off, for, as he said, 'It was so heavy, man, and I don't like to be stamped on' —neither did he! The lion was then driven off and killed. Livingstone was so quiet and imperturbable that he would have made a capital sportsman, but he could neither shoot nor ride (except on oxback)—this was not his business. I am afraid he despised the *rôle* of a sportsman, and no doubt believed, as he has stated, that the Kafirs looked upon us as weaklings to be used for providing them food. Perhaps he was right; but I think he overlooked that we, with no knowledge of the language, would have found it very difficult to make our way, if we had only come to see the country, without shooting. He could talk to the Kafirs' ears and hearts, we only to their stomachs; and I would fain believe that his grand work was occasionally made a little smoother by the guns.

An incident highly creditable to Kafir womanhood occurred just as we reached Mabotsé. The women, as is their custom, were working in the fields—for they hoe, and the men sew—and a young man, standing by the edge of the bush, was chatting with them. A lioness sprang on him and was carrying him off, when one of the women ran after her, and, catching her by the tail, was dragged for some little distance. Hampered with the man in her mouth and the woman behind her, she slackened her pace, whereupon her assailant straddled over her back and hit her across the nose and head with a heavy short-handled hoe till she dropped her prey and slunk into cover. This man was her husband! Would Mrs. Smith do as much for Mr. Smith? Could she do more?

We pushed on from Livingstone's station and hunted through the country of the Ba-Katla, the people amongst whom he was living. It was then full of game, and put me in mind of the children's pictures of Adam naming the beasts in the Garden of Eden—more animals than bushes. The first giraffes fell here, Murray again scoring, and killing No. 1. We seldom shot these beautiful-eyed, gentle-looking creatures—only a cow as a dainty now and then, for the flesh of the female

is the most excellent eating, a kind of venisony beef. They were to be seen nearly every day in herds of from five to thirty. Shooting them on foot was a difficult matter, their great height giving them an extended view. I never stalked but two—a delicate head peering over a mimosa-tree nearly always detecting the coming danger before I could get within reasonable distance with my smooth-bore. There is no difficulty in riding them down (as we had, of course, sometimes to do for the men when other game was scarce) provided you are a light weight and a fair rider, for a horse requires more driving up to this animal than to any other. The towering height and the ungainly sawing motion appear to terrify him ; and to these must, I think, be added the scent. Horses have very sensitive noses, and try to avoid giraffes, as in India they do camels. A good-couraged beast soon conquers his fears, but I have had regular fights with faint-hearted ones. Get as good a start as possible, press your game as much as you can for 300 or 400 yards—for press them you must, or you may ride after their tails all day—and you are alongside ; a shot in the gallop with the gun across the pommel brings the poor thing to the ground, and you are ashamed of yourself if it has been done wantonly. Eland hunting, from horseback, may be classed with giraffe, as very tame after the novelty is over.

I would utter two words of warning with regard to hunting the giraffe. Do not ride close behind him, for in his panic he sometimes lashes out most vigorously—I have had his heels whiz very ominously within a few inches of my head ; and my friend Vardon, in pistolling one that was standing wounded, only just missed what might have been serious injury from a vicious stamp of the forefoot—and be careful after you have fired to slacken speed at once, or pull your horse to the right, lest your victim fall on you.

I have measured bulls quite 18 feet—6 feet of leg, 6 feet of body, 6 feet of neck. For their peculiarity of shape, shared by other African animals, there must be a reason. Now we can understand that 'a deer with a neck that was longer by half than

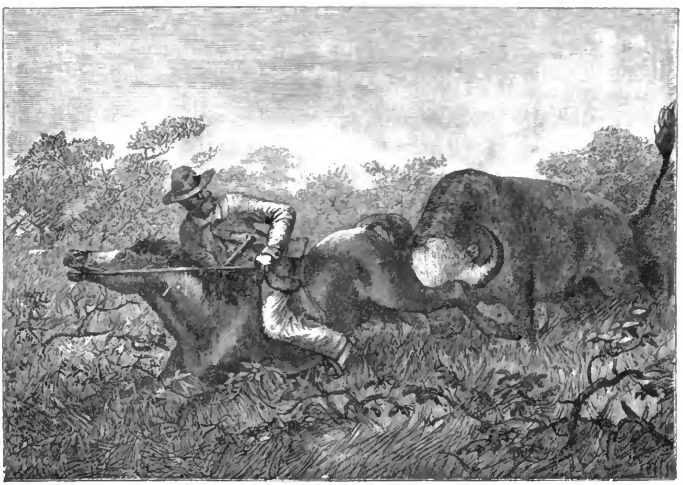
the rest of his family—try not to laugh—by stretching and stretching became a giraffe,' to the detriment of his hind-quarters. But what about the sasaybye, hartebeest, and elephant—why are they so low behind? The lion, too, is weak-quartered in comparison with his forehand, and even the hyæna has thought it necessary to follow the fashion. The animals of South Africa, indeed, are a queer lot—all countries have their specialities, but Africa is all speciality—distinct are the giraffes, the gnus, the hippos; adapted *plus æquo* are the elephants, rhinoceroses and antelopes.

Buffaloes were abundant, the bravest and most determined of all animals when wounded and at bay; courage is the instinct of the buffalo family. Look at the wild cousin in India, who will charge home upon a line of elephants, and even at his tame relations in the same country. In Collegal, an outlying talook of the district of Coimbatoor, in the Madras Presidency, I have seen the village buffaloes drive a full-grown tiger helter-skelter up the hills, pursuing him far beyond their feeding grounds. Again, I have known a misguided tiger spring into the midst of a herd penned up for the night; he was stamped and gored to death, and when taken out from amongst the half-maddened beasts in the morning he was a pulp. The *Bubalus caffer* is a stirring fellow when his blood is up; you may shoot a dozen on a flat or in open ground, taking your own distance for dismounting and shooting, and think them oxen; but wound one in thickish bush and follow him, and if alive he'll let you know it! The Kafirs will hunt a blood spoor of elephant, lion, rhinoceros, or any other animal right ahead of you like hounds; but put them upon wounded buffalo tracks, they will *follow* you at a respectful distance; they know the ways of him and his character. Wounded in bush he runs straight on for some little distance, then turns back and takes a line close to and parallel with his up-tracks, lying down or concealing himself behind a patch of cover. With his eyes on the ground the sportsman is picking out the trail, when a hard grunting bellow to right or left

makes him look up, and he had better beware and hold straight now if ever, for down comes the wounded bull, and nothing but death or a disabling shot will stop him. I have seen one with entirely paralysed hind-quarters attempt to carry out his rush to the bitter end by dragging himself along with his forefeet. His pluck is splendid ; no single lion will face him, though, attacked by stealth or numbers, he occasionally falls a prey. Once I went out in one direction and Murray in another to shoot elands for fat to make candles —we carried wicks and tin moulds amongst our stores. I turned homewards early to throw off my load, and within a mile or two of the waggons put up six lions on a flat surrounded by bush ; in riding after them for a shot I drove up a couple more, so I had a 'flock' of eight before me. Pressing them, the hindmost, a fine black-maned fellow, who seemed willing to sacrifice himself for his friends and relations, turned on me, thus giving the others time to continue their retreat. Twice I dismounted to shoot him, but before I could get the chance I wanted, I was obliged to remount, for the whole of his companions, seeing their rear-guard cut off and in difficulties, bore down upon me. One was all very well, but I felt I was not the man for the eight ; they were not very far from bush when I first saw them, and before I could get upon anything I thought equal terms they reached cover without a shot.

I found Murray already in camp. He had come upon an ostrich's nest, and making his after-rider take off his trousers and tie up the bottoms, he had carefully packed the eggs in them, put them across a horse, and, with heart set on omelet, had returned to the cookery pots. Unfortunately, he had not broken an egg, but taken them in faith, and they all contained young birds, which the Kafirs were joyfully stirring round in our big baking-pot preparatory to a feast when I appeared on the scene. My readers may naturally say, 'What has eland fat and ostrich eggs to do with the courage of buffaloes?' Well, these are just the incidents of daily camp life, which have brought up another recollection illustrative of my point.

That night, half a mile from the waggons, from dark to dawn a fight was going on. The air rang again and again with the short snapping bark of attacking lions and the grunting snorts of buffaloes on the defensive; and, as soon as it was day, we went to the field of battle. None of the combatants were to be seen, but the whole story was clearly told by the trampled ground. A herd of 40 or 50 buffaloes had evidently been attacked by a number of lions—the Kafirs said nine, from



Death of Superior

the spoor—but the ground was so torn and trampled I could not pretend to count. They had taken up a position in front of a very dense patch of thorns, on a curve, and shifted backwards and forwards as their flanks were threatened; the bulls and cows had come to the front, the calves had been placed in the rear, and they had held their own throughout the night without the loss of a single calf! The lions I had seen in the afternoon were probably the baffled marauders.

We had been unsuccessful up to this time in killing buffaloes

handsomely. More than half those hit got away—chiefly, I think, from our not having as yet adopted the squatting position; but this may be a fad of mine, and our bad shooting have been the cause. Two days after leaving the camping ground I have just spoken of, whilst the waggons were moving slowly through the low bush, three bulls crossed the line of march. I was on my horse, Superior, and, with a shout to Murray that I intended to make sure of a bag this time, galloped after them, and singling out one, got alongside of him within five feet and fired He pitched upon his head and lay perfectly still. Making sure he was dead, I would not give him the second barrel, and turned the horse to ride after the two others which were still in view; but, before I could get my animal into his stride, the wounded beast sprang up and struck him heavily. I felt the thud, but the horse did not fall, and cantered on for twenty yards, when the whisk of his tail dabbled my trousers with blood, and, on getting off, I found a hole thirty inches deep, and nearly wide enough to get into, in his flank, for the horn had been driven up to the base. The bull was too weak to follow up the attack, and died where he stood; the horse crawled on for a few yards, and then, seeing it was a hopeless case, I put a ball through his head.

This lesson early in shooting experiences made me cautious in buffalo-hunting throughout the whole of my time, though I have had a narrow escape or two. Coming homewards one afternoon, we stumbled into the middle of a herd asleep in the long grass. Our sudden appearance startled them from their dreams, a panic seized them, and away they galloped in the wildest confusion. One old patriarch had been taking his siesta apart from the rest, in a dense patch of bush to the right: the sound of the gun and the rush of his companions roused him, and with one barrel loaded, as I ran after his relations, I found myself face to face with him, within ten yards. He was evidently bent on mischief. We stared at one another for a second. I fired at his broad chest; it was the best I could do, for his nose was up, and the points of his

shoulders were not exposed. He plunged at me instantly. I fortunately caught a projecting bough of the mimosa-tree under which I was standing, and, drawing my knees up to my chin, he passed below me. I have heard of people avoiding a charge by quickly stepping on one side, but the ground must have been in their favour, and they must have been very cool, and only resorted to this instinctively, I think, as a last resource. A buffalo, it is true, drops his head very low, but only just before he closes, and he can strike desperately right and left from the straight line, so you ought to secure four or five feet side room. I have never been obliged to try this lateral movement, and fear I should have made a mess of it, though I know it is possible ; for I once travelled down the west coast of South America with a bull-fighting man and woman, and they explained to me how, when the 'toro' charged, they stepped aside and stuck the banderillos into his neck ; but they had no bush or smoke to contend with. I have often, however, had to dodge animals round a tree, and once escaped from a borili by catching a bough, as in this instance.

On our first journey to Lake 'Ngami, when within a hundred miles, the oxen wearied, so we selected twelve of the freshest and started with my waggon only, and some of the men, leaving the rest to encamp themselves and await our return. During our absence the drivers had to supply the party with meat. One of them wounded a buffalo, which immediately charged. The man, dropping his musket, climbed a tree just in time. For four hours the buffalo watched that tree, walking round and lying down under it. How Piet got to *terra firma* again I do not remember. Probably the animal grew tired of waiting, though they are generally very patient, and willing to bide their time for retaliation. The following short story illustrates the vengeful nature of the beast ; it is told, I think, in Moffat's 'Missionary Travels,' but I have not the book by me, and cannot vouch for the exact words : A native, sitting by the water at night, wounded a buffalo, but not mortally. It made for the shooter, who ran and lay down under a

projecting rock. Unable to get its horns to bear, but not to be baulked, with its long, rough tongue it licked off the flesh of the exposed part of the man's thigh down to the bone, and then left its victim, who died early in the morning.

The smell of blood seems to madden these beasts ; they will turn on a wounded and bleeding companion and gore him most savagely. As I write recollections come back of scenes that had left no vivid pictures in my mind, because nothing untoward happened ; but why not, and how not, now one thinks of it, is wonderful. Stalking an antelope, or I know not what, I found myself in an immense herd of buffaloes. The bush was full of them, I was surrounded, and had nothing to do but stand still. They dashed about me like rooks after the wireworms in a newly ploughed field. I had the sensation of drawing myself in very tightly about the waistband. Till they thinned out into a tail I could not begin to shoot, but there were such numbers that even then I knocked over six at exceedingly close quarters. The danger was, being run over or butted down in the headlong stampede. The same thing has happened to me, and, I dare say, to many all-round shots, with elephants. How they avoided or missed you—for they didn't seem to try to avoid—you can't tell. You come out of it without a scratch, and therefore, as a rule, think no more of it.

If I were to write our daily life and shooting, it would be weary reading. In a few chapters of this kind, all I can do is to take my readers into some of my scrapes, and let them fill in the blanks ; but perhaps, once for all, I may put the abundance of the game in those days in some way intelligibly before them, if I say that in most parts, with horses, one gun could easily have kept 800 men—600 we tried—fattened, and supplied with a store sufficient to last for months. Fortunately, in consequence of the excessive dryness of the climate, meat, cut into long thin strips and hung over the bushes to dry in the sun, will keep quite good for a long time. It needs

soaking before cooking, and loses much of its flavour, but it holds body and soul together.

Leaving the valley and rocky hills of the Ba-Katla, we moved slowly onwards towards the Ba-Wangketsi ; before reaching them, an event occurred which coloured my whole African life, and will colour my life as long as I live. It is no story of big game, and perhaps ought not to find a place in these pages ; but it is so bound up with all my shooting, all my pleasure in Africa, that I would ask to be forgiven for telling it. I should feel a traitor to the memory of a dead friend if I did not.

We were trekking through some low sand-hills covered with scrub, when three lions crossed about fifty yards ahead of the oxen. Snatching up a gun, I jumped from the waggon, calling upon someone to follow me with a heavy rifle which was always kept loaded as a reserve battery. I pressed so closely on the leisurely retreating trio that the largest stopped short. I squatted, intending to take his shoulder as he turned, looked round for my second gun, and heard the bearer, who was close to me, whisper in Dutch, 'You can get nearer by the ant-hill.' The move lost me the lion, as he broke away after his companions ; and then for the first time I took notice of the cool, tall, handsome lad who had offered me advice, and recognised in him at once the stuff to make a henchman of. From that day forth he was my right-hand man in the field, and never failed me.

John Thomas was an Africander, born at the Cape, of parents probably slaves ; but as a grand specimen of manhood, good nature, faithfulness, and cheerful endurance, I never met his equal, white or black. Plucky to a fault, he was the least quarrelsome of men, the life and light of our camp fires, and the pet of the Kafirs, who seemed at once to understand his quiet unpretending nature, and always made their requests to me through 'bono Johnny.' To tell his good deeds through a five years' wandering would very often be to show up my own faults ; let it be enough to say that he was a perfect servant to a very imperfect master, who, now that his

friend is dead, feels that he did not value him half enough, though he never loved man better. His worth, to those who know the troubles and difficulties of African travelling, may be outlined by the following little story.

When Livingstone and I made our journey in search of Lake 'Ngami, we held out to our followers that if we were successful we would not attempt to press on further. They were, as a rule, a timid folk, dreading the unknown, too ready to listen to any tale of danger and difficulty that might be in the world beyond, and always eager to turn colony-wards. After some hard work we reached the lake, and success bred in us the wish to do more ; but we were bound to stand to our agreement. At last the desire of penetrating deeper into the land became so strong that I suggested calling a meeting of the servants and trying what our eloquence might effect. After putting before them that we fully recognised our promise of not constraining them to go with us any further, I told them that the Doctor and I had made up our minds to give them one of the waggons with sufficient stores, supplies and ammunition for their homeward journey, while we ourselves had decided to push on ahead. I further explained to them that they would have no difficulty in reaching the colony, as they knew the waters, and had the wheel-tracks. I paused for a minute, and then added, that though we could not ask them to accompany us, yet that if any one of them was willing to do so, we should be very glad. I rather enlarged upon our ignorance of the country in advance, for we did not wish to influence them unduly to join us. For a few moments there was silence, and blankness of face ; then out stepped John, and speaking in Dutch, as he always did when his feelings were touched, though he at other times spoke English perfectly, said : 'What you eat I can eat, where you sleep I can sleep, where you go I will go ; I will come with you.' The effect was instantaneous. 'We will all go !' was the cry. Do you think after that it was much matter to us whether our brother was black or white ?

Time wore on. I was obliged to return to England. John accompanied me to the Cape. I told him, in part, how I valued his services, and asked him if I could in any way repay my debt of gratitude. I had taught him to read, in the bush, but that was the only good I had ever done him. His answer came, after some hesitation. He had heard so much of England that he should like, of all things, to go with me there. Two days later we were on board ship together. He, as usual, was everything to everybody—helping the steward, attending the sick ladies, nursing the babies ; the idol of the sailors, to whom he told stories of bush life, the adored of the nurses. John, with all his virtues, was a flirt—the admirer and admired of all womankind. On arriving in England, I left him in London and went down to my brother's. He hesitated about my henchman, thinking a real live black man would hardly suit the household of a country clergyman. But his coachman fell sick. Could John drive? I should think so. He was the best eight-in-hander in Cape Town. Down he came, and in half an hour he was perfectly established in the family. My brother declared he never had such a coachman, and was very kind to him, timidly at first. The cook taught him writing ; the lady's-maid went on with his reading. I shall not forget meeting him with the two women, one on either arm, chatting with them in the most accomplished style. His stay in England was limited to six months, as we had agreed, and he went back to the Cape with a friend of mine, who wrote most highly of him.

Two years passed away ; I was a wanderer again ; and at the beginning of the Crimean War found myself carrying secret-service money to Colonel, now Field Marshal, Sir Lintorn Simmons, political agent at Shumla. On my return to the coast I fell in with a cavalry regiment and the 60th Rifles encamped near Devna, a few miles from Varna. A sergeant of the latter regiment saluted as I passed, and asked for news from the front. Silistria was then besieged. I turned myself half round to the right on my saddle to talk with him, and pre-

sently felt a hand placed very *gently*, *lovingly*, on my left foot. John stood by my stirrup, his face a picture of affectionate triumph at having caught me again. He had taken service with an officer of the 60th. We threw ourselves down under a bush and renewed old memories. The Major, near whose tent we were, called John, and, finding from him who I was, most courteously entreated me, telling me how beloved John was by the regiment, and how well, through him, they knew my name. I had letters to deliver at Constantinople, and went on. John, I believe, sickened, and was invalided to England; but for two or three years I heard no more of him, for I was away in South America and elsewhere. Shortly after my return home a letter came to me, asking if I could recommend a black man named 'John Thomas' as a butler! He had referred the writer to me. I was obliged to say I knew nothing of his capabilities in this line, but added that, as a staunch ally in a fight with an elephant and an absolutely trustworthy man in all the relations of life (save that of a butler, in which I had not tried him), I could most highly recommend him. My friend engaged him, and had an excellent servant, for such was John's power of adapting himself to circumstances that nothing ever came amiss to him. But the dark day was coming on; and, in the midst of his affectionate service, beloved from the head of the house to the youngest child, trusted and never found wanting, always ready and always willing, this fine, noble fellow died. I heard of his sickness too late to see him alive on earth, but I trust that master and man may hereafter meet as brothers in Heaven.

We had been shooting in this Ba-Wangketsi country for a fortnight, and the work had been very hard. One morning after breakfast, my companion, who was busy cleaning the head of a koodoo, said he would have a day of rest, and finish what he was about. His laziness was catching. I ordered my horses to be unsaddled, and was idling about the camp when our head man told me there was no food for the twelve or

fourteen dogs, our night watchmen; so I took up my gun, which was only loaded in one barrel, and strolled out on the chance of a shot; but as, kill or miss, I intended to return immediately, I did not carry any spare ammunition. A reedy pond lay close in advance of the waggons in a little opening; beyond this, as on every other side, stretched a sea of bush and mimosa-trees. Two hundred yards from the outspan I came upon a clump of quagga and wounded one, which though mortally hit struggled on before falling. I followed, and marking the place where it fell, set my face as I thought towards the waggons, meaning to send out men for the flesh. No doubt of the direction crossed my mind—the pool was certainly not more that 400 yards in a straight line, and I thought I could walk down upon it without any trouble; so taking no notice of my out tracks, which had bent slightly in following the quagga, I started. It was now about 10 A.M.; little did I think that 5 P.M. would still find me seeking three vans nearly as large as Pickford's, and half an acre of water.

In my first cast I cannot say whether I got wide or stopped short of the mark I was making for, and it was not until I had wandered about carelessly hither and thither for half an hour, feeling sure that it was only the one particular bush in front of me which hid the waggons, that I very unwillingly owned to myself that I was drifting without bearings in this bushy sea. The sun was nearly overhead, and gave but slight help as to direction, and the constant turning to avoid thick patches of thorns rendered it nearly impossible, in the absence of any guiding point, to hold a fixed course through this maze of sameness.

I tried walking in circles in the hopes of cutting the wheel tracks, but though on a previous occasion this plan had succeeded, it now failed. As with empty gun I plodded on, occasional small herds of rooyebuck and blue wildebeest, evidently very much at home, swept and capered by me, and, stopping and looking at me with wondering eyes, increased my feeling of loneliness. I had no doubts of regaining my party next day at latest, and cared but little for passing a night

in the jungle ; but, bewildered and baffled, I envied the instinct of the so-called brutes, which, careless of their steps, were nevertheless quite sure of their ways. Twilight near the tropics is very short. Just before the sun set, therefore, I followed a game track which I knew would lead to water, as it was still early in the season, and the rain supply had not yet dried up in the hollows. At dusk I reached a pool similar to the one I had quitted in the morning. After a good draught I began collecting firewood, but for once it was very scarce, and the night closed in so rapidly, that a bare hour's supply was all my store. Partly to save fuel, and partly in the hope that as the night crept on signals would be made from the waggons, I climbed a tree which stood by the side of the water, and had not been long perched before I heard, though so far off that I could hardly catch the sound, the smothered boom of guns. Alarmed at my absence my companions suspected the cause, and were inviting my return ; but it required a very pressing invitation indeed to induce a man to walk through two miles of an African wood in those days on a dark night.

This particular spot, too, was more infested with lions than any other, save one, I was ever in ; and, though harmless and cowardly enough as a rule in the day, they were not likely to prove very acceptable followers at night. But I had been walking all day under a tropical sun, my clothing was wet with perspiration, and it now froze hard—for freeze it can in Southern Africa—and I was bitterly cold. I determined to come down and light my fire. I knew it would last but a short time, but thought I would make the best of it, and thaw myself before attempting to return. I got to the lowest bough of my tree, and had placed my hand beside my feet before jumping off, when from the bush immediately under me a deep note, and the sound of a heavy body slipping through the thorny scrub, told me that a lion was passing. Whether the creaking of the tree had roused his attention and caused him to speak so opportunely I don't know, but without the warning, in another half-second I should have alighted

on his back. I very quickly put two or three yards more between the soles of my feet and the ground. Presently, from the upper end of the pool came the moaning pant of a questing lion; it was immediately answered from the lower end —their majesties were on the look-out for supper, and had divided the approaches to the water between them. It was much too dark to see anything, but from the sounds they seemed to walk in beats, occasionally telling one another of their whereabouts by a low pant; of my presence I think they were not aware.

This went on for an hour or more, and I got colder and colder; my beard and moustache were stiff with frost. I could not much longer endure the cramped position in my scraggy tree, and I felt I must get down and light a fire, when, suddenly up came the blessed moon, and right under her the sound of three or four muskets fired together. With the help of her light and partial direction in case my companions got tired of firing, I was not going to stay up a tree to be frozen. Waiting, therefore, until she was about 'one tree high,' and until the lions were far asunder, on their separate beats, as well as I could make out from the sound, I came down, and capping —it was all I could do; for, as I said, I had started without powder and ball—my empty gun, which was standing against the tree, I passed at the double round the end of the water and dived into the bush on the opposite side. I have no doubt my desire was to get on as quickly as possible, but reasons for a cautious advance soon made themselves heard on all sides. An African forest was then alive at night. I only thought of the lions, and especially of the two I had left, or perhaps not left, at the water; but every little nocturnal animal that stirred kept me on the stretch—the less noise the more danger. The movement of a mouse might well be mistaken for the stealthy tread of the king of the cats. Among the trees the moon gave but scanty light, and nearly every minute I had to stop and listen as some unseen animals passed near me. Sometimes I could recognise them by their cry, but mostly it was 'a running that could not

be seen of skipping beasts' that troubled me. The only animal I really saw that night was a rhinoceros that, with head and tail up and in a terrible fuss, crossed a few yards before me. A sound in front, and I strained my eyes into the shadowy darkness in advance; the rustling of a leaf told of life to the right or left; and the snapping of a twig of possible death in the rear. But I struggled on for an hour, I should think, when, stooping to clear a low bough, four or five muskets fired together within fifty yards told me I was at home again. I hope I was thankful then; I know I am now. Two of my Hottentot servants and a batch of Kafirs had come some distance into the bush in the hope of meeting me, and escorted me to the fire in triumph. As I held my still only half-thawed hands over it, the baulked roar of a disappointed lion rang through the camp. He had not been heard before that night. 'He has missed you, Tlaga,[1] by a little this time,' said my black friends. 'Let him go back to his game.' They were right, for in the morning we found his spoor on mine for a long way back. Whether he had come with me from the water or I had picked up a follower in the bush I never knew. My constantly stopping and listening probably saved me, for a lion seldom makes up his mind very suddenly to attack a man unless hard pressed by hunger. He likes to know all about it first, and my turning, and slow, jerky progress had probably roused his suspicions.

Two nights before this we had met with a sad misfortune. The oxen were 'kraaled'—surrounded, that is, by a hedge of thorn-trees, and bushes strong enough to keep them in and lions out, we hoped—a mode of defence we always adopted if there was wood enough close to the outspan, or we intended staying any length of time in the same place; though occasionally, when we only halted for the night and were distant from water, and therefore likely to be free from lions, the oxen were instead

[1] To my face the Kafirs always called me 'Tlaga,' which, I believe, means 'on the look-out,' wary, like game; behind my back, I have been told, I was called 'Bones,' from my leanness.

made fast to the leathern rope, or 'trek tow,' by which they draw the waggon, each pair—there were five to each waggon—to their own yoke in the order they worked in the team, so that they were ready and in right position for inspanning in the morning. We were lying on this occasion by a large Wangketsi village, and the cattle had been kraaled rather to prevent them getting mixed with those of the Wangketsi, as they were taken out to graze at sunrise, than from any apprehension of an attack. The three waggons were drawn up as usual on one side of the enclosure, and the Kafirs were by their fires on the other. I was asleep, but was roused by shouts, the discharge of a musket, and the sudden rush of our pack of dogs. I found a lion had sprung over a weak place in the thorn fence on to the back of an ox, and, scared by the shouting, had jumped back again the same way. According to tradition I know the ox ought to have been in his mouth, but it wasn't. A lion will drag an ox by the nape of its neck anywhere, but he can't carry it, much less jump a 6-foot hedge with it in his jaws. It was quite dark, but by the gleam of the fires the men, aroused by the panic of the oxen, caught sight of him, and one of the Hottentot drivers had taken a flying shot. The dogs pressed hard upon him ; directly he gained the cover he stood to bay. I suppose the poor things got hampered in the bush, for presently two crawled up to us mangled and dying. The hubbub went on for some minutes, and then the lion, frightened probably by the firing and yelling—we could give no other aid to our allies—broke bay, and ten dogs returned exclusive of the two that had come in to die ; two were still missing—one of them a brindled bull terrier, which we all knew must one day come to grief, for he was a most reckless, determined brute, game to go in to anything. A few days before, feeling offended at a puff adder—the worst of the Cape snakes—hissing at him, he had seized it, and notwithstanding the snake striking him on the head with its fangs, had stuck to and killed it. His head swelled to an immense size, but he pulled through and recovered. With day we went to the

place where the scrimmage of the night before had occurred, and there lay 'Tod,' as the Hottentots had named him, with the other absentee, both dead. 'Tod' had apparently run straight into the lion's mouth, for the marks of the teeth were visible enough over his back and loins. He was a rash fellow, but he died an honourable death. The loss of dogs was a very serious one, for it was through their fidelity and watchfulness we were able to sleep in comparative ease and safety. At the first sound or smell of danger they went to the fore, and walked barking round and round with the lions, just keeping clear of their spring or sudden rush, showing them they were detected and that the camp was not all asleep. In the times I am writing of I don't think it would have been possible, save with a large number of armed watchers and fires, to have kept your oxen in anything like safety without dogs. You went to sleep in peace as soon as the dog-watch was set and the fires made up for the night. Firewood was abundant after passing the Molopo. A store of huge logs was collected directly the waggons halted, and the blaze was kept up throughout the night, the fires being shaken together and replenished by anyone who chanced to wake; and as their own safety depended on it, the men were zealous in this part of their duty.

By this time we had shot most of the kinds of game to be found away from the rivers, in large numbers—Harris's black buck potoquan (*Aigoceros niger*), and the beautiful hill zebra (*Equus montanus*) excepted. The former I only saw once during my five years in Africa, and never got a chance at, and the latter I would not have shot if I could—he is such a pretty, tiny, thoroughbred-looking thing, the size of a small Shetland pony, and the most playful little fellow imaginable, springing about the rocky hill-tops with the surefootedness of an ibex. We had not yet fallen in with elephants or even seen their tracks. Three years after the time of which I am writing I killed them frequently to the south, but now they were away to pastures new for the time, and we decided

on going on north to the Ba-Mungwato country in the hope of finding them.

On our way we halted at a small spring at the bottom of a slight depression. It looked as if the water had once been much larger, and might have occupied the best part of the area. There was a trickling overflow, which, after running a few yards, tumbled into a hole and disappeared; hence its name 'Lupapi,' or the 'Mouse.' This was the very

A night attack—Lupapi

worst place for lions I ever knew; not so much from their number as their insolent audacity. I stopped here on three separate occasions, and each time was molested more than sufficiently. On this, the first, we had made, luckily, a very strong kraal. The fires would not burn brightly, as there was a misty rain falling. At 10 P.M. or half-past we had only just turned in when we were attacked in force by two lions and a lioness. Our vedettes, the dogs, were driven in, and the enemy charged down upon the cattle enclosure. The

noise, of course, woke us all, and dogs, Kafirs, Hottentots, Murray and myself had our work fully cut out; our assailants kept just outside the firelight, making savage rushes at the dogs, but never giving us the chance of a shot. I stood for a long time in very scant attire (someone brought me a jacket and trousers later on), my first entrance to the scene being anything but noble, for on running from the waggon to the front my foot caught in a creeper, and I fell heavily. The Kafirs behaved admirably, never yielding an inch, though the lions were very determined. After half an hour or so we nursed the fires into brighter glow, and increased the circle of light around us, and things grew rather calmer. We could hear every breath and angry purr, though as we were looking into the dark we could see nothing. For some time I made a Kafir stand beside me and throw brands into the darkness, hoping by a gleam to get sufficient indication of the whereabouts of our foes for a shot—but in vain. I fired frequently as near as I could guess on the spot where the purring seemed to come from, and could hear the angry beast make a dash at the pinging ball. But I struck nothing save the ground. However, we had checked the onset, and now had only to keep on the alert. Just before the day broke the siege was raised, and I was on horseback to look out a better camping-ground for the next night. As I cleared the low jungle which lay around us, a lioness broke away from the edge of it and took across an opening beyond. She was eighty yards from me, rather too long a shot for the old Purdey; but there was cover ahead from which I could not cut her off, and I was savage enough at her unwished-for attentions during the night, for she was, no doubt, one of the three, and oh! how glad I was when I heard the ball thud, and saw her stride short. I mounted and rode her to a standstill in a couple of hundred yards, when she squatted in front of a bush. I got within twenty or twenty-five yards of her, intending to dismount, but found I had fired all my loose balls away during the night, and that the one in the barrel was all I had to

rely on. I have a weakness for a second bullet, and backing my pony a little further off I told my after-rider to go to the waggon and bring me a fresh supply. He was only absent a few minutes, I keeping watch on the lioness meanwhile. On his return I loaded the empty barrel, and, getting off for a steady shot, found to my dismay that, although I could see her well enough whilst sitting on my horse, the long grass hid her entirely when on my feet. I could not remount, for the after-rider had removed the horse, and it is not probable the lioness would have allowed me to do so without interference. For a moment I was in a fix, but about ten yards to my left I saw a dead mimosa-tree with a fork in it five feet from the ground. It appeared my only chance, though a risky one ; and I wonder to this day that the beast did not charge when she saw the scrub moving as I passed through it. She did not, however, and I gained my fork and could now see her quite plainly, and she me likewise, for she never took her eyes off for one second. Her head was full front. I aimed between her eyes, but a twig must have turned the ball, for I was firing from a rest, and it only bored a clean hole through her ear. She struck it angrily with her paw, and then faced me again. The second shot was more successful, and she dropped dead. I had hit her the first time very far aft, but I think she must have been more crippled than I had supposed, or she would never have allowed me to move about so clumsily without attempting a diversion.

The second attack, a year afterwards, was not so prolonged, but the lions pressed the men so hard that they had to take refuge between the fires and the hedge of the kraal, and the beasts twice crossed the line of firelight in pursuit. The third imbroglio at this water was more serious, but the initiative this time was with me. John, my after-rider, woke me very early one morning to tell me a lioness and her cub were drinking at the spring, from which we were lying only 200 yards distant. Ordering him to saddle two horses—they had not yet been loosed from the waggon-wheels to which we always

made them fast in pairs—I slipped on my clothes and, jumping on the back of one of them, galloped towards the spring, followed by John, half a dozen Kafirs, and the dogs, hoping to cut off mother and child from the thick bush behind them. But they beat me; and the dogs, taking the scent, followed them. The Kafirs had come with me, partly to see the fun and partly, in case of my shooting the lioness, to catch the cub, which, when it is quite young, they manage to do by chasing and dodging it, and throwing their short skin carosses over it. They then roll it up like a baby in swaddling clothes, with only its head out at one end and its tail at the other; round the bundle they wind a leathern riem or strap, and pass the snarling though now harmless little beast from one to another, saying pretty things of its father and mother, aunts and uncles, &c.

The dogs very soon brought the lioness to bay, and I got within thirty yards, but from the thickness of the bush could neither see them nor her. I shifted my position once or twice in the hope of making out what was going on, standing up in my stirrups looking for an opening, that I might dismount and get a shot. Suddenly the barking of the dogs and snapping snarl of the lioness ceased, and I thought she had broken bay and gone on, but in a second I heard a roar on the horse's right quarter, in a different direction from that into which I had been peering, and, looking round, saw her with her mouth open, clearing a rather high patch of bush twenty yards from me. There was no time to get off the horse, and no possibility of a shot from his back, for the charge was on his *right* flank, and you cannot shoot to the right. I did the only thing that I could—jammed the spurs in and tried to make a gallop of it; but my follower was too close, and before I could get up full speed I heard her strike the ground heavily twice in her bound, and with the third she sat up behind me. She jumped short, however, and failed to get hold with her mouth, but drove her front claws well into the horse's quarters, and a

hind foot underneath him, and so clung, but only for a moment; for the poor beast, maddened by fright and pain, and unable to stand up under the extra weight, became unmanageable, threw his head up, and swerved under the projecting bough of a tree which, striking me on the chest, swept me from the saddle against the lioness, and we rolled to the ground together. A sharp rap on the head, from my having fallen on a stump, stunned me for a minute or two, and I woke to life to

'Post equitem sedet "fulva" cura'—The lioness does the scansion

find John kneeling alongside of me, asking me if I was dead, which was a needless question, seeing I was at the time sitting up rubbing my eyes. 'What's the matter?' I said, but at the same instant I heard the dogs again baying fifty yards off, and recollection came back. Rising to my feet, I staggered like a drunken man, rather than walked towards the sound, and propped myself up against a tree, for I was still weak and dazed; indistinctly I could occasionally see both dogs and lioness. Presently, something broke through the

thinner part of the bush, and I fired and wounded one of the dogs. And the lioness, tired by the protracted worrying, and startled perhaps by the sound of the gun, bounded off and escaped without a shot. I have been often asked by those who have seen the sketch, 'Oh, but why did you not turn round and shoot her from the saddle?' And all the answer I could or can give is, 'It's easy to say but difficult to do,' and that in a second we were on the ground together. The men told Livingstone that the dogs came out so close upon the lioness that she, rather flustered at being swept from the horse's back, turned to fight with them, and took no notice of me. We caught the horse four miles off, and I sewed up and cured his wounds, but he was never fit for anything again, bolting dangerously at a stump or other dark object. A hard spin after a straight-horned gemsbok killed him.

It was here at Lupapi that I first saw the wild dogs hunting. I had gone towards the water on the chance of a shot, late one afternoon, and as I got into the little flat in which the spring lay, an antelope broke through the bush on my right, panic-stricken and blown. Thirty yards behind it came the wild dogs; before it had gained the middle of the open space they ran into it, and though I was within 100 yards, they had torn it nearly to pieces when I got up. They then retired a short distance, sitting down and watching menacingly whilst I cut away part of the hind quarters, and the moment I turned my back swooped down on their prey, dismembering and putting it out of sight in an incredibly short time. They are ugly-looking brutes, more like jackals than dogs, with great endurance in running, and great grip of jaw. Three or four head the pack, holding the scent. As they tire, three or four others take their places, the pack running loosely after the leaders.

We reached the kraals of the Ba-Mungwato, but met with a surly reception. The chief wished to play the part of the great potentate, and declined seeing us, sending messengers for presents and specifying what they were to be. His envoys,

however, returned empty-handed, with a reply that we were not in the habit of giving without expectation of some return; that if we could not see him we would go to the next tribe; that we had come to hunt elephants in his country, and to feed his people; but that if he did not wish us to do so, or would not help us in our hunting, neither would we send him any gift in anticipation, or on the chance of changing his mind, adding that we should mention his politeness to other white men, who would henceforth avoid him. So the day passed. Two or three lounging fellows of the tribe told my men yarns of Secomi's power and of the retaliation he took upon his enemies, mentioning *inter alia* that we were encamped, having been led to it by his orders, upon the very spot where last year he had disposed of a party of Matabili who had come on an embassage. Hottentots are open to swaggering stories, but in this instance their credulity was confirmed when shortly before sunset they rambled out in advance of the waggons, and found that we were in a *cul de sac*, the hills closing in round us 300 yards off and offering no passage through them, and, horror of horrors! on the ground lay a number of human skulls.

They came back in great fear, and told us the result of their explorations. We were not much disturbed, but I thought it wise to take precautions against surprise, and served out ammunition to the men, bidding them sleep with their muskets handy and take their cue from us. The night, however, passed quietly. About 7 in the morning news was brought me that the great man was approaching with a number of his warriors. I ordered the horses to be made fast to the waggon-wheels and the oxen to be tied, ready for inspanning, to the trek tow, and then allotted to each man his tree, intimating very clearly that, in the case of a disturbance, they were to follow, not set, an example, and that if anyone fired a shot before I did, I would shoot him.

Secomi came up with his spearmen, and sat down opposite me, fifteen feet from our fire, where we were taking our morn-

ing coffee. Livingstone had sent a very fine old Bechuana fighter with us as a kind of head man, a most dignified superior fellow, by name Syami (*Anglicè*, I believe, 'stand firm'), who had won great renown in many a fight, and once, when wounded badly and left for dead, on coming to had broken off the shafts of the assegais, and crawled three miles on hands and knees to a friendly village, with the irons still in him. This man we put up as our champion, and for an hour and a half did he argue in our interests, speaking with all the untrammelled fluency of uncivilised man. We understood but little of what he said, and that only by signs, not words ; but he was evidently very eloquent. The chief at first would hardly listen to him, but was by degrees brought to treat upon the matter, making suggestions as to what presents would be likely to assuage his wrath ; but we firmly refused to budge an inch from our original lines, until he should give us a guide to the next tribe, for after his conduct we told him we were determined not to shoot in his country. There was no active sign of hostility. The position Secomi had placed himself in with respect to the muzzle of my gun, which lay across my knees, exercised perhaps a calming influence ; but he would not help us in any way, and steadily refused guides. We were wearied of the long discussion, and I called to the Hottentots to inspan the oxen and loose the horses ; this operation was watched intently, without remark, by the chief and his followers. I then gave orders to turn the waggons, for I had the night before ascertained the direction of the Bakaa Hills. As the oxen slowly brought the heavy carts round and faced the other way, I gave the order to trek, and the faces of the Ba-Mungwato were a sight to see. Throughout the preliminary operations they had watched us eagerly, believing us ignorant of the trap into which we had been inveigled, and hoping that we should go further on into it. I do not think they would even then have attacked us, but their feelings would have been relieved by our disappointment and the success of their arrangements. The bird had, however, seen the snare and escaped out of the

hand of the fowler. They stood stupefied and crestfallen, and the waggons moved on without a word or sign of opposition. I brought up the rear with the loose oxen and horses. We had gained 300 or 400 yards from the camping ground, which was still in sight, when I heard the sound of running behind me, and turning saw a man coming on at the top of his speed after us. He threw up his hands to show he was carrying no arms, and I grounded my gun and waited for him. 'What is it?' 'I am sent by the chief to take you wherever you like to go!' 'Lead on to the Bakaa then!' and thus ended our first and only difficulty with the natives.

On our arrival we found this people in a pitiable state; the crops had failed, and they were starving. The chief welcomed us warmly, asked what we had come for, and on receiving answer to hunt elephants, besought us to take his people and feed them, putting his country and his services at our disposal. On condition that *his* people during their stay with me were to be *my* people, I accepted 600 men, women, and children in the most terrible state of starvation. No white man, emaciated as these poor fellows were, could have walked ten yards—the two bones in the lower arm and leg were distinctly visible, and you could see them working in the joints and attachments; in truth, nearly the whole party were bones covered with skin, and poor skin too, for from poverty of blood you could hardly have found a sound patch large enough to lay a crown piece on. The chief introduced three of the head men to me, and bade me hold them responsible for the rest, and I did—and never had the very slightest trouble.

We started for the hunting grounds next morning, and were among the elephants in a day or two. There have been discussions as to who is king among the beasts, and to this day the lion is generally given the title. But look down that narrow game-track. A lion is coming up it from the water. As he turns the curve in the winding path he sees that a rhinoceros or buffalo is coming down to drink. He slinks into the bush,

lies very low, gives them the road, lets them pass well by, and then resumes his interrupted way. If this is the king, he is exceedingly courteous to his subjects—one might even think just a little in awe of some of them. King of the cats in Africa he may be, and is ; but king of the beasts he is not.

Come with me to a desert pool some clear moonlight night when the shadows are deep and sharply cut, and the moon herself, in the dry, cloudless air, looks like a ball. All is nearly as bright as day, only the light is silver, not gold. Sit down on that rock and watch the thirsty animals as they drink—buffalo, rhinoceros, antelope, quagga, and occasionally, if the water is large, lions too. But what has frightened the antelope and quagga that they throw their heads up for a second and fade away into the shadows? The other beasts, too, are listening, and now leave the sides of the pond. Nothing but the inevitable, irrepressible jackal, that *gamin* amongst wild things, remains in view. As yet your dull human ears have caught no sound, but very soon the heavy tread, and low, rumbling note of an oncoming herd of elephants reaches you. They are at the water. The jackals have sat down with their tails straight out behind them, but not another creature is to be seen. The king drinks. Not a sound is heard. He squirts the water over his back, makes the whole pool muddy, and retires solemnly, leaving his subjects, who now gather round, to make the best of what he has fouled. This is the king in the opinion of the beasts. You may think him a nervous monarch, subject to panic, and I do not know that you are not right ; but he has weight in the animal world, you may be assured.

This African elephant is an uncomely, ragged fellow, with his bad facial angle, huge ears, long fore-legs, sliced off quarters, and generally untidy appearance ; but he carries fine tusks, and often gives you a lot of trouble. I have ridden nearly twenty miles on his spoor before coming up with him, and liked him all the better for it. He is wanting in ready wit, but is a wise, thoughtful being in his ponderous

way, and a great hand at combination. He wishes to feed on the top of a tree, finds it too strong for him alone, calls on a friend or two, and, with an all-together swing, they bring it to the ground. When at bay, he has a fancy for pushing down a tree on your head and charging through the branches. His friend tumbles into a pitfall—by the way, males very seldom do, for, fearing no other animal, they carry their trunks down ; the sensitiveness of that organ warns them of the danger, and they will walk securely amongst a nest of these traps and neatly uncover them, throwing the reeds and grass into the air with scorn. The cows, however, are frequently taken, for, anxious about their calves—which are often attacked by lions—they carry their trunks in the air, feeling for a chance scent of the enemy. The Kafirs sometimes lie in wait by the water near to which the pits are dug, and after the elephants or other game have drunk, raise a shout, and in the hurry of the retreat the living graves reap their harvest.

These pitfalls are 10 feet long by about 9 deep and 4 wide at the top, narrowing as they deepen, so that a large beast gets jammed in them ; they are made larger specially for elephants, and are most skilfully covered with reeds, grass, and a few handfuls of sand. I have ridden into them horse and all, and I have walked into them ; in the first instance, I shook my feet out of the stirrups in time to prevent my legs being crushed, and managed to scramble out from the horse's back. In the second, walking on the high bank of the Zouga River, I was rating one of my drivers in the river-bed below for punishing his oxen, when I suddenly felt the ground give way beneath me, and amidst a shower of dust and broken reeds thought I could catch the sound of laughter from the waggon—let us hope I was mistaken. Luckily this one had no stake at the bottom, as many have. But we have left our elephant in the trap too long ; let us return to him. His friends at first run off panic-stricken, but often come back affected by his piteous calls for help ; and, swinging their heavy forefeet, strike the sandy soil with the front part,

cutting away earth from the end or side of the pitfall, quicker than a navvy could with a spade, and at last successfully freeing their companion, who stamps all the débris of the broken-down sides beneath his feet, by helping him with their trunks up the rough kind of incline they have made. This occurred one night within 300 yards of our waggons; we, of course, did not see the operations, but we heard them being carried on, and the elephants talking to one another, and these were the inferences the Kafirs drew next morning from the foot-marks and appearances, and they assured me the case was not uncommon. If the wariness of these heavy animals among pitfalls is wonderful, not less to be admired is the way in which they manage to clamber up trackless heights, and come down by impossible-looking paths. A wall of rock 300 feet high is before me; immediately along the edge runs a shelf five or six feet wide, in places so precipitous that you could only slip down it, and even that at considerable risk, but over it, in Indian file, come eighteen or twenty elephants making their way to the jungle below. As they reach the sharp inclines they sit down, and thrusting their hind legs straight out under them, as far forward as they can, they 'go it,' as Albert Smith used to say of the Alpine tourist, and everyone comes safely to the bottom. They take readily to deep water, displacing so much that only the ridge of the back, and upper part of the head down to the eyes, show above the surface; they carry the trunk up and swim strongly. I have known them come to the opposite side of a river, and finding the bank too steep to climb, at once begin pounding it with their forefeet until they had established a firm resting-place for one gigantic rammer, and then starting from their fresh point of departure, go on making steps till the flight was complete—this was in India.

In elephant country we were always obliged to be very careful, for a single shot at night will sometimes drive a herd far away. Unlike the rhinoceros and buffalo, elephants seldom drink twice at the same place in a river. This is partly due to caution, though perhaps it may chiefly depend on their soon

eating up a district, and having to seek new feeding grounds. With this object they frequently travel great distances—fifty miles or more—in a night. This will not appear so remarkable if it is considered that the bulls often stand fifteen miles from the water, and walk to and fro in the hot nights without missing, though during the colder season they are contented with alternate nights. In India, where vegetation is rank and the forests dense, elephants hold on to the same locale.

The ears of the African elephant are enormous—six feet in length, and broad in proportion, though I never measured the breadth. The lower end just touches the point for the side shot. I was once hunting these animals in the Ba-Quaina country, and had killed three, when a tiny dark wreath on the horizon warned us of a coming thunderstorm. A South African sky is for nine months quite free of cloud ; for 300 out of the 365 days of the year the sun rises as glowing copper, and sets as flaming gold, without a framing of any sort. A happy thought struck me : I ordered the Kafirs to cut off an ear from one of the dead elephants, and, lying curled up beneath it, I escaped a wet jacket, though the rain came down in waterspouts, and I stood six feet. The scientists of the future may find occupation for some time to come in developing the cause of abnormal ears, sloping backs, thorns at the ends of lions' tails, and a number of other little peculiarities in beasts, birds, insects and fishes ; but they ought not to delay, for many types are already on the wane.

The elephant's head is wonderfully constructed. If it were great masses of bone and muscle, the ligaments of the neck would need to be of extraordinary power to support it ; but between the larger bones, and in all admissible parts of the skull, the spaces are filled in with a cellular, bony structure, fulfilling both requirements of strength and lightness.

I believe some people suppose the Carthaginians tamed and used the African elephant ; they could hardly have had Mahouts Indian fashion, for there is no marked depression in

the nape of the neck for a seat, and the hemming of the ears,[1] when erected, would have half-smothered them. My knowledge does not allow me to raise any argument on this point; but might not the same market have been open to the dwellers at Carthage as was afterwards to Mithridates, who, I suppose, drew his supply from India, where they have been broken and made to do man's work from time immemorial? *Vide* friezes, carvings, pictures, stories, myths innumerable—the last running back into obscurity—the elephant holding in them the position of the 'gin' in the Arab tales. Half the world has at one time been the *habitat* of this great pachyderm or its congeners. Siberia, with its fossil ivory mines, and Europe everywhere, are its tombs. Destroyed or driven south by some climatic change, India and Africa are its present homes; but in Africa the place thereof shall soon know it no more, and to our great-great-grandchildren the old 'tlou' will be as the mammoth is to us.

The elephant's age is a disputed point; but, as no one has quite decided, let me put it down at 200 years, upon these two grounds: 1st, that most animals live four or five times as long as they take to attain maturity, and an elephant is certainly not a 'man' till he is fifty; 2ndly, that I had charge for the Government of a large take of elephants caught in a 'coopum' in India. They were sometimes, while being broken, very troublesome, and if they got beyond the control of the men a tame elephant, 'Lachmé,' was called in to 'whip' them. Lachmé had been a pagoda elephant sixty years; we had the record of her capture as a full-grown female. That makes her upwards of a hundred, and she was then, in 1847, quite in her prime, without a sign of old age, and I dare say is very much

[1] I know in the representations on the medals of Faustina and of Septimius Severus the ears are African, though the bodies and heads are Indian; but these were struck nearly 400 years after Carthaginian times, when the whole known world had been ransacked by the Romans for beasts for their public shows; and I still think it possible that the Carthaginians—the great traders and colonisers of old—may have obtained elephants through some of their colonies, from India.

the same still. The young calves, too, are the smallest beasts for the size they afterwards attain, and must take a long while growing. Such tinies are they that I have had them run under my pony, and touched their little pinky bodies with my foot—poor morsels! I never could shoot the female with any satisfaction, and I think I never did at all but twice; males were plentiful enough.

Men differ as to the height of the African elephant. I have seen thousands, and shot the largest one I ever saw. I measured him, and he was 12 ft. 2 in. I have *heard* of one 17 feet high, but I did not see him, and it is long ago, so perhaps he was the last of the giants! A tusk was exhibited in the African Exhibition in Regent Street, in 1890, by Sir Edmund Loder. It weighed 180 lbs. odd, and was by far the heaviest single tusk known, I should suppose; but I have been shown a pair, 303 lbs. and 9 feet in length. My largest trophy was rather under 8 feet long, and the pair weighed between 230 and 240 lbs. They belonged to a bull I killed on the Zouga; he was the smallest old one I shot in Africa—not more than 9 feet high. I went out with John one bitter morning to provide food for the camp, and, having dropped a white rhinoceros, made for the waggons to get hot coffee and breakfast. On the way we came across an elephant, its head entirely hidden by a thick bush. Thinking, from its size, it was a cow, I was passing it unnoticed, when John, with the desire, I suppose, of adding to his collection of tails, begged me to shoot it. I fired, and down went the bush, as, with a shrill trumpet, the elephant trampled through it, disclosing nearly six feet of naked ivory, over the curve; so long were the tusks, and so diminutive their owner, that the points barely cleared the ground. A second ball finished him.

The drier the country the smaller the elephants. On the Limpopo the average height of the bulls was 11 feet, on the Zouga and through the Kalahari 10 feet. The ivory of the smaller kind was larger and, I am told, closer in grain. These tusks, which are deposited by a gum, are very slow of growth; and the molar

teeth, to ensure a supply for a long life, have always a young tooth growing at the back of the alveolar process which pushes out the old ones as they become worn.

Most of my elephants were killed from horseback with the shoulder-shot ; the cover is rarely thick enough to allow you to get within reach on foot. Besides, on foot you can seldom dispose of more than two at a time; whereas from horseback, under favourable conditions, you may double or even treble that number. Sometimes you must crawl in, and then, of course, you take the head shot if you can get it ; but you ought to be within fifteen yards, on a line parallel with your quarry, just a trifle in advance, and then a ball in the lower depression, or temple, will, nineteen times out of twenty, be instantly fatal. I see Sir S. Baker does not believe in the front shot for Africans ; but, though as a rule I agree with him entirely, I certainly have killed them by this. Their heads slope so much backwards, however, that it often fails. In tolerable ground there is but little difficulty ; but in thick bush there is always some danger, more especially if you are particular in choosing your tusks ; and in riding the bull you select out of the herd there is a certain amount of knack—you settle to him and then press him individually, disregarding the rest of the herd for the time. He shoots ahead of his companions, or turns round on you and charges ; in either case you have gained your object—separation. If he charges, put the horse to the gallop and let him follow you, the farther the better. Watch as he slacks off, keeping about twenty yards ahead, and pull up sharp when he comes to a stand. He is too blown to charge again, and when he turns to go after his mates he must give you his side ; one or two shots properly placed at short range are enough, and you are away again after the flying herd. The oftener you attack the easier the victory, for the heavy beasts get tired, and in consequence are much less difficult to kill.

The little elephant is an amusing imitator of the ways of his elders. I have come upon cow herds with a number of very

small calves. As the mothers move off, disturbed and trumpeting, the little fellows fancy it their business to follow suit. Up goes each tiny trunk with a penny trumpet and a fussy waving to and fro. When frightened they run under their mothers, and peer out in the most old-fashioned way ; and if you have been unfortunate enough to kill the parent, they will often follow your horse—poor little beggars !

The mothers, I think, as a rule, do not show so much affection for their young as might be expected. They are too nervous and easily affected to remain mistresses of themselves, and, so far as I have experience, forget their offspring in troubled times. You have occasionally striking instances to the contrary, but they are the exceptions. In a large herd of females I once shot a young bull, believing him a good tusked cow ; as he dropped, a gaunt old lady, presumably his mamma, fell out from the herd, and charged me at once. I was on horseback and galloped away from her, as she had shabby stumpy tusks, and though I was that day shooting for the pot, there were plenty of others to choose from. She turned back to the dead elephant, which lay in the opening through which I had to pass to get at the others, and stood guard over it, charging in the most determined way every time I attempted to get by—which I had to do at last by allowing her to follow me and then doubling on her. This scene I remember more clearly than I otherwise perhaps should because of an extraordinary sight. When I caught the elephants again they were slinging down a hillside. Dismounting, I killed three of them, two pitching on their heads and rolling over like rabbits.

We shot through the country of the Bakaa for about seven weeks, north and south of the rocky hills on which they lived, and I was here first introduced to that giant tree, the baobab. I was following elephant spoor on foot, with three or four men, through thick thorns, when I found that they had led me off the tracks ; and on looking up for a reason why, quite close to me stood what at first I took to be the body of an elephant,

I threw my gun into my left hand to be in readiness, to the amusement of my followers, who, knowing I had never as yet fallen in with the baobab (*Adansonia digitata*), had led me a little aside to grin at my astonishment. These quaint, enormous trees seem to have belonged, like many of the animals of Africa, to a bygone world, and, finding the present doesn't suit them, they are taking their leave. A few of the old ones still remain, but I never saw a young one. The largest I measured was 74 feet girth at four feet from the ground, and the smallest 45 feet, but I perhaps overlooked smaller specimens.

We had very good sport, unbroken by accident or anything remarkable. Our starvelings had fattened day by day, and were now shining and very merry and happy in their new skins. Uncivilised man does not take long to pick up ; he only wants food, and plenty of it. Shall I be believed if I say that Kafirs will eat, if you give it them, from 12 lbs. to 15 lbs. of solid meat in the day? It appears, I know, an impossible feat, but I can vouch for it and partly explain it, too ; for in a short journey with Livingstone, between the Chobé and Zambesi rivers, two or three years after this, we had no sort of meal with us, and were consequently obliged to live on meat alone. And I certainly thought the dear old Doctor was very greedy, for he would eat 4 lbs. for his breakfast and the same or more for his dinner. On telling him my opinion of his performance, he retaliated, 'Well, to tell you the truth, I've been thinking just the same of you!' The fact is that a very large quantity of meat is required if nothing else is eaten. When I got back to the waggons I tried giving two or three of the men a handful of beans with their rations, and found they could not possibly eat more than 3 lbs. of flesh, the smaller mixed diet meeting all the requirements of the system.

We had harried the country of the Bakaas a good deal, and decided on seeking a new field along the banks of the Limpopo, where we heard the game—elephants especially—were in great abundance ; so, setting our heads about E. by S., we journeyed onwards, and, travelling slowly, came to it on the

third or fourth day—the last twenty-four hours without water for the cattle.

This day ought to be marked with a very large though dull-coloured stone in my shooting annals. Murray made a long *détour* to the N.E., intending to strike the river lower down and follow it up to the encampment. I kept within easy distance of the waggons, as I was anxious to see the cattle watered and well cared for. I shot two large bull elephants and a rhinoceros, and one of the drivers killed a giraffe and a quagga. I think we must have been near the river, for men were left behind to cut them up and dry the flesh, and I do not remember any other water within reach. It was about 3 P.M. when we drew up on the bank, and I was sitting down and enjoying the pleasant sight of the thirsty beasts taking their fill, when I heard three shots in quick succession three-quarters of a mile down stream. It could only be Murray, for there were no guns in the country in those days except our own and those of the Boers far away to the eastward, and my Kafirs would have told me soon enough had any stray party of these been about. Again came shot after shot, and thinking Murray was either in trouble or had fallen in with a herd of buffalo, the spoor of which was very plentiful, I caught one of the ponies, and putting the bit in his mouth, kicked him along as fast as he could go in his waterlogged condition.

Immediately opposite the sound of the guns the bush was so thick I could not get through with the horse ; so, tying him to a tree on the outside, I crawled in, and came upon a kind of backwater from the main river, very deep, 150 yards long by fifty wide, with high banks, especially the one opposite me, on which sat the dear old laird blazing away right merrily—his after-rider helping him keep up the cannonade by loading one of the guns. 'What is it?' I shouted. 'Look at those beasts,' he replied—*bang*. 'There again'—*bang*. 'Look!' he cried. The pool was alive with monstrous heads, and though this was the first time I had seen the hippopotamus in the flesh—fat, per-

haps, I ought to say—for we had then no friendly hippo in the Zoo—there was no mistaking him.

I opened fire at once from my side at heads which showed for a second above water and then disappeared below, again to reappear; and Murray kept pounding away from his. This went on for a quarter of an hour, and nothing came of it; though the hippos were hit every time, not one of them seemed to die—there was, apparently, the same amount of snorting, puffing, and blowing—but no results of the thirty or forty shots that had been fired, and yet the animals were within twenty or twenty-five yards of us. 'Have you killed any, old fellow?' I shouted, and the answer came back to me, 'No!' At the same moment a big bull made straight for the part of the bank on which I was standing. Letting him get his forelegs clear of the water, I fired within three feet of his head, blowing him back, as it seemed, into the stream. 'Well, I'll swear I hit him!' I roared to Murray. 'Oh, I've hit all I've fired at,' was his reply. The evening was closing in, and just before we started for the waggons one hippopotamus floated up dead on Murray's side. We looked at one another, and did not say much of our shooting. Next morning, however, on the surface of the creek lay fourteen huge bodies—a hippopotamus sinks to the bottom when killed, and only floats when the gas distends the stomach; at least, that was our reading of the riddle. It is the poorest of sport, and I never shot another except for food. The young are very good eating, the flesh resembling the most delicate pork.

We knew nothing about the tusks when we shot this first batch, and so lost some valuable ivory. Large hippopotamus' teeth were then worth 20*s.* a lb., when elephant ivory would bring only 5*s.* 6*d.*, the former, I believe, being used for the finest sort of inlaying and artificial teeth.[1]

The hippopotamus and crocodile live together in the same

[1] Sir S. Baker tells me these prices are altered now, and that in 1892 elephant ivory fetches from 12*s.* to 18*s.* a pound, and hippo's only from 5*s.* to 10*s.*, as the dentists have given up using it.

rivers, and keep the peace, though on what pact I know not, for the young of the former would be sucking-pig to the latter; I suppose there is a mutual agreement of bear and forbear. The hippopotamus looks more like a retired publican than a fighter, but whether he can bite or not, ask the canoes. The little calves stand on the broad backs of their mothers as the school moves from one feeding ground to another, and this may be a precautionary measure, for I fear 'Brer' Crocodile is not a very honourable fellow. I may mention as a curious fact that once or twice I found his armoured skeleton fifteen feet up in the trees by the river's bank. The Kafirs assured me that it was thrown there by an elephant who had come down to drink, and on whose trunk the crocodile had fastened, whereupon the elephant in his fright and fury had kneaded him to death and then, with a toss from his tusks, treed him. I could see, and can suggest, no better explanation of his position —high above even flood mark.

Next morning our now plump Bakaa came as a deputation, assured us we had made their hearts quite white, and requested leave to return to their kraals. It was granted, of course, and a few days later, after drying their strips of meat and making it up into large faggots, having requisitioned as carriers a number of Ba-Lala—a kind of poor Kafirs who hang on the outskirts of the more powerful tribes like pariahs or mean whites, and whose position I could never exactly make out—they set out for their villages, each man, woman, and child staggering under as much meat as he or she could possibly stand up under. This one day's shooting of elephants and hippos had given them over 60,000 lbs. They had large stores beside, and every few days had sent back men with loads to their chief throughout the whole time of their being with me. They *all* went to their homes. Out of the 600 not one was missing, sick or feeble.

We shot down the river for a month or five weeks. On one of the last days, Murray and I rode out together. We usually took our separate beats, and this is, as a rule, by far the best plan, for men get jealous shooting against one another

—the camp fires dull ; in this way, too, you learn more of the country through which you are travelling. We had pottered about, shot a giraffe, and some smaller game, when accidentally we lighted upon a herd of elephants. Now you very seldom come across elephants by chance ; you have nearly always to follow them for miles from the water ; but here they were, and eight fine bulls too—nothing very large in tusks, but all good. Though startled, they stood and fronted us. We each took one of the flankers, firing at the point of the shoulder. With a flourish of trumpets the whole eight charged in a crescent—it was a grand sight—we turned and galloped right and left, the bulls pressing after Murray, and in their course driving up an old mahoho, who puffed and snorted, and putting on full steam managed at last to get clear, in great alarm. We only bagged a couple ; in after years with more knowledge I should have got at least four single-handed.

The season was drawing on, and we set our heads southward and westward towards Mabotsé, and, shaking the dear old Doctor and Mrs. Livingstone by the hand, went down to the Colony, I to refit for next year, Murray to return to England. I should have managed very well with the stores I had, but from December to April you cannot keep your horses alive—the horse sickness kills every one. This mysterious illness, though an epidemic at the Cape, is endemic through the old hunting grounds. It is said to be peripneumonia, and to arise from the rank vegetation springing up after the first rains ; but I think some other explanation of its cause than this must be found, as the horses suffered just the same once when I was crossing the Bakalahari desert rather too early in the season, for I lost six in nine days. Bleeding to exhaustion seems the only remedy, and one or two I certainly managed to pull through by opening the veins at both sides of their necks at once, and letting the blood run till I could push them down with my hand. Had it not been for this we should never have taken the trouble of the long journey to and fro, but have remained quiet for the hot months, and then resumed the campaign when the weather became cooler.

CHAPTER III

SECOND EXPEDITION TO SOUTH AFRICA

By W. Cotton Oswell

Murray returned to England. I threw off my ivory at the nearest frontier town, and laying in such fresh supplies as were needed, and buying half a dozen horses to fill up the gaps, was by the middle of April on my way to the Mariqué River, a small tributary of the Limpopo, intending to shoot down it to its junction, and then follow the main stream as far as I might be able. The game was very numerous, and John was already well on with his frieze of elephant tails round the inside of my waggon. He always cut off the 'tips' from the elephants I shot, as a kind of tally; and now that we did much of the tracking alone, he was besieged on his return to camp by the Kafirs, to find out how many tails he had, and whether the late owners were fat! They ran heel the next morning and left men to cut, dry, and despatch the flesh to their respective kraals; a large number, and all the head men, remaining with me.

One morning, before I started, a Kafir came in with a letter fastened in a cleft-stick, from 'a white man shooting on the Limpopo, three days up stream from the junction of the Mariqué'; it was from a Major Frank Vardon, of the 25th Madras N.I., who, hearing I was within a short distance, proposed to join parties and shoot together. I had been one whole season and part of another at the work, and I thought that a new comer of whom I knew nothing might not be the most desirable of companions; he would very likely wish to

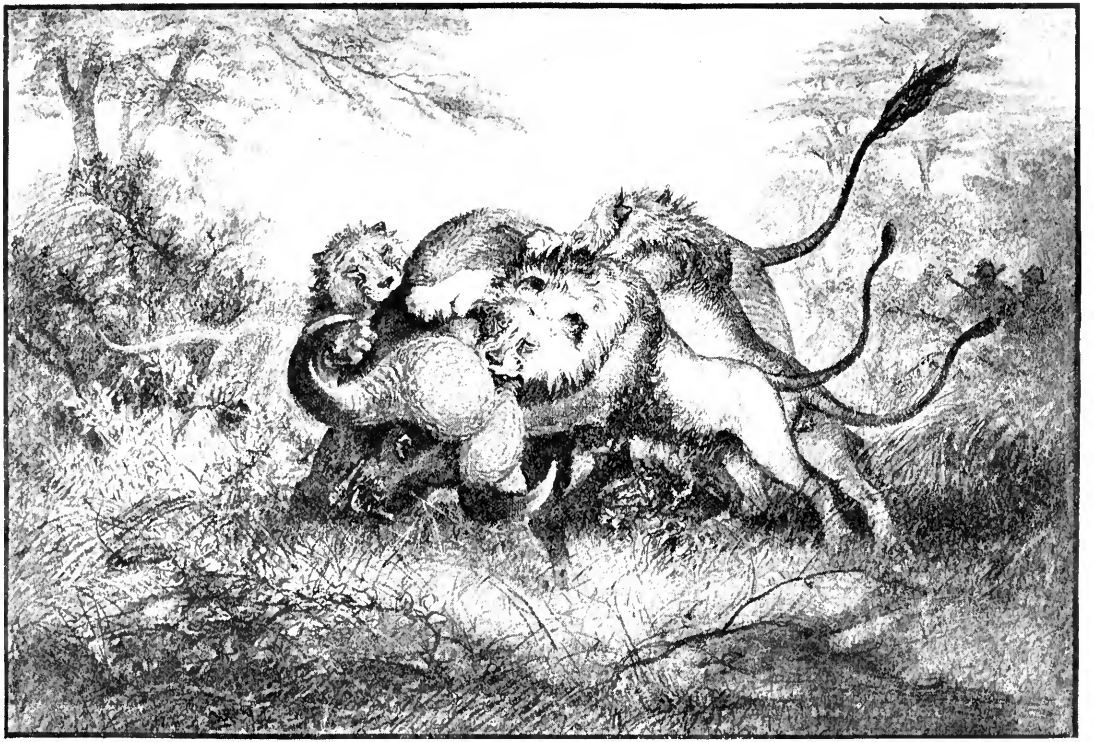
stop when I wished to go on, and *vice versa*, and I sent an answer in this spirit; but, 'thanks be praised,' I repented of my churlishness in an hour after the departure of the messenger, and wrote a second letter, begging Major Vardon to ignore the first, pardon my selfishness, and join me as soon as possible; and to the end of my life I shall rejoice that I did so, for in three days the finest fellow and best comrade a man ever had made his appearance.

I had been fortunate in finding elephants early, had shot three fine bulls, and in consequence of having had a very long ride the day before, after a herd we never came up with (we started at 8 A.M. one morning and only reached the waggons again next day at 7 A.M.), I returned to camp about 3 P.M., and introduced myself to my new companion, who had just arrived. I will not attempt to describe him—let every man picture for himself the most perfect fellow traveller he can imagine, and that's Frank; brightest, bravest-hearted of men, with the most unselfish of dispositions, totally ignorant of jealousy, the most trustworthy of mates; a better sportsman, and better shot than myself at all kinds of game save elephants, and only a little behindhand in that, because he was a heavy weight and poorly armed with a single-barrelled rifle; yet he was always rejoicing in my success, and making light of his own disappointments—and this man I had all but missed!

Sometimes we would take a day together after elephant or buffalo, and occasionally we met by accident, our beats cutting one another, and the sound of the guns showing our whereabouts. Once having come together in this way, we saw the finest struggle of brute force I ever witnessed. We were making tracks back to the camp, walking our horses slowly along the bank of the river, when Frank got off to shoot a waterbuck (*Aigoceros ellipsiprymnus*). A shout followed the report of his rifle. Dismounting, for the bush was thick, I soon joined him. In stalking the waterbuck he had come across buffalo, and had wounded one, which with two others was still in view. I started in pursuit and soon outran Vardon, for he was stout, one Kafir holding with

me. Presently I was abreast of his animal, which was leaning, hard hit, against a tree. I gave it a widish berth, not wishing to finish Frank's work, and pressed on after the others ; but, just as I passed, it made a plunge forward, and began to run again ; at the same instant the bush was streaked with yellow, and calling out, 'Come along, there's a lion !' I put on a spurt to get first shot, carrying the gun at the trail, for one had to stoop often under the branches of the thorns. After going a hundred yards, I could distinctly hear the sharp snort of the buffalo, and muffled growl of its assailant, and knew that the latter had got hold. I still ran on, looking out for a sight of the combatants, when suddenly the man who had kept up with me put his hand on my wrist, and, pulling rather harder than he intended, stooping forwards and running as I was, down I came over-balanced. 'What is it?' I asked angrily. 'Look !' he answered. Within twenty-five yards a magnificent fight was going on. Two other male lions had joined the one I had first seen, and run blood-spoor till they had overtaken and stopped the buffalo. They were now all standing rampant on him, teeth and claws both at work, the gallant old bull doing his utmost to hold his own against odds. He tried to gore them, but they hugged his side, putting their bodies parallel with his, and so escaping the thrust ; he swung the lion on his right completely off his legs, as you swing a child by his arms. It was only by glimpses that you saw anything, for it was an enfolding cloud of dust, out of which came every now and again the black hide of the bull and the fulvous coats of the lions. Every muscle of the attackers and attacked was on the stretch. You felt rather than saw the terrible strain. Had the buffalo been unwounded, even with the odds of three to one against him, he would have left his mark. It did not last much more than a minute—perhaps not even that—and then the grand, old 'Naàri' came to the ground, killed by the ball, not by the lions.

The one of these which had attacked on the right came round to his fellows, and they all three stood with their fore



ODDS—3 TO 1

paws on the carcase, and roared and growled their pæan of victory. Frank had come up; we were too near to speak, but I motioned him to take the lion on the left, while I covered the middle one. We fired together; his fell dead with a broken back, filling its mouth with bush as it rolled over: my shot was rather a slanting one, went in through the back ribs, and out somewhere forward; at all events, it was not fatal on the spot, for the lion sprang over the buffalo without stopping to inquire where it came from; the third never moved, but kept on shaking the dead bull till I had loaded again and killed him. I wish we could have picked up No. 2, but the evening was closing in too rapidly to allow us to track him any great distance, and we did not therefore bring him to bag, as we must under other circumstances have done, for he was wounded to his death. It was my clumsy first shot that was in fault, and Frank's want of a second barrel. When a lion has fast hold of his prey with his mouth, his eyes are nearly closed, and you may get quite close to him, the folds of the skin of the face being driven up by the constriction of the muscles of the jaws against the lower lids: the Kafirs all recognise this fact.[1] Vardon was a very deliberate shot, and used to take me to task for snapping too much. But our weapons were different, his a finely-sighted rifle, mine a very open-sighted smooth-bore.

He gave me quite a jobation one day, in the presence of a living lion, not ten yards from us, when he delivered his text. It happened on this wise. The waggons were halted for the night, on the bank of a deep 'nullah.' There were no elephants to alarm in the neighbourhood, so I strolled out on the chance of a shot. It was late in the afternoon, 4 P.M., and I could hear Vardon talking to his men two hundred yards off, as he came back to camp. Whether roused by his voice, or by

[1] Mr. Wolf's sketch does not quite bear out this statement; when he was drawing it I forgot to mention the peculiarity. I am, however, able to indicate it in the illustration, thanks to the courtesy of Mr. Caterson Smith, who altered the plate in accordance with my suggestion.

sight of me I don't know, but a lion broke from the bottom of the nullah, and scrambled up the opposite bank. It was a longish shot, and I think I missed. In two or three minutes, exactly at the spot the lion had gained the bank, Vardon and his party appeared ; I ran through the hollow, and telling him what had just happened, we put the Kafirs on the trail and followed. We had not gone a hundred yards before one of the men made signs to us to stop, and through the very patch of bush in which we were standing the beast came heading down again to the thickly-wooded ravine. He really was not more than eight feet from us, but a dry bush was between. I dropped on my knee, and when he was slightly in advance fired. It is always better to let a *passing* lion get a trifle ahead of you ; there is more chance of a kill, less of a charge. The ball struck well behind the shoulder and went right through him. He bounded on, dabbling the bush on either side with blood, and then dear old Frank began to blow me up for firing too quickly. In this instance, I really had not done so, but he had not got his rifle off, not having a clean sight, or he was desirous that the game should get clear of the partially covering scrub. We never picked up this lion, for a wind arose in the night and blurred the spoor, and he had not died in the long grass, for we burnt it ; his loss was always scored against me.

Opinions are very various about lions. There is the young lady's lion, a noble generous animal, that always kills his own mutton, and refuses all butcher's meat ; and the young gentleman's, whose experience, perhaps, began at Wombwell's, and ended at the Zoo. His is a cowardly, sneaking brute, a regular cur. There must be lions and lions. Those I have met with are not above eating what may be before them, asking no questions for conscience sake ; but as a rule, if you will take my advice, you will hold as straight as you can when you pit yourself against a lion ; and if you accept all chances without picking and choosing, you'll now and again find yourself in a warm corner. Lions are not so plentiful as blackberries, or even as buffalo, and perhaps it's better so. I do not think his rush is so

quick or so resolute as a tiger's, and he has a much better head to hit; still, he looks ugly enough when, with mane standing out as if electrified, and with a short, barking roar, he comes down to the charge. He will not, except when hard pressed by hunger, or when accustomed to feed off human carcases lying about after fights and raids, attack man in the daytime unprovoked. A surly beast, awakened suddenly from sleep, or disturbed while feeding, might be nasty; but he nearly always retreats before man, for the fear and the dread of one of Noah's family are still a tradition with wild beasts. But even in the cases above mentioned his conduct very much depends on yours. In the daylight wild animals, especially the wildebeest and quagga, show but little fear, running up to within fifty yards, and gazing at him as if fascinated.

In my first journey I hunted for many weeks with a party of Bushmen, and gained many valuable hints about beasts and their ways from them; and, with regard to the lion, I learned that if you came unarmed on one, your best chance was to stand still and he would move off, but that if you turned and ran, he was nearly sure to make after you. Three times in my shooting life have I tested this advice—once on horseback, twice on foot. On the first occasion, without a gun, I came quite unawares upon a sleeping lion. He woke, stood up, and we looked at each other for a few seconds. Then he turned, walked away very slowly for thirty or forty yards, as if he wished to convey the idea that he was only moving to get out of such low society—throwing his head first over one shoulder, then the other, to see what impression he was making—and directly he thought he was out of sight broke into a lumbering gallop. If he shows an inclination to hold his own when met, the Bushmen stoop, and, with their hands resting on their knees, begin to walk very slowly towards him. He raises his head and watches the man suspiciously, trying to find out what he is about, and then, turning, retreats. I would not say that this plan would be always successful, but I firmly believe it is the best to try when you are unarmed. I have

even stood thus twice opposite a *wounded* lion with an empty gun. Had I fallen back I feel certain my *vis-à-vis* would have attacked, for he was in neither case so crippled as to be unable to follow and overtake me. When the cubs are very small the male will show fight, to give the lioness a chance of making off with them, but this is rather a demonstration than real business.

I do not think our South African lion can be nearly so formidable as the North African, for I had the pleasure of once meeting the famous French sportsman, M. Gérard, and the animals he described far exceeded any I ever met with in size and ferocity ; perhaps the climate and the constant badgering they get from the Arabs may be sufficient to account for the differences. Of course, if you take the war into his camp, he will fight, and he is a very dangerous opponent, from his quickness and strength. I see Sir Samuel Baker believes that he possesses more power in his paw than the tiger. I would not be understood as disputing such excellent authority ; but a tiger can give a tidy pat, too—I have seen him smash in an ox's head at a blow. Again, I have spoken of the lion as less resolute in his charge ; but Sir W. C. Harris asserts that he is never stopped. This is not my experience, for I have sometimes known him brought up short by comparatively trifling wounds, and one actually by the cutting away of an eye-tooth by the bullet. He has two very distinct cries besides his roar and charging bark, one when questing, the other when full. Lying by the fire at night, Kafirs will start up at once and pile on wood if they hear the low panting moans of the first ; of the second they take no notice, unless you call their attention to it. 'Oh, he's full ; he's going home singing.' I have once or twice taken the grunting of the cock ostrich for the note of the lion. It is much shallower ; but it has deceived me. The Kafirs never make the mistake.

People looking at the original sketches of the pictures which are engraved in this book have often asked me how I felt at the time of the accidents. Much as other men would,

I suppose, is all I can reply. We all belong to the same family. When trouble threatens, you shoot very straight, your muscles are rigid and steely *for the time* ; if you come to grief the whole of your mind is bent upon getting away, and on that only. Some men have more of their wits about them than others, no doubt ; but all pale faces must yield to the black skins in this particular. A man was cutting long grass to thatch one of Dr. Livingstone's outbuildings when he came upon a buffalo, which charged. The man ran some little distance, but noting a slight depression on the ground, like a shallow ditch, threw himself down flat into it, holding on to the bush and grass with his hands. The points of the buffalo's horns turn in, bowing out the middle—there was, from the man's position, a difficulty in getting the points to bear, and before the bull could arrange matters satisfactorily to himself his nose came close to the Kafir's body ; in an instant he had hold of it, and pinched and wrung it sharply. The nose is the buffalo's tender spot, and this happy thought of the native was sufficient to rid him of his assailant. Livingstone told me this story. I did not see it enacted, but I believe it ; and it is illustrative of such presence of mind as would hardly be found in the European—living amongst wild animals and inheriting from generation to generation the instinctive knowledge of their natures, it would be surprising if the blacks were not in such things our superiors.

The buffaloes were in immense herds along the Mariqué River. As we were coming home one night rather later than usual from hunting, a white rhinoceros with a calf insisted on stopping the way. It was bright moonlight, and easy to shoot her ; but the country was full of elephants, and I was very unwilling to scare them. We tried every way to get her to move, but no, she would not. We pelted her with pieces of wood, abused her roundly, and the men threatened her with their assegais, all to no purpose. At the last, very unwillingly, I was obliged to fire. She ran a little distance and dropped dead ; but the report of the gun had awakened the whole forest to the left of

us into life, unheard, unseen before. I rode up to the edge, it was a mass of struggling buffaloes jammed together. The outside ones, startled by the shot, and having got sight of our party, bore back upon the main body ; hoof and horn, horn and hoof, rattled one against another, and for some distance I rode parallel with a heaving stream of wild life. I cannot pretend with any accuracy to guess their numbers, but there must have been thousands, for they were packed together like the pictures of American bison, and any number of 'braves' might have walked over their backs, so far as I could see, for any distance. In the moonlight, I could only, to be sure, make out my side of this seething river.

Two marches from the junction of the Mariqué we found elephants in such large herds that we halted a week or ten days, and the ivory as it was brought in was piled up under my waggon. Once whilst here, after a long day's tracking, the night caught us and we had to lie out. We found water, but had no food—for you never shoot on elephant spoor for fear of disturbing your game, or losing your men, who settle down like vultures to eat. Kafirs hunt best hungry. It was a bitterly cold night, and how the men without clothes got through it I don't know. I had no extra covering, it is true, save my saddle-cloth, a square of blanket 3 feet by 3 ; but we made a large fire, and lay all round it like the spokes of a wheel, and I don't remember feeling much inconvenience, though I was a little stiff in the morning, for the fire had burnt low, and the ground, except where we had lain, was white with frost. One of the men had kindly roused me about midnight, with an invitation to partake of a tortoise he had caught and was stirring tenderly in its shell among the warm ashes. I declined with thanks. We were all quite fresh and merry when the sun thawed us, and as we neared our waggons we heard shot after shot in the bush around, every now and then catching sight of a buffalo. I thought Vardon had turned out with the drivers for an early 'battue'—very much against his custom, certainly—but who else could it be ? The mystery was solved directly I reached our encampment, for on

the opposite bank of a small stream, which here ran into the Limpopo, I saw two waggons unmistakably Dutchmen's. I was disgusted enough that anyone should dare to come poaching on our manor. But what was to be done? They were many, nine or ten, and we were but two. After breakfast one of my Hottentots, who had been herding the oxen in the direction of the Boers' waggons, brought a message, or rather an order, that I was to go over to them. I returned for answer that if they wanted anything they could come to us. They took it quite in good part, and about ten o'clock, after ascertaining from my boys of what our party consisted, seven or eight of them crossed the stream and made their way up to our camp, having the good taste to leave all their roërs behind. We had a friendly chat, coffee and tobacco playing a considerable part in it, and filling up the gaps in my rather incomplete Dutch. Dear old Frank could never be induced to believe that Dutch was anything but bad English, and would occasionally put in a word or two of this latter in the worst grammar and pronunciation he could improvise. We smoked and we drank coffee, and we were amicable exceedingly, when one of my guests chanced to see the ivory under the waggon. They all got up to look at it—where did it come from?—who shot it? I said I had, and during the last few days. Alone? Yes, alone. 'That must be a lie. A poor lean fellow like you could never have shot such a splendid lot of tusks.' They appealed to my drivers for the truth, and when we returned to our coffee-pot, made an astonishingly liberal proposal that I should join and shoot with them, and take half the ivory killed by the whole party. They were in earnest, and I had the greatest difficulty in getting off; but I have reason to believe it was through the account of these Boers, and of another party I met at Livingstone's station at Mabotsé, that I received the most courteous message from Prœtorius, who was then their chief, that he hoped I would visit Mahalisberg, and that I should find a hearty welcome throughout Boerland. They had a wholesome dread of traders, who for ivory might supply the natives with muskets and am-

munition, and thus render them recalcitrant, and they had found out I didn't and wouldn't trade ; indeed, the story among them was that on a native bringing a tusk to my waggon for sale I threatened to shoot him then and there !

Vardon was the most enthusiastic rhinoceros hunter ; he filled his waggon with horns as I did mine with ivory ; he used to shoot four or five every day, and there was always a freshness about the sport to him which seemed remarkable. He was an all-round shot, but best at rhinoceros. The mahoho is not bad eating—by the way, his hump is excellent—but there is a good deal in the cooking of pachydermata. We had a capital cook at the waggons, and had eaten elephant's trunk many and many times. Two or three days farther down the river the men told me they had heard of a fine herd of bull elephants, about thirty miles off ; as there was little water, or at all events not sufficient for the oxen, they begged me to take only a couple of horses and sleep two nights away from the waggons. John and I started accordingly with our guides, and at 5 P.M. reached the small spring where we were to halt. Early next morning news came of two tuskers being close by, and it was proposed I should begin with them and go after the large herd next day. I soon found and shot them. One, a very fine bull with large tusks, charged viciously after getting a ball through the thick end of the heart. The men brought it to me to look at when they opened him. We took a lump of the trunk, and returned to our sleeping place—only one woman had remained, the rest were off to the dead elephants. We were hungry, and John proposed we should cut part of the trunk into small lumps and boil them. On the fire they went, and on they were still three hours afterwards. John, who was a very hungry fellow, kept prodding the pieces with a pointed stick to see if they were fit to eat, but they were still springy. At length we voted them done and tried to chew them, but they were exactly like bits of india-rubber, and we could make no impression. The woman, seeing our difficulty, made us scrape a hole under the fire, roll the trunk up in its

skin, put it in the hole and draw the ashes and fire over it, and in two or three hours it was done to a turn and excellent food.

Next day, about 4 P.M., we came up with the herd we were looking for—eleven bulls, all well furnished with ivory. It was so late in the day that we were in doubt whether to attack or leave them till the morrow, but as there was no water for the horses, I decided to go in at once, the more so as the elephants were standing lazily among thin bush in an easy country. Looking for the finest tusks, I rode out and killed the first bull without any trouble, but the next two gave plenty, and took more time than I had reckoned on, and the night closed in so rapidly that I was obliged to give up further attempts; had there been sufficient daylight I always thought I should have shot them all, for they were so tired and disinclined to run that they walked sulkily a little distance and then stood again. The men never forgave the want of light, and often asked me afterwards to press a herd till they were done up and then shoot them all, a programme difficult of execution as a rule—this *might* have been the exception.

I had dismounted, and we were making our fires when an elephant trumpeted fifty yards from us. He had probably lost his friends in the scrimmage and was trying to find them. I got within twenty-five yards of him, but could only see very indistinctly a mass of something, though he stood in rather an open place. There was no chance of my stalking any nearer. I might have run forward and got a shot, but it was too dark to play tricks. John squatted with the second gun and whispered to me to do the same, and, gazing steadily against the sky, I could now make out the elephant enough to tell his head from his tail-end. I fired—a shoulder-shot—and, stumbling a length or two, down he came. It was a good day's work, though it might, as I have said, have been better; but four first-rate bulls and at least 500 lbs. of ivory lay within a space of three or four acres, and there were, besides, the two I had killed the day before, one of which had very heavy teeth.

We lit our pipes and smoked quietly for a time, and then

remembered that we had breakfasted early and that we ought to be hungry and thirsty. The Kafirs suggested that as the elephants had probably come from the water in the morning, we should find some in their stomachs, and they immediately set to work and opened a large tusker that was lying close to our bivouac. They found what they sought and, after a good pull, invited me to partake. I was very thirsty, and they seemed to have enjoyed their drink, so, by their directions, placing a small bunch of grass as a filter, I took a mouthful, but—well! I immediately got rid of it—it was simply nitric acid. As the elephant was opened, however, the men were not going without dinner, and though I dare say it was horrible, there was at the same time something grand in the sight of the dark forest, lit sufficiently by the ruddy firelight to deepen the gloom beyond, with the naked savages, their blazing torches in their hands, walking about inside the cavernous ribs. A few choice morsels from the undercut of the sirloin broiled on the embers made a palatable supper, and, putting our feet to the blaze, we all fell asleep.

Whiz! 'tao!' *whiz*! woke me some time during the night, and, sitting up, I found the Kafirs throwing brands from the fire and shouting. A lion, no doubt attracted by the smell of blood, was tearing at the inside of the disembowelled elephant. I just got a glimpse of him, but it was too momentary for a shot. We slept, and were not again disturbed. I gave the dead beasts to the Ba Lala who had brought the information, telling them to send me the tusks, and returned to my waggon. The dozen were duly delivered in four or five days' time, though the waggons had gone fifty miles farther down the Limpopo. It was always so. Once the chief of a large tribe of Bushmen came running—as we were inspanning for the march—with a request that I would shoot two elephants, which he had just seen coming up from the river, for him and his people. I was very unwilling to stop the trek; telling the men therefore to go on, and saying I would overtake them, I jumped on a horse and went off with my Bushman, he keeping well in front, though I

was making a sharp canter of it. Through the bush, on to the open plain, and the game was in view. I dashed ahead. One had good tusks, and I settled down to him. He soon turned on me. I had been shooting buffalo the night before, and as there was only an ordinary charge in the gun, wishing to get rid of it, I fired at long range—forty yards, I dare say. The horse was fidgety, and the ball struck eight or ten inches below the backbone ; to my astonishment, the bull took one stride and settled down quite dead. The bullet had cut the aorta. His companion had such small teeth I let him go free, and, making the carcase over to my Bushman, who was astounded at the easy way the animal had been disposed of, and telling him to keep the tusks till I returned, I galloped after my waggons. Three months passed before I was again in the neighbourhood ; but while yet thirty miles off, the man, hearing that I was coming on, brought the ivory to me. I was delighted to gladden his heart and reward his honesty with a present of beads and brass wire.

But the saddest of days was at hand. I had one pre-eminently good horse, the very pick of all I ever had in Africa —fearless, fast, and most sweet-tempered. Returning to camp one evening with a number of Kafirs, tired and hungry after a long day's spooring elephants, which we never overtook, I saw a long-horned mahoho standing close to the path. The ength of his horn, and the hunger of my men, induced me to get off and fire at him. The shot was rather too high, and he ran off. I was in the saddle in a moment, and, passing the wounded beast, pulled up ten yards on one side of the line of his retreat, firing the second barrel as he went by from my horse, when, instead of continuing his course, he stopped short, and, pausing an instant, began to *walk* deliberately towards me. This movement was so utterly unlooked for, as the white rhinoceros nearly always makes off, that, until he was within five yards, I sat quite still, expecting him to fall, thinking he was in his 'flurry.' My horse seemed as much surprised at the behaviour of the old mahoho as

I was myself, and did not immediately answer the rein, and the moment's hesitation cost him his life and me the very best horse I ever had or knew ; for when I got his head round, a thick bush was against his chest, and before I could free him, the rhinoceros, still at the walk, drove his horn in under his flank, and fairly threw both him and his rider into the air. As he turned over I rolled off and fell in some way under the stirrup-iron, which scalped my head for four inches in length and breadth. I scrambled to my knees, and saw the

Death of Stael

horn of the rhinoceros actually within the bend of my leg ; but the animal wavered, and, with the energy of self-preservation, I sprang to my feet intending to run, for my gun was unloaded and had fallen from my hand. Had I been allowed to do so this story might never have been told, for, dizzy as I was from the fall, I should have been easily caught. Tottering a step or two, I tripped and came to the ground a little to the right of the creature's track. He passed within a foot without touching me. As I rose for the second time

my after-rider came up with another gun. I half pulled him from his pony and mounting it caught and killed the rhinoceros. The horn now hangs over the entrance to my front door.

That day Frank happened to be again hunting in the same direction as myself, and, hearing the reports of my gun, hoped I might have come up with the elephants I had started after in the morning. He found me sitting under a bush, hatless, and holding up the piece of my scalp with the blood streaming down my face, or, as he afterwards described it to Livingstone, 'I saw that beggar Oswell sitting under a bush holding on his head.' A few words told him what had happened, and then my thoughts turned to Stael. That very morning, as I left the waggons, I had talked to him affectionately, as a man can talk to a good horse, telling him how, when the hunting was over, I would make him fat and happy, and I had played with him and he with me. It was with a very sore heart I put a ball through his head, took the saddle from his back, and started waggonwards, walking half the distance (ten miles), and making my after-rider do likewise. Unless a man has been situated as I was then, it is difficult to make him understand all that the loss of a good horse means. You cannot even fill up his place in quantity, let alone quality. In this part of Africa, at all events, your success depends enormously upon your steed, for the country is generally too open for stalking, and he carries you up to your game, in most instances, as near as you like, and it is your fault if you don't succeed. Had I been the best shot that ever looked along a rifle, and made of steel, I could have done but a trifle without horses, in comparison with what I accomplished with them. Armed as I was with a smooth-bore not very true with heavy charges at over thirty yards, it was a necessity to get as near my game as possible. I am not vain of my shooting—I can do what I intend pretty well at from ten to twenty-five yards—but I would have given the best shot in the world without horses very long odds; besides, from the saddle you see so much more of the country,

and are so much more at your ease, and your attention for everything that surrounds you is so much more free.

On horseback your whole day is a pleasure to you, mind and body, whereas on your legs it is often a wearisome, unsuccessful tramp. Men going into Africa for shooting should be very careful in the selection of their mounts, and get the aid of some local friend or trusty acquaintance in their purchase, remembering always that five good horses are worth ten moderate ones and five brutes. For a season's shooting eight to ten trustworthy animals, and five not quite so costly for your after-rider, will, with luck, be an ample provision. The number seems large, but there are accidents, sore backs, hard fare, and hard work to be taken into account. You may sometimes do with fewer no doubt, but there ought to be a margin for loss. Men who go to Africa with the idea that the game will come to them to be shot will find their mistake ; 'Dilly, dilly, come and be killed' is not sufficient to fetch the African fauna.

Among my horses, I had many unbroken for riding ; they had, I fancy, all been driven. I once bought a whole team—eight—out of a waggon. On my way up from the colony to the shooting ground I used to amuse myself by breaking them in. The method was expeditious, though primitive. We saddled a quiet old stager and tied the young one to him, neck to neck, allowing about two feet length of coupling, by the riem, or leathern thong which every horse habitually wears for knee haltering, or fastening up at night. By degrees, with coaxing, we got the saddle and bridle on, and then I mounted the young one over the back of the old, on which John or one of the Hottentots got astride. There was a little trouble at first with the pupil, but as he could neither rear nor back, and might kick as long as he liked, I sat quietly until he was tired, and then, putting the broken horse into a slow walk, persuaded him to follow suit ; he generally did so, and after a mile or two, when he had become accustomed to my weight and movement in the saddle, I lengthened the coupling, little by little, and once or twice I have cast it off altogether and let him

go free alongside the other in the first day's march; but generally two or three lessons are necessary, and it takes a week or two to give him anything of a mouth. The principal trouble with the Cape horses is the *inbred* trick of bucking, of which I think they are hardly ever cured; they may behave well for a time, but just when you want them at a pinch, the vice recurs, and they leave you in a hole. Some, when hard worked and brought low, will go peaceably an ordinary journey, but anything unforeseen happening is apt to upset them. I had a very good-looking chestnut I bought out of a team, and broke to saddle myself, and he went well and steadily. One day something put him out, and he began bucking, not in the straightforward style of the trained horses of the Wild West Exhibition, which is difficult enough to sit, but in what we at the Cape call the half-moon, which is much worse, when a horse, without any warning, while going quite quietly, suddenly puts his head and neck well down between his forelegs and bucks right or left in a semicircle. I have heard many men say they can sit it, and perhaps, if expecting it, you might do so; but, in my experience, you nearly always part company. At all events, I and my chestnut did, four times, in as many minutes. The first time I was encumbered with the gun, but the three others were fair spills. I am sorry to say I lost my temper and meant shooting him, but thought better of it, and rode him down thin, keeping him so with work, till he was killed by the fly. Greys are not common at the Cape, and unless first rate, don't buy one for elephant hunting; you will be seen sooner and longer, and pursued further in the charge. I had a cream-coloured dun, and sometimes it was very difficult to shake off his followers.

I found a very light S-cheeked curb bit, single-reined, work well—you often need to turn quickly. I wore hunting-spurs, and kept my hands quite free for gun and rein. The horses were unshod and sure-footed. Introduce them, if possible, gradually to their work by letting your after-rider use them a few times. He is always out of danger, and if once

accustomed to the sight of an animal at a respectable distance, they can soon be driven up alongside of it, and get as eager in pursuit of elephant and large game as their riders.

By neglecting this rule, I very nearly came to grief on an afterwards capital pony. It was his *début*, and a wounded elephant charging with a scream, so terrified him that he was paralysed with fear, and stood stock-still after turning round; spurs had no effect, and how we escaped I cannot now tell. The bull came within a few feet of his tail and then wheeled. I can only suppose he got the scent of the human being, for he was quite near enough to have swept me from the saddle with his trunk. By a little careful treatment this pony became a very valuable one, and I once in after days shot 120*l.* worth of ivory from his back in half an hour. Have nothing to do with a vicious or uncertain tempered horse. If you find you have been taken in with such a one, shoot him; the first loss may not be so bad as the last. Never ride a stumbler up to anything that bites or butts. I had one, and he twice fell with me before a charging elephant. Luckily I did not come off, and pulled him up just in time to escape. Horses used to be cheap enough, but I dare say the price has risen. I mounted myself well from 7*l.* 10*s.* to 15*l.* apiece. Your ponies—for they are hardly more—ought to be quick getting their legs, and a turn of speed is desirable; for though in the open it is easy sailing away from an elephant, in bush or broken ground for 200 yards he will sometimes press a slow horse.

I was once, in particular, hard put to it by a smart though rather small bull. I had fired both barrels, and on he came. I might have had twenty yards' start, but for the first 100 he gained on me, and I had to ride as if in a close finish. A good Hantam horse is an exceptionally tough beast. Whilst at 'Oologs Poort,' a farm then in the occupation of a Mr. Nelson, I was buying mounts, when a Hottentot riding a neat round-ribbed bay came in with a return-letter from the town of Cradock, as far as I remember, seventy miles distant. The horse's appearance pleased me much, and though I found the

owner, a Mr. Cock, at first unwilling to part with him, I at last purchased him for 15*l.*—a large price then ; but he was worth it. He had just done his 140 miles in thirty hours, including five hours off saddling at Cradock. I was unfortunate with my horses, and lost this one early in the campaign. I had shot an eland or two just beyond the first chooi, and, being alone, had tied 'Vonk' (spark), as the men called him, to a tree whilst I gave the *coup de grâce* to the game. This done, I walked up to loose him and remount ; but as I thoughtlessly placed my hand on the rein he got scent of the blood, and suddenly starting back, broke away. I followed him a long while, every moment hoping to catch him, as he let me come quite close and then trotted on, feeding quietly till I came up to him again. At length I grew weary and angry, and twice covered him with the gun, that I might at all events save my saddle and bridle ; but twice I relented—the creature was too good and too tame to shoot, and there was a chance that I might find him next morning if he were not killed by a lion during the night. So I let him go, and just before sundown set my face towards the waggons, the encampment lying ten miles off. I walked really, I think, for once by instinct ; it was soon dark, and after three hours, afraid of going astray, I decided upon making a fire and camping out, knowing I should find the wheel-tracks next morning if I did not overshoot them. I took out my tinder-box and trying to strike a light, dropped the flint, and was on my knees feeling for it on the ground with my head down, when a muffled shot, which I at first took for a lion's pant, made me start to my feet, and within 100 yards of where I was standing, though hidden by a belt of thorns, by a second shot I was directed to the waggons. I had come quite straight down upon them through the night. We searched for the horse next morning in vain ; his spoor was over-trampled by a large herd of quaggas, and for two years I never heard any more of him ; when I ascertained a wandering party of Barolongs had found him in the veldt, and, unable to catch him, had driven him

before them for thirty miles to their kraal, and had killed many giraffes and other game from his back, one or two of the tribe who had gone into the colony for work having learnt to ride.

Round the dead elands there was a typical African breakfast party—two lions, a dozen jackals, five or six hyænas, and an innumerable company of vultures. The lions, having fed to the full, were lying down close to the carcase, the jackals intently watching them, one of their party every now and then, when he thought the lions' eyes were turned upon his companions or partly closed, running in for a hasty mouthful till a growl sent him to his seat again. A shambling hyæna, after many tries, for the beast wants dash, gets hold of one of the outside strings of the entrails and, pulling it taut, backs as far as he possibly can. Two or three of his friends invite themselves, and, rushing into breakfast, tug different ways. Vultures of various kinds stalk about tearing with beak and claw, and good right have they, for the invitations to the feast have all come through them. High up in the blue, entirely beyond your ken, they saw the game killed, and before you left the spot, if you had looked up, you might have seen the air alive with them. Soaring very high for an extensive view of anything going on for their advantage upon the earth below, their keen sight has comprehended the situation at a glance. Those immediately over the spot begin to descend, the message of there being something 'down' has been aërially communicated from battalion to battalion among the circling brotherhood, and through miles and miles of ether a game of follow my leader is going on. It is sight, not scent. An animal killed in a nullah, or in thick bush and covered up at once, escapes. The jackal, hyæna, and lion follow the birds. When the beasts of prey do not find the carcase—it may have been shot far from water—and the animal is thick-skinned, like the rhinoceros and elephant, and even the giraffe and buffalo, the beaks and claws cannot for some time make an entrance into their larder supply, and the birds sit about in solemn funereal state on the surrounding trees waiting for the

softening of putrefaction, which is well established in two days, solacing themselves meantime with an eye or the inside of the mouth if they can get at it.

In this neighbourhood and between Lake Kamadou and the Zambesi the works of the ants are marvellous. One variety builds a dome-shaped nest, which makes a first-rate oven, for it is hollow inside, and by smoking out the inhabitants and lighting a fire it becomes thoroughly heated, and bakes well. So much has been written about the white ant that it needs no description from me; but though I was in India for years I never remember seeing their earthworks half the size they are in Africa, where I have come across them ten to twelve feet high, and so large and firm that I have ridden about the roofs, in and out amongst the pinnacles and minarets, which give them an appearance, let us say, of Milan Cathedral on a small scale! And all this is the work of blind architects, who are obliged to protect themselves from the sun and from enemies by a covered way they build between their nests and any of the trees around, which may have dead wood or branches. How their instinct leads them my reason cannot tell, for they are eyeless. Where there are no chairs or stools, one sits and lies upon the earth, and sees much of the kingdoms and communities of the insect world. Here is the ant-lion lurking at the bottom of his inverted cone of a hole, ambushed and ready to spring upon the incautious insect that, stepping on the edge of his trap, is carried to the bottom by the loose, unstable grains of sand; here the hard-biting, plunger-looking red ant, whose holes have been stopped when the breakfast was prepared and the surface swept for the skins on which we lie. Up he comes, having wired his way through his closed front door, sits on end, strokes what would be his moustache if he had any, and then, with a number of his fellow-sufferers and friends, walks straight to the nest of a large black species of his own family, and each throwing one of the blacks—about twice his own size—over his back, away they go to their own holes, and, pointing out the work to be

done, stand with a fierce countenance over their slaves until all is put right, when the inferior race retire. Trapdoor spiders, too, were very numerous, with their cunning arrangements.

But I have wandered from the Limpopo.

The Bechuana are not of much account in hunting elephant with the spear, though they talk and brag a good deal about it; indeed I have known them fairly beaten and forced to come to me for assistance. I can see a young bull now, walking about quite strongly, with forty assegais in him, scattering his assailants by trumpeting and half-charges. 'Would "Tlaga" come and shoot him for them?' Tlaga did. The elephant looked like a porcupine, but they would never have bagged him, though he might have died afterwards. It is not so with the Bushmen. They are past-masters of the art of hunting, though here I would mention that there are Bushmen and Bushmen. Those found near the colony and spread over the barren Kalahari country are a small, stunted race, dwarfed probably by scarcity of food and hard usage. The others are upright, tall, sinewy fellows, who with their skill in hunting and the abundance of game never suffer hunger, and who are looked upon, though small in number, with a certain amount of fear by the Bechuanas. I was very fond of the Bushmen. They tell the truth, which the Bechuana do not, and instead of being mere pot-hunters they are enthusiastic sportsmen, enjoying the work as much as yourself. When you are hunting with them, it is true, they leave all to you, and greatly delight in watching a tough fight with a savage bull, giving you full credit for your weapon and your use of it; but their tactics when alone are as follows. Taking up the spoor of, say, five or six tuskers, they follow on until they see their quarry, which, with their splendid sight, they do a long way off. A handful of dust thrown up gives them the wind. Some half-dozen or more men conceal themselves in pairs not far apart in the line they hope the elephants will take. Two or three of the others, making a long *détour*, give them their wind, and as they move off, try to head them in the direction of the

ambush. The moment an elephant comes within reach of one of the pairs a man springs up and, running towards him, throws a very heavy hafted spear—twelve to fifteen inches in the iron head—not straight, for it would not penetrate—but in a sort of curve, and the descending weapon buries itself by its own weight. The man is in full view, the irritated beast usually makes for him, and though fleet of foot the hunter would very often be caught were it not for his mate, who, immediately the elephant charges, runs up behind him as close as he can, and sounds a shrill whistle, made generally of the leg-bone of a crane, which each wears hung round his neck by a leathern thong. The elephant hears it, and, cautious even in his rage, stops suddenly to find out what danger is in his rear. As he turns, another spear is thrown; another charge, and another whistle; and this goes on until the animal is exhausted and winded, when the final *coups* are given by men running in and stabbing him behind the ribs, while their companions occupy his attention in front. In this manner a dozen Bush-men will often kill two or three out of a herd.

The Boers have an effective, though cruel, way of killing them. Their legs are solid, not hollow with marrow, like those of most animals; they need to be strong, for a large bull weighs all six tons. The jägers come upon the herd and wish to bag as many as they can; they are not fond of getting too near, and bombarding effectively from a distance is a work of time, so they take the first shots, if opportunity offer, at the forelegs of two or three. The ball splinters and weakens the limb; the sagacity of the animal tells him this at once, and he instantly stands immovable, lest his weight should break it. The hunters follow the rest of the herd and shoot one or two perhaps, and then return to the cripples, who fall an easy prey to the roërs at close quarters. Nine times out of ten the elephant refuses to stir, but if goaded into attempting a charge, the bone snaps directly weight in motion is thrown upon it, and the poor brute falls. It is a most pitiful sight to see these fine, intelligent monsters quietly awaiting death—standing,

sadly conscious of their inability to make an effort for attack or escape. I witnessed this butchery but once, and, willingly, would never again.

In the open country the Bechuana, though muffs at elephant hunting, catch large numbers of animals in the hopo. The Ba-Quaina and Ba-Wangketsi, especially, were clever at this kind of work. The hopo is a large pit dug in a favourable spot, generally just the other side of a slight rise, in neighbourhoods where game is abundant, and is often used year after year. From the sides of it stiff, diverging hedges of bush and branches are run out for a considerable distance, and the beaters, sweeping a large area of country in a crescent, open at first, but gradually contracting its horns as the game approaches the hedges, manage to drive slowly forward large masses of antelope, quagga, and wildebeest. Men are suitably placed here and there outside the range of the fences, to indicate gently to the game the way they are expected to take. When they are well within the lines the men bear down on them, and by shouts urge them forward *pêle mêle* to the hopo, which by the rise in the ground is hidden from the leaders until too late ; for the weight of the scared body behind them, always pressing on, carries the foremost ranks into the pit, which, in a successful drive, is soon filled with a heaving mass of struggling life. Numbers of the driven escape through the hedges and through the crowd, by this time close up, many of them, the quagga especially, charging the drivers, who, sitting or kneeling, cover themselves with their shields, and ply their assegais as opportunity offers, from beneath them. I should have said that some of the hunters are ambushed near the hopo, and these dispose of any animals that, coming to the surface, seem likely to escape. The southern tribes manage sometimes to kill the hippopotamus by suspending a heavy spike of iron, or of wood burnt and sharpened to a point, and weighted with a large stone. This, by an ingenious contrivance, is fastened to the branch of a tree overhanging the animal's path as it leaves the water at night to graze,

by a rope attached to a catch, the other end of the rope being brought down, fixed about a foot from the ground, across the path, and tied to one of the trees opposite. As the animal presses against the rope the catch is freed, and down comes the spike. The northerners, who live on the shores of the lakes, Kamadou particularly, kill them from canoes with spears like harpoons, which, once firmly fixed, serve to show by their shafts the direction taken by the wounded beast, and enable the men to follow him and repeat the attack until, utterly weakened from loss of blood, he is secured by ropes and drawn ashore. This plan, which seems to me to have its drawbacks and dangers, is not attempted on the rivers, and I was never an eye witness of it, even on the lakes ; but I have two or three of the harpoon assegais, and this was the story of the hunting as told to Livingstone.

On the low Siloquana hills near this we made our acquaintance with the Tsétsé fly, which we were the first to bring to notice ; Vardon taking or sending to England some he caught on his favourite horse. They have now been thoroughly discussed entomologically, and I would only very lightly touch upon them. The *Glossina morsitans* is a dusky grey, long-winged, vicious-looking fly, barred on the back with striæ, and about the size of the fly you so often see on dogs in summer. Small as he is, two to three will kill your largest ox, or your strongest horse—for the poison introduced by the proboscis is zymotic ; the victims sicken in a few days, the sub-lingual glands and muscles thicken, the eyes weep, a defluxion runs from the nostrils, the coat stares, and in periods varying from a fortnight to three months death ensues. On examination after death the blood is found to have diminished wonderfully in quantity, to have become gelatinous in appearance, and to have parted with its colouring property. You may plunge your hands into it and it runs off like tapioca, without staining them. The vital organs, lungs and heart, are flaccid and anæmic, but show no further sign of disease. The flesh has a peculiar glairy appearance. Wild animals are not

affected, but all domesticated ones are, save the ass and the goat, and the calf as long as it sucks. Man escapes scot free. The flies settle on and bite him sharply, but no results follow.

Supposing the poison to be alkaline, is it not possible that the creic—an acid known to be present in the blood of all wild animals and to disappear as they become domesticated—may act as an antidote, more especially as man, on whom the poison is innocuous, shares with the donkey, &c., this prophylactic acid? This pest, like all others, is held in check by an antagonist, one of the ichneumons—a rakish-looking creature which catches and sucks it out on the wing, dropping the empty cases much as the locust bird does the locusts.

These tsétsé have caused me sad searchings of heart. The Geographical Society of Paris honoured me with their medal, 'pour la découverte du lac 'Ngami,' and I, in acknowledging their highly valued distinction, sent them a short sketch of the country through which we had passed, and a small bottle of the flies, with an account of their habits, habitat, and the poisonous nature of their bite. This account—probably from my confused style—was entirely misunderstood, and when the copy of the Proceedings of the Society reached me I found I had been made to attribute the death of a native chief, Sebitoani, to the poison of these insects, and also to state that the oxen were maddened by their attacks, whereas the poor things took their deathbites quite calmly—with a whisk of their tails, as is their custom with other flies—and, as I have already stated, human beings suffer no ill. I have tried to correct this impression, but fear I may not have succeeded.

When I came home I happened to meet Dr. (now Sir Richard) Quain, the great toxicologist, and by him to be introduced to Dr. Spence, to whom I told the story of the tsétsé, the result being that I was invited to attend a meeting of the Entomological Society. Doubting my power of giving any clear account before such an august assembly by word of mouth, I wrote the few particulars I had to communicate. When I entered, rather late, a gentleman was explaining the

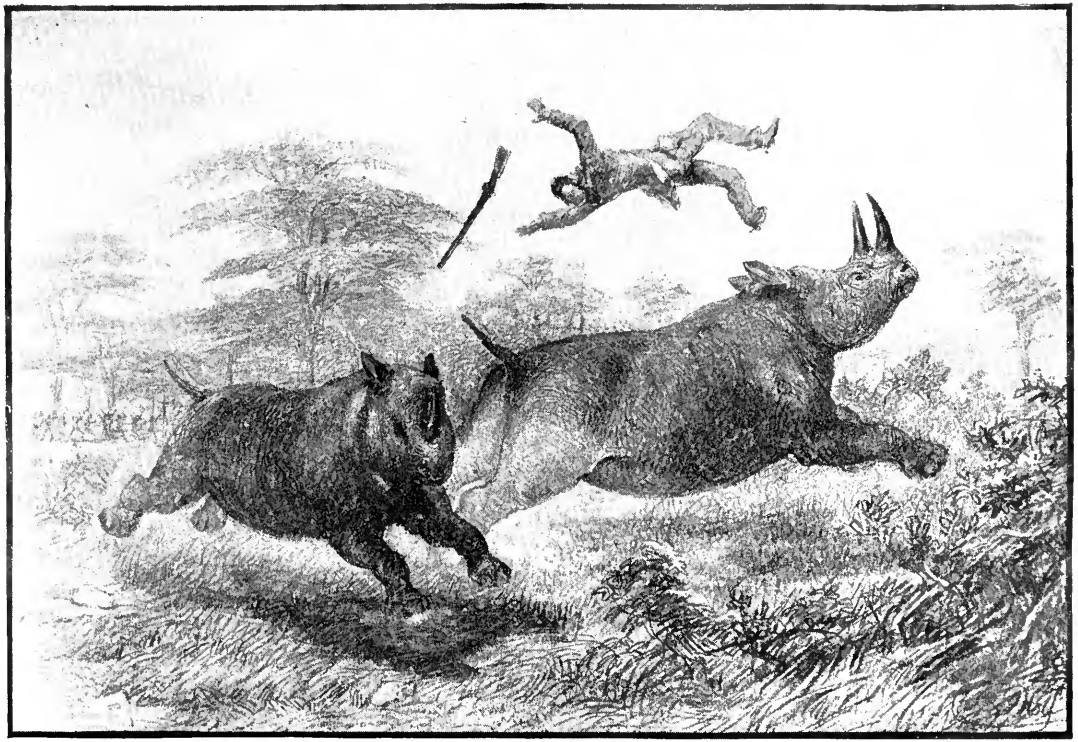
abnormal and interesting peculiarities of a beetle, which had an extra tarsus—at least I think that was the peculiarity—and that tarsus was actually fimbriated ! A great deal of very learned talk and discussion followed, and I thought what a fortunate fellow I was to have written my description ; but alas ! my turn came, and the same savant, after holding my scrawl at every angle in the hope of deciphering the cacography, at last gave it up, saying he regretted he could not make it out, but fortunately the writer was in the room, and would perhaps kindly tell them the history of the flies of which he had sent a specimen. I longed for a repetition of the days of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram just to swallow up that old gentleman and his scarabæus ; but I had to get up and explain that I was sorry if they expected me to address them in the very erudite way I had been listening to for the last hour, as I really had no idea how many (if any) tarsi my fly had, and, moreover, I was supremely ignorant whether their tarsi (if existent) were fimbriated or not. They kindly begged me to tell my tale in my own words, declaring they should much prefer it, and I did so, and was dealt with in a most friendly manner. I certainly would rather have stood the charge of a couple of lions at once than laid myself open to a catechism on tarsi and fimbriæ.

We pushed down the Limpopo beyond the Siloquana ridge four or five marches, and then crossing the river near a high rocky hill returned to the Mariqué without anything of much interest occurring ; but half-way between the junction of that river with the main stream and the place where we left it to get to Livingstone's station, I was again in trouble.

It was three in the afternoon. We had followed a herd of elephants since 8 A.M., and the traces of the dew of the previous night were still visible on the trail. Our chances of coming up with them were so small that we abandoned the pursuit and turned in the direction of the waggons. After an hour or two the natives began to make pathetic appeals to the state of their stomachs, suggesting that they had met with hard

usage, and that, as we had not found the elephants, they were not above breaking their fast upon quagga, giraffe, or even rhinoceros. I tried to persuade them that elephant was the only dish worthy of them or likely to fill those almost bottomless cavities to which they had alluded; that we might have better luck the next day, and that they might put off dining till then. If you wish to be successful in hunting for large tusks, it is as well to keep your men on an elephantine diet and not pamper them with dainties, or they become lazy and careless in seeking the larger game. Whether on this particular occasion I was unusually tender-hearted, or their appeals were too touching, I do not remember; but whilst with my very poor stock of Sechuana words I was trying to explain my views, in an open glade of the forest through which we were passing, their hungry eyes fell upon two rhinoceroses of the keitloa variety, and the eager cry of 'Ugh chukuru, mynààr!'—the last word a corruption of the Dutch mynheer, lengthened plaintively into a kind of prayer—was too much for me, and I dismounted to do their pleasure. Fifty yards before the animals ran a scanty fringe of dwarf thorn-bushes, on outliers of which they were feeding away from us. I made a long *détour*, and came out a hundred yards in front of them, the little scrubby cover lying between us. A handful of sand thrown into the air gave the direction of the wind; worming my way I gained the thorns, and, lying flat, waited for a side chance.

The rhinoceroses were now within twenty yards of me, but head on, and in that position they are not to be killed except at very close quarters, for the horns completely guard the brain, which is small and lies very low in the head. Though alone on the present occasion, I was travelling with the best rhinoceros shot I ever knew, and his audacity, and our constant success and impunity alone and together in carrying on the war against these brutes, had perhaps made me despise them too much. I had so frequently seen their ugly noses, when within eight or ten yards of the gun, turn, tempted by a twig or tuft of grass to the right or left, and the wished-for broadside thus given,



FEELING BOTH HORNS OF A DILEMMA

that I did not think anything was amiss until I saw that if the nearer of those now in front of me, an old cow, should forge her own length once more ahead, her foot would be on me. She was so near that I might possibly have dropped her with a ball up the nostril, and, had she been alone, I should probably have tried it ; but the rhinoceros, when he charges, nearly always makes straight for the smoke of the gun, even though the hunter is concealed, and I knew that if No. 1 fell, No. 2, who was within four or five yards of her, would, in all probability, be over me before the smoke cleared. In the hope that my sudden appearance from the ground under her feet would startle her and give me a chance of escape, I sprang up ; the old lady was taken aback for a moment and threw up her head with a snort. I dashed alongside of her to get in her rear ; my hand was on her as I passed ; but the shock to her nerves was not strong enough, for before I had made ten yards she was round, and in full chase.

I should have done better to fire into her as I went by, but it had not occurred to me, and it was now too late ; in my *anxiety* to escape, to put it as mildly as may be, I had neglected my best chance, and paid the penalty. I was a fast runner ; the ground was in my favour, but in thirty yards from the start she was at my heels. A quick turn to the left saved me for the moment, and, perhaps, by giving my pursuer my flank instead of my back, my life too. The race was over in the next ; as the horned snout came lapping round my thigh I rested the gun on the long head and, still running, fired both barrels ; but with the smoke I was sailing through the air and remember nothing more, for I fell upon my head and was stunned.

The day was fast drawing to a close when, though in that addled state which prevents a man from deciding whether to-day is yesterday or to-morrow, my brain seemed stirring again in a thick fog. By degrees I became aware that I was on my horse, that a native was leading it, and another carrying my gun beside my stirrup. It all appeared strange, but with the

attempt to think it out the mist came eddying thicker, and I was content to let it be. Presently a dim confused impression that I was following some animal was with me, as in a dream ; the power of framing and articulating a sentence returned, and I drowsily asked the nearest Kafir which way the trail led. He pointed in the direction we were going ; his manner struck me, but I had had my say, and no other remark was ready. Men met us ; among them I recognised two of my Hottentot drivers carrying a 'cartel,' or cane framework, which served as a swinging bedstead in my waggon. 'Where are you going?' I asked in Dutch. They stared stupidly ; 'Why, we heard you were killed by a rhinoceros !' 'No,' I answered. Without a thought of what had occurred, my right hand fell faintly from the pommel of my saddle to my thigh ; with the restlessness of weakness I drew it up again ; a red splash of blood upon my cuff caught my eye. I raised my arm to see what was the matter ; finding no wound on it, I sought with my hand for it down my leg, through a rent in my trousers, and, so numbed was all sensation, that I actually dabbled down to the bone in a deep gash, eight inches long, without feeling any pain—the smaller horn had penetrated a foot higher up, but the wound was not so serious as the lower one. The limb stiffened after I reached the waggons, and, unable to get in and out, I made my bed for nearly four weeks under a bush—the rip, healing rapidly, covered with a rag kept constantly wet.

The rhinoceros, as I afterwards learnt from the men who were with me, was running so fast when she struck me and lifted me so high, that she had shot ahead before I fell, and, on their shouting, passed on without stopping. The horns, as is generally the case in this variety, were of nearly an equal length, so that one to a certain extent checked the penetration of the other—as it would be more difficult to drive a double-spiked nail than a single one. The bone of the thigh, however, providentially turned the foremost horn, or it must have passed close to, even if it had not cut, the femoral artery.

CHAPTER IV

LATER VISITS TO SOUTH AFRICA

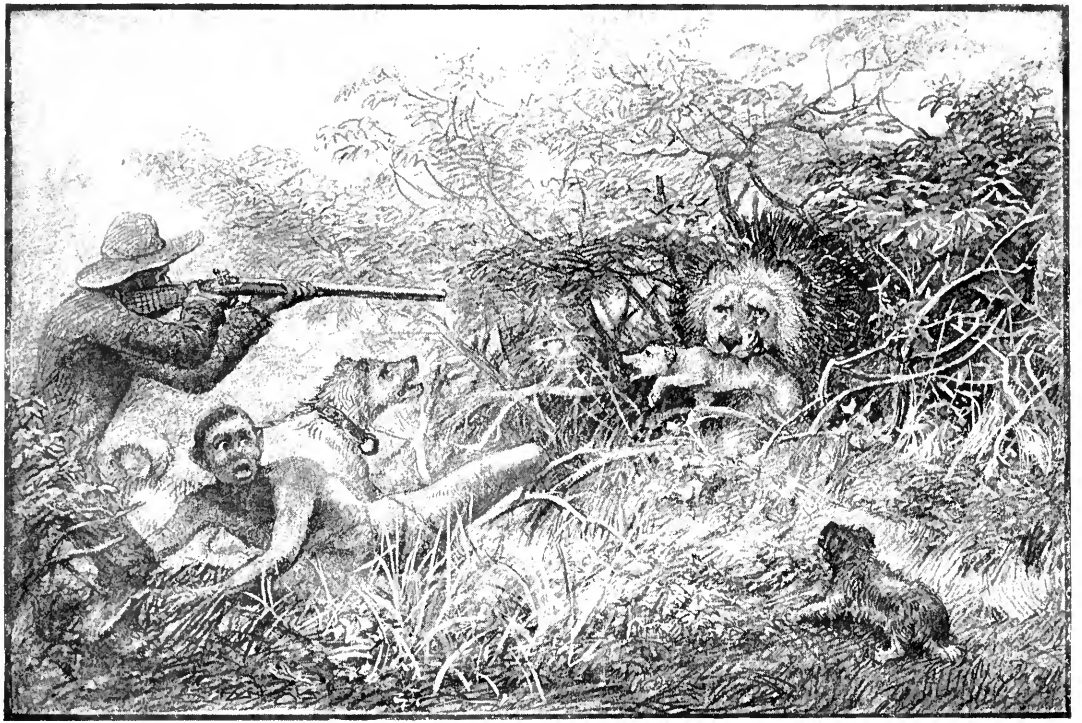
By W. Cotton Oswell

Vardon went home to England, I think, and I returned to India to finish my time before taking furlough in 1847. Early in 1849 hearing that Livingstone intended making an attempt to reach Lake 'Ngami, Murray and I again left England to join him. The Doctor had quitted his old missionary station, and was now with Sechélé at Kolobeng. As we neared this place, whilst we were lying at a small spring called Le Mawé, or the needles, from some pointed rocks which overhang it, the Kafirs told me there was a shorter way to Kolobeng through the hills, but they doubted if it would do for the waggons ; so I volunteered one afternoon to examine it, and report for the onward move of the next day. I started at 2 P.M. on a good old horse, and had followed a winding track through the stony hills around us for an hour or more, and, as it seemed likely to answer, was thinking of returning to camp. We were at a slow walk when a low grumbling growl woke up man and beast, and on looking back I saw a lion within fifteen yards, coming up at his wicked slouching trot. He was too near to give me a chance of dismounting, and I spurred into a gallop ; but he gained on me, and, in the hope of checking him, I fired a shot Parthianwise from the saddle. The bough of a tree swept off my hat, and, as it fell, the lion made a spring at it, giving me a moment's law. Fifty or sixty yards ahead there was a small, rocky, but otherwise open space, and to this I pressed at best

speed. I pulled up, as I could see well around, intending to load the barrel I had fired, and bring my friend to account; but my foot was not out of the stirrup before he was again on me. I was alone, and the horse was so scared I could hardly hold him; but, freeing my foot, I caught the reins over my left arm, faced the oncomer, and threw the gun up to fire; just as I covered him, and my finger began to press the trigger, I was violently pulled back, and my arm jerked up. The lion still came slowly on, with his body sunk between his shoulders, and his brisket nearly touching the ground. When within twelve yards, I shouted at him, instinctively, hoping to stop him. The human voice acted like a charm; he stood, and made as if he would turn away. The horse, seeing that he no longer advanced, left off tugging at the rein, and I snatched the opportunity and fired my remaining barrel. The bullet struck the point of the shoulder, and rolled him off the little rocky plateau into the bush below, where he lay roaring, without my being able to get sight of him. I went forwards to look for and settle him, but had to give it up, for my horse, which I had tied to a tree, did not at all approve of being left alone, and tried to break his *riem*. I coaxed him, and as long as I stood by him he was quiet, but directly I turned to leave terror seized him. I could not afford to lose him, so I mounted, and attempted to ride him near enough to get a sight and shot; but the tremendous noise was too much for him, and neither spur nor hand had any effect. He stood up on his hind legs, and broke into a white lather of sweat. I persevered for a time, but had to give it up, and, breaking a few twigs and leaves from the trees to make myself a kind of substitute for my lost hat, got back to camp.

Next morning, after putting the waggons on the path I had looked out the day before, Murray, I, two Kafirs, and three dogs [1] went on ahead to pick up the lion. We had just

[1] I have said but little of our dogs, but they deserve mention. I never shot with them; but besides guarding the camp from surprise, they were invaluable, as in this instance, in helping us to pick up a wounded lion, or in



THE DROP SCENE

reached the place where my hat had been torn off by the tree, and I turned round to tell the Kafirs that he must be hard by, when an angry growl to my left and then the shriek of a man told me that something had gone wrong. Jumping off my pony, I ran into the scrub, guided by the sound. I had hardly got fifty yards when, bursting through a thicket in front of me, a man, covered with blood, fell at my feet, crying out that he was killed by the lion, and at the same instant I caught sight of the beast close up on three legs, his mane as if electrified into an Elizabethan collar, with the Kafir's dog in his mouth. As his head came clear of the bush I put a ball through it, and he dropped dead by the native's foot. I looked to the yelling victim, and found he was terribly bitten in thigh and arm ; so, tearing my shirt into strips, I bound him up as well as I could, never expecting him to live, for large surfaces were mangled, and I had to replace much a good deal at hazard. As I finished the waggons came up, and, lifting the wounded man on a blanket into one of them, I took him home, made him over to his wife, gave her a handful of beads and a yard or two of brass wire to purchase food whilst he was laid up, summoned the chief, said I was very sorry an accident should have happened to one of his men, received his assurance that it was not of the slightest consequence, especially as I had killed the lion, and then, as there was no water for the oxen, I moved on. In seven weeks I returned to this village. The first to meet and welcome me was my wounded friend, quite well and sound, and about to start on a journey. He brought back the blanket on which we had carried him—I had left it at his hut—cleanly washed ; and when I told him to keep it his joy was so great that I think he would have had the other leg bitten for a like reward. The recuperative power of the

telling us the whereabouts of a hard-hit ambushed buffalo—in this illustration the dog in the lion's mouth was the Kafir's, and the other two were the best I ever had (the likenesses are admirable). I have known them hold a lion at bay for nearly an hour, the larger one heading him continually, and the little rough Skye-looking fellow running in at intervals, nipping him in the rear, and then scuttling off at full speed.

wild man is marvellous. A European must have died of the wounds, or the consequent fever. The native, it appeared, had stopped behind, as we came through the pass, to mend his sandal, and, taking a short cut to rejoin us, had chanced upon the wounded lion, which first seized him by the large back muscles of the thigh, and on his striking him over the head with his fist, shifted his grip to the arm, which was munched up to the elbow, though no bones were broken. I have before said, lions do not attack men in daylight without strong cause. I opened this one, and found the stomach and nearly the whole of the intestines absolutely empty! The beast was starving—he had evidently bled all night, and was very weak, a fact which may account for the man's getting off easier than one would expect.

My journey with Livingstone to Lake 'Ngami, and my subsequent visit to the Zambesi in the same company, have been fully described by the Doctor himself, and though on both occasions I had to kill game for the camp, they do not fall within the category of shooting expeditions. They were made with other ends in view, and would be out of place in a narrative of this kind; it will be sufficient to say we were successful in introducing two new antelopes[1]—the 'Nakong and the Leché. The latter, of a dark fawn-colour, with horns annulated and curved like the waterbuck's, only smaller, was found on the flats between the shallow lake Kamadou and the Sesheké plains, west of the Zambesi, the former about Lake 'Ngami, and in the marshy land and pools of one of its affluents, the Teoge River. It is a veritable swamp-liver, about the size of a goat, with long, brownish hair, and horns resembling those of the koodoo in miniature. The abnormal elongation of its hoof enables it to skim over the surface of morasses into which other antelopes would sink. I have one, which I have just measured, very nearly four inches long—if it were in the ratio of the animal's size,

[1] We *heard* of a third antelope which was said to burrow, but we never saw it. Has any later traveller anything to say about it? or is it a myth? The Kafirs were precise enough in their description.

one and a half would be its proportion. On hard ground the 'Nakong runs with difficulty—the swamp shoe is a hindrance. Instead of escaping by flight or concealment in the bush, this antelope, on being disturbed, makes straight for the water, sits down in it, and submerges all but the nostrils until the danger be overpast.

When Murray and I reached Kolobeng in 1849 we found, for some reason or other, Livingstone had already started, but we caught him up beyond the Ba-Mangwato, with the chief of which tribe we had again a little difficulty. By the way, six or seven miles south of his kraals we found a hot, brackish spring, which bubbled up as if laden with gas.

Our trek to the lake was a hard one, and we were very anxious to see some of the dwellers of the desert, that we might gain information of the path and waters in advance; but messengers from Secomi, chief of the Ba-Mangwato, had gone through the land ordering all Bushmen and Balala to keep out of our way, and by no means to give us any assistance. If they happened to be anywhere near our line of march, they had instructions to step heavily on their toes, and, pressing the sand behind them, to make as good an imitation as they could of frightened wildebeest or quagga. We noticed these tracks, but were never able to use them to our advantage, though we saw through them, for in that land of thirst we could not afford time to follow the trail of people hostile to our advance, with perfect knowledge of the country and its hiding places, and likely to lead us in their flight as far from water as they possibly could. That they were often about us, even quite close, we knew; but we never sighted one. A little dog strayed one day into our camp: we caught it, and covered it with rings of beads, brass wire, and tinder boxes, then loosed it with a sudden crack of the waggon whip, in the hope of its running back to its ambushed masters and giving evidence of our friendly intentions; but nothing came of it. Again, I tried to lure our unseen watchers through that most sensitive organ, the stomach. Elephants trooped down one

night to drink ; in the morning I took up the spoor and shot one immediately, but after wounding a second had much trouble with him in the thick bush, the horse falling before the charging bull, and I only just escaping. Months afterwards, on our return from Lake 'Ngami, when there was no further object to be gained by opposition, we were encamped at the same pool, and were soon surrounded by the children of the wilderness, who recounted and acted the story of the elephant hunt ; how they had followed and found number two, which escaped at the time, and eaten him ; how they had witnessed it all as invisible spectators ; and now, turning actors, they enjoyed the play vastly : trumpeted like the elephant, fell like the horse, and imitated my attack and retreat, and the noise of the gun.

During this journey, when very hard up for water, I offered to sacrifice a pony and ride on in advance of the slow-moving waggons, which were to follow on my spoor, on the chance of finding what we needed so sorely. John and three or four Kafirs accompanied me, and we had travelled I dare say twelve miles when I saw a patch of high grass wave as if something were passing through it. Thinking it might be a lion, and if a lion then water was near, I cantered to the head of the 'Jheel,' dismounted, and watched the line of movement. It came to the edge, and some living thing broke from it. I covered it, and only just in time saw it was a woman running, or rather crawling, very fast on all fours. I mounted in an instant, and shouting to the Kafirs to follow, I headed her and made signs to her to stop. She fell upon her knees, and in Sechuana begged me not to kill her. She had never seen horse or white man before, and evidently took me for a hippogriff. I calmed her apprehensions, cut the metal buttons off my waistcoat, presented them to her, and asked where the water was. 'There is no water,' she said, 'I was just making something to drink' (she was mashing a watery tuber in a wooden bowl) 'when I saw the pitsi (horse).' Bushmen—she was of that people—we knew, lived for months without real

water, but I thought it worth while trying the experiment of offering her beads and brass wire if she would guide us to some. It succeeded. 'Well, if you won't kill me, I'll show you where the elephants drink,' she replied ; I bade her go ahead, and made her walk just in front. Never did any old lady step out through prickly bush as did my dame. Her bare legs were scratched by the thorns ; but what was that to her, expecting instant death if she stopped a moment ? On she went. Presently we came upon an elephant. She suggested by signs that I should kill it, but I answered, 'Water, then elephant.' We entered a belt of high trees. I pressed even more closely on her, lest she should dodge among them and escape ; my pony's nose nearly touched her, and so we went through two miles of wood.

As we break into the open again, what do I see? The Lake ! Can it be that I am the first to catch a glimpse of it? We had voted it mean to stand upon an ant-heap for the chance of a first view, and here was I engaged on a work of love for the public weal. I was the happy discoverer, and under 'creditable circumstances.' As far as the eye could reach, without limit rippled the bright blue water. Up went my old wide-awake, and I shouted for joy ; down went the old lady on her knees begging for dear life : she feared the hour of sacrifice had struck. The Kafirs who were with me looked astonished, and thought I had gone mad. 'What is it ; what is it, Tlaga ?' 'The Lake !' I replied. 'Where ?' 'Here—under our feet—close by.' 'Why, that's only a chooi !' and so it was. The low sun cast a slanting beam over the incrustations of salt, and they looked like ripples—indeed, a moment before I would have sworn it was water. The bush-woman showed us the usual spring by the side of the pan, and we got water enough for the cattle ; she was bountifully rewarded, but she bolted during the night.

As the waggons came up I watched to see if Livingstone would make the same mistake as I ; but one of the Kafirs had told him the story before, so he posed as Solomon

and I was chaffed. The Lake was still 200 miles distant. These choois are remarkable features in South African lands. This one was fifteen miles long by, say, about four broad ; one to the immediate north was much larger. The wild animals visit them as 'licks,' and the Kafirs get their salt from them.

In 1850 I hoped to bring a boat, but found it impossible to carry it through the drought and heat, and launch it in serviceable condition on the inland waters. The Doctor and I had arranged to start together, but he had already left Kolobeng a month when I arrived, Mrs. Livingstone with him. There was no chance of overtaking him this time, so I decided upon getting on to the Zouga, the river running out of Lake 'Ngami, and having a quiet shoot by myself. This was our second journey across the Bakalahari, and knowing the waters, we made our arrangements accordingly, crossed without much trouble, and reached our destination.

Let me here record my gratitude for the nearly absolute perfection of the copper caps I used--Joyce's. I might very ungratefully have forgotten my debt but for a rather narrow escape on this journey from *the only* miss-fire I ever had in thousands of shots. In mid-desert, attracted perhaps by the water we had opened, a fine bull elephant came close to the waggons. I rode to meet him, and fired, but failed to do any serious damage, though he pulled up. I reloaded and manœuvred for his shoulder ; but before I could get a shot he charged, and the cap of the right barrel snicked—fortunately the left stopped him with the front shot, and he fell dead. I dismounted and then looked on the ground. I was amongst a nest of pitfalls—how the horse and the elephant had avoided them I don't know. On the Zouga the game was abundant, and the shooting, as it nearly always was, peerless.

Eight or ten days from Lake Kamadou the camp had been made, 150 yards from the river, just outside the thick fringe of trees, and all was quiet for the night ; even the dogs were sleeping, I believe, for once, for I had not been roused since

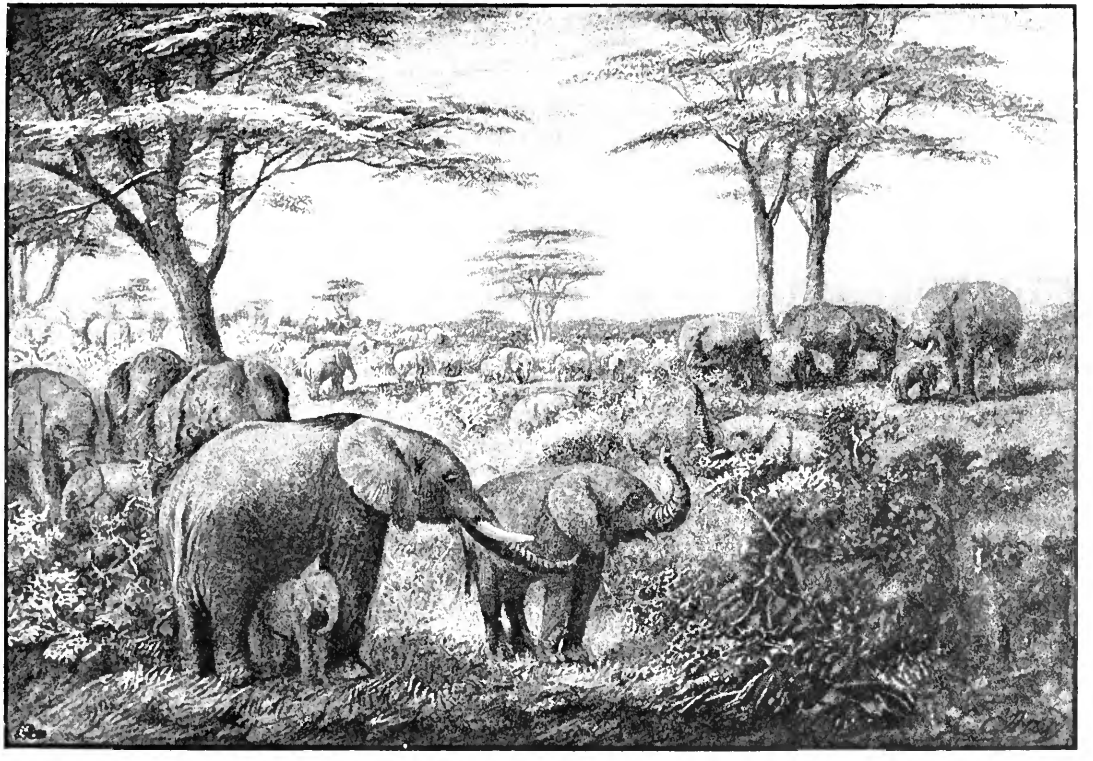
I turned in, when about midnight we were awakened suddenly by a tremendous noise, higher up stream, coming towards us. Crashing trees and a general rushing were the only sounds we at first heard, but presently the screams and trumpetings of panic-stricken elephants mingled in the din. The herd came tearing and breaking its way through the dense jungle straight for us; luckily they caught sight of the gleam of the fires and made a sharp bend to the left, but the outsiders were within a few yards of my waggon. On they passed into the darkness, and in five minutes all was again still. By coaxing and speaking to the horses, which were as usual tied two and two to the waggon-wheels, we calmed them down; but every ox had broken his tethering *riem*, for, as luck would have it, they were fastened to the trek-tow. The two teams with all the spare beasts had vanished no one knew whither, and five hours must pass before we could do anything to find out.

Making the best of it I turned in again, and did not wake until the sun rose, when John, putting his head into the waggon, told me the oxen were on the flat, with a lion after them. I was up in a moment, and unslinging a gun from the side of the waggon tent, went in hot pursuit. Interrupted in his pastime, the would-be cattle-lifter turned quickly to bay, and as he gave me a fine open front shot at fifty yards, I fired for his chest; but I had been after elephants the day before, and the heavy charges were still in the barrels. For accuracy at the distance I had too much powder by half, and the gun threw up, the ball striking his neck, and down he came on me with a grunting bark. I waited till he was within twenty yards and fired the second barrel, but it was a poor shot, the gun kicking violently, and it struck the upper part of the near foreleg. Two more bounds, snap went the bone, and pitching heavily forward he lay six yards from me. I had run out in a hurry, and had neither powder nor ball. John and another man stood a short distance off. Keeping my full front to the lion and never taking my eyes off for a moment—a compliment he returned in kind—in an undertone I told one of the men to

go back for ammunition. He may have been away two or three minutes, but it seemed a long time. When he returned the difficulty was to get what he had brought to me. There were two or three small trees on the spot. I was standing beside one of them, and he managed somehow to climb into it, and, leaning forward from a bough, to put the powder and balls into my hand, which I held behind me. I began very cautiously to load, by feeling not by sight, for I knew I must keep my eyes fixed. Fortunately the balls went home easily, though every little push I had to give with the ramrod brought a twitch and a growl from my neighbour. At last all was finished except putting on the caps, but this was the crux. Directly I raised the gun to fix them the lion began to show signs of waking up in earnest. It was a touchy operation, and oh! the relief when it was done! The first shot rolled him over, and the second finished him.

I had now time to look about me, and found the ground trampled by elephants into broad roads. Going back along the line of the stampede of the previous night, I met a poor little yearling calf elephant, torn badly by a lion, but still alive. I put it out of its misery. This was doubtless the cause of the last night's scare. After a cup of coffee and a damper I started on the tracks. The herd was of cows, but I was induced to follow it, as to my surprise there were two or three bulls consorting with them—a most unusual circumstance, for as a rule they herd apart like stags. But there could be no mistake—there were the great tell-tale feet.

The line of retreat kept widening from the numerous small parties that had joined the main body till at length it was two hundred yards broad, and I and John cantered merrily along it over the flat for ten miles, when we entered a dense belt of bush, into which we had not penetrated far when our progress was obstructed by a young bull with small tusks, who seemed inclined to make himself unpleasant. I did not want him and tried to drive him off, but he wouldn't go, and at last charged down on our horses. This was too much, and I shot him.



ELEPHANTS—ZOUGA FLATS

We pressed on as quickly as possible to the open park-like country of which I could now and again get glimpses, fearing that the shot might have disturbed the rest of the herd if they were within hearing. But I need not have troubled myself, for as I got clear of the bush I came upon at least 400 elephants standing drowsily in the shade of the detached clumps of mimosa-trees.[1] Such a sight I had never seen before and never saw again. As far as the eye could reach, in a fairly open country, there was nothing but elephants. I do not mean in serried masses, but in small separate groups. Lying on the pony's neck I wormed in and out looking for the bulls whose spoor we had been following, and while doing so was charged by a very tall, long-legged, ugly beast, who would take no denial, and I was obliged to kill him. He was *the* bull, but, alas! he was without tusks, and probably being defenceless had been driven from the bull herd and taken up with the cows. I did not want any of them, and turned waggonwards, rather disappointed at not getting ivory, but well satisfied with the sight my ride had given me.

In the evening a straight-horned gemsbok (*Oryx capensis*) coming up from the river passed near the camp; her horns struck me as unusually long, and with some of the dogs I gave chase on foot; she moved very slowly, soon stood to bay, and dropped to the shot. She was evidently very old and worn out. I introduce her to air a theory.

In many of the Bushman caves the head of the oryx is scratched in profile, and in that position one horn hides the other entirely. In Syria, even up to the present day, I am told, a very near relation of the *Oryx capensis* is found; it is the habit of man in his hunting stage to try his hand at delineating the animals he lives upon. Probably the rocks or caves of Syria may show, or formerly may have shown, glyphs

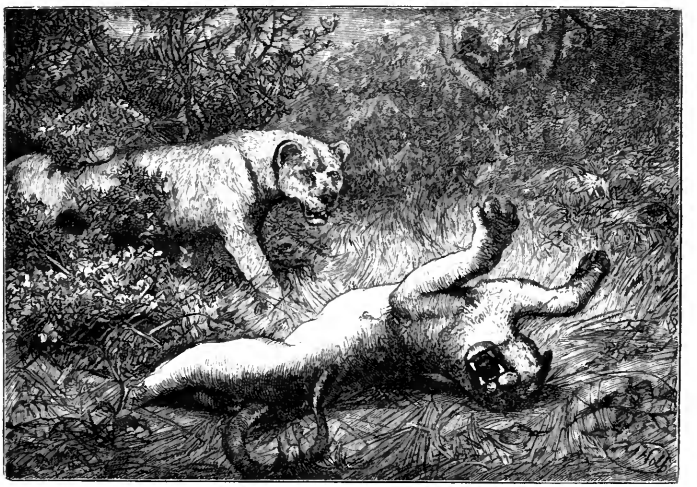
[1] Here, again, my description must have been defective, and Mr. Wolf had not then been introduced to Jumbo, or the forelegs of the elephants would have been longer, the backs more sloping, the ears larger, and the facial angle less; but it is a beautiful piece of drawing and reproduces the surroundings and heated atmosphere most wonderfully.

of the oryx resembling the work of the African Bushmen, and an early traveller may easily have taken them for representations of an animal with one horn, and have started the idea of the unicorn, Biblical and heraldic. With regard to the former, the word in the Hebrew in our version rendered unicorn is 'reem'; in some old English Bibles, indeed, 'reem' has been preserved in the text untranslated. Again, I am told that the Syrian congener of the the Cape oryx is called by the Arabs of to-day ريم 'reem.'[1] Is it not likely then, that the Biblical Unicorn is the same as the 'reem' of the Arab? As an heraldic beast, the gemsbok lends himself most gallantly to the theory; he is a strongly marked equine antelope, and is the one of his family that frequently lowers his head to show fight, it is said even with the lion—and this is confirmed in song, though he certainly got the worst of it in poetry, as I very much think he would in real life.

The gemsbok is scarce, and hardly met with save in the barren open stretches of country like the Bakalahari desert; there were more near the colony in my day than further in. He can do without water for a long time certainly—indeed I believe altogether. He digs and eats watery roots such as luhoshé, a large tuber, and the bitter desert gourd; if rain falls, or he comes across water, he drinks, no doubt, but he does not need it to support life. His country is also the stronghold of the Bushmen, who can, as I have said before, live for months under the same conditions, but who generally obtain water by boring with a long pole through the sand, in hollows well known to them traditionally, down to the hard substratum. Enlarging the bottom of the boring as much as they can, by working their pole on the slant, and then tying a small bunch of grass to a long reed and inserting it in the hole, they suck up the water.

[1] Since writing the above I find this subject has been discussed by the learned, and a decision arrived at unfavourable to the oryx; but I let my remarks stand, for I do not know that anything has been said on the glyphs in profile theory: the idea was first started in my mind by a conversation with the son of a late Bishop of Jerusalem.

These maminas, or sucking holes, are common throughout the desert, and wherever we found the reeds we found water ; in two instances, indeed, by digging to a depth of nine feet we were enabled to supply all our horses and oxen, for though the water never stood more than eight or ten inches, yet the oftener the well was emptied the quicker it filled again, obstructions to its free flow being removed by the continuous trickling.



Maneless lions

I have mentioned how much the elephants of the Zouga differ from those of the Limpopo, and the more southern and eastern districts ; the lions too are, I suppose, influenced by the drier climate and surroundings, for very few of the males grow manes. I thought at first this might depend on their age, as the lion of the south is only furnished in this particular in full lionhood ; but one day whilst lying on the Zouga, a few days' march from Lake 'Ngami, a horse of mine fell into a pitfall, and in broad daylight three lions invited themselves

to lunch. I was at the waggons, and ran out with a trader of the name of Wilson to get a shot at them. They saw us, and, leaving the horse, got into cover; as they had retreated very leisurely and were by no means scared, we took for granted they would come again. A low mound was within twenty yards of the pitfall, and gave an excellent standing-place behind a double-stemmed tree. Wilson took the right, I the left, and from our slightly raised position we commanded the only approach the lions could well return by. I can say that my eyes were never off that opening, and yet so quietly and glidingly did a lion fill it that I did not see him till he had come—the coming was a blank to me; he was looking at me. A ball in the chest killed him. A second closed the gap, halted inquiringly by his companion, who was stretching in the death spasm, and raising his head caught sight of us. I covered him, but let Wilson fire—the ball raked him from chest to tail, and he dropped dead alongside his mate. After watching some time vainly for the third, we walked up to the carcases; they were both males; the one I had shot was the longest I ever killed, teeth, claws, skin, perfect, in his very prime; the other the oldest, most worn-out specimen, no teeth, no claws, stumps only, his grizzled hide mangy and full of the scars of old wounds; in fact, he was, as the Kafirs said, 'Ra le tao,' the father of lions. Neither had a sign of mane.

A poor young fellow who had come out to shoot, but was utterly unfitted for the work, lost his companion on one of the lower reaches of this river, near where we now were. From the natives' account, it appeared his friendhad fired at a goose, which fell in the river. He stripped to go in after it, though they begged him not, as there were alligators; he would not listen to them and swam out. When two or three yards from the bird he was observed to strike sideways, as if he saw something, and in another instant rearing himself half out of the water, with a cry, he sank. There was no doubt what had happened. I first came across the former of these two travellers in a pass not many days' trek from Kolobeng, Living-

stone's station; but the interview was a short one, as I was inspanned and on the move. Next morning I found all his men, they were Ba-Quaina and knew me, had followed my waggons, and upon my questioning them they said they really could not stay with that white man, as he starved them. They had found him elephants two or three times, but he never killed any; he only rode after their tails, expecting them to fall off. Of course I insisted on their going back, and shot a rhinoceros on their promise of doing so, just for the present distress. Here was a country swarming with animals, a man with guns and ammunition in abundance, and yet he couldn't 'keep his camp.' I would not blame him for that; but why did he not give up at once when he discovered, as he must soon have done, his utter incapacity? My friend Vardon had interviewed him before he started, at the Cape, I afterwards learnt, and asked him what he had come out for. 'To shoot a lion,' he replied. 'Was that all?' he was asked; and he replied, 'Yes; if he did that he should be quite content.' 'You'd better have given 200*l.* and shot the one at the Zoo; it would have been cheaper, less trouble, and less dangerous too.' Poor lad! he picked up another mate and started on another journey, goodness knows what for; and on my second return from the Zouga we found his skull with a bullet-hole through it, and some small articles of dress, near an old camp-fire two or three marches only from where we first met. The hyænas had dragged away the rest of the bones. Rightly or wrongly, his death was attributed to his companion, and strangely enough this man, subsequently joining himself to an expedition, met a similar fate himself. I never could get full particulars of this sad story.

The way in which, according to the Kafirs, the native dogs worked the alligators on this narrow Zouga River amused us. Three or four of them wished to cross, either for better fare, or to see their friends on the other side; but, though alligator is very partial to dog, dog is not so fond of alligator. Assembling on the banks, they would run, barking violently, a

quarter of a mile up stream in full view; halt; join in a chorus of barking, yelping, and baying; suddenly pull up in the middle of the concert, and dash at the top of their speed, absolutely mute, out of sight on a lower level, to the point they had started from, jump into the water and swim across, selling the alligators, who, hungry after their 'course of bark,' were eagerly expecting their dinner at the spot where they had had the largest dose. Whether this was eyes or ears, or both, I could not make out. One beast has wits, another power; and so the balance is pretty fairly kept.

While still in the desert, during our first trip, Livingstone called my attention to a wonderful bit of instinct in a bird —he mentions it in his works, but it is worth telling a second time. We had been a couple of days without water, and I was enjoying watching the cattle swell themselves out in a chance thunder-shower pond we had just come to, and sitting dabbling my feet, when to me the dear old Doctor, 'I say, what do you think is the greatest proof of conjugal affection you ever knew?' 'Go along, I'm not occupied with such matters.' 'Don't be cross; come here. Do you see the chink in that tree, and that large horn-billed bird going backwards and forwards to it? What do you think he's doing?' 'Oh, making a fool of himself generally.' 'No, he's feeding his wife and his children, who are shut in behind it.' And it was so. The ornithological name of the bird I don't know, but he's something between a toucan and a hornbill, neither one nor the other, about the size of a large pigeon, though, if I remember right, more like a woodpecker in build. After marriage the birds select a hole in a tree, and gather a few sticks for a nest; the hen takes some feathers off her breast to line it and lays her eggs. When this is done, and incubation begins, the male bird goes to the nearest pond, and brings wet clay, with which he stops up the hole at which his wife went in, leaving one narrow opening in the centre, and through this the excellent fellow feeds mamma and little ones, until the latter are fledged and ready to leave the nest, then he and she, from outside and in, jointly peck

away the clay, which has by this time under the dry heat become as hard as a brick, and madame and her family make their *début*. The poor monsieur is a rickle of bones, madame as round as a ball ; the Kafirs, knowing this, always dig her out as a tit-bit whenever they find the nest. And what's it done for? An African wood is filled with all sorts of cats, and without a protection the toucan (that's not right, but let it stand) family would soon be improved off the earth, for a hole in a tree comes handy to a cat ; but the clay very soon gets too hard for his claws, and the bird hatches in security. Now come with me towards a Kafir kraal, such as those of the Ba-Quaina or Ba-Wangketsi, permanent tribes. We walk through the outskirts ; there's our friend the toucan again, but there's his wife too, and they keep alternately flying to and from that hole in the tree, out of which many gaping mouths are protruded at each visit. They are the same birds, but the house-door is open. Within a radius of five to six miles of every large kraal no cat exists. The Kafirs kill everything that runs upon four legs for food or clothing, the best *carosses* are made of cat-skins (I have one with thirty-six pussies in it), and the birds have found this out—instinct? or reason?

I wandered on at my leisure, and on my return from the higher reaches of the river unexpectedly came upon the waggons of Mr. Webb, of Newstead Abbey, and Captain Shelley, and a companion who, I believe, was travelling with them and trading on his own account. We exchanged friendly greetings, they going towards the Lake, I homewards. I was returning earlier than need be, for I was very nearly run out of lead, and though I knew they were amply provided I had not the face to ask them for metal more valuable than gold in the middle of Africa. Next morning, however, I shot three elephants, and it occurred to me that I might exchange their tusks for lead with Mr. Webb's companion, and I accordingly sent John on horseback with a note to Mr. Webb, asking him to mediate for me, and telling him John would put his Kafirs on our tracks from the elephants and they might run heel, and take the tusks out.

John overtook them twelve or fifteen miles off, and came back to camp with his horse laden with bars of lead and the prettiest and most courteous letter from Mr. Webb, who would not hear of my buying lead with ivory, and sent me a bountiful supply and a number of kind words. It was a most generous help, most graciously rendered, and enabled me to enjoy my homeward march. Without it I should have been troubled to feed my followers for 1,400 miles, for I had only a very small reserve.

These were the only elephants I shot that were not eaten, and I hope some wandering Bushman, vulture led, may have come across even them. I missed Livingstone. He was driven back by fever breaking out amongst his party, and returned on the other side of the river, to which I myself crossed over after a time, but he had then gone by.

Inspanning one morning whilst here, a shout of 'Ingwe' from the men, a rush of the dogs, and up jumped a leopard in the midst of us, and made for a large tree, which he climbed. I was beneath it in a minute with a gun, and for half an hour with three or four men searched for him along the branches without avail. At last we gave it up, and went after the waggons, thinking he must have managed to get away unseen by us. One man however stopped behind for a minute to tie up his bundle, and before we were a hundred yards off the cunning beast raised his head from a bough, came down, and made away too quickly for us to get back, on the man's halloo, in time to shoot him—he did wondrously in hiding himself. Leopards were not common thus far in; they clung to the rocks and hills in and near the colony. I only saw four or five of them, but one performed a cleverish trick. The Kafirs were sitting round their fire under a large tree, when, climbing along an overhanging branch, he dropped into the circle, caught a dog, cleared the ring at a bound, and got safely away. Towards the Colony, where the baboons are plentiful, the leopard preys on them, though, when in large herds, the old dog baboons will frequently drive him off; their canine teeth are formidable weapons. Most amusing

fellows are these noisy ancestors of ours, especially when feeding, spread about, picking up what they can find, lifting stones, and seizing anything that may be under them, and popping it into their cheek pouches with a smack. Three or four experienced veterans keep guard, to give warning of the approach of danger. They cannot forage for themselves, so they have an eye for the pouches of their brethren, and now and then make a spring, take a young fellow by the ear, and cuff him well, until he allows them to put their fingers into his pouch, and transfer its contents to their own. The hunting leopard, too, was seldom seen. I once roughly tested his tremendous speed. I was on horseback, and caught sight of one in such a position that he must pass close to me, if I could gain a point fifty yards off. To upset my plan he had a hundred and fifty yards to run, and he beat me hollow, though I went at a full gallop.

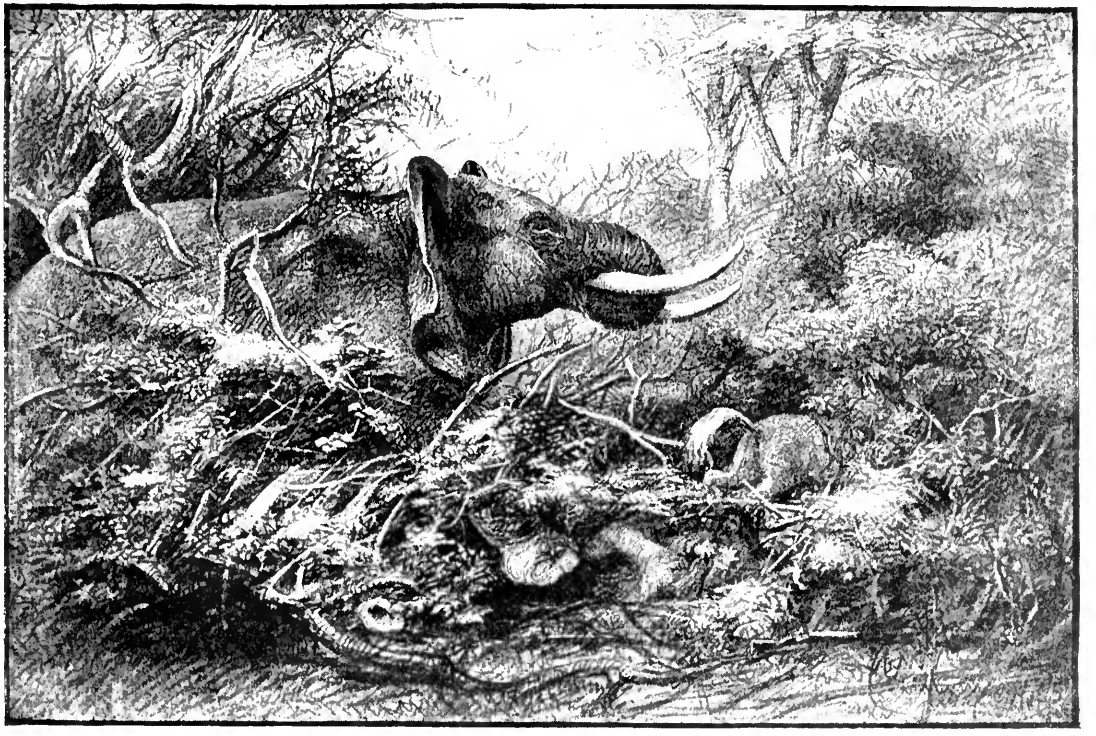
The game was plentiful on this north side of the river, but the country in places was very ugly for hunting from the dense thickets. Lying lazily one day on a high bank of a beautiful reach, I was watching the otters below me as they paddled and fished down stream, when a troop of Bushmen from a neighbouring kraal came to the watering-place, to fill their gourds and ostrich shells, before starting for the elephants I had killed the previous day, which were as usual some twelve or fifteen miles from camp, in a dry and thirsty land where no water was. After filling their vessels with a supply sufficient to last them for the two or three days it would take them to cut up and dry their meat, they proceeded to fill themselves—a most remarkable process ; each one, whether at the moment thirsty or not, pouring down a cargo of water to the utmost limit of his holding capacity, to economise the store he carried at his back. Like Mr. Weller at Stiggins' tea party, 'I could see them swelling wisibly before my very eyes,' until their usually shrivelled bodies became shining and distended all over ; and man, woman and child waddled away—so many different sized water balloons. The last of the long line had disappeared in

the dense forest—my otters were all gone—the country was not a tempting one for hunting, the thorns by the river being almost impenetrable, and the jungle further off so matted and bound together with creepers and monkey-ropes that I had determined not to try it again. The noonday heat had stilled the earth of all distinguishable sounds, though the unbroken monotonous hum of insect life, the never-failing accompaniment of a piping hot day, seemed to fill and load the head and sultry air. I had nothing to watch, less to do, and was not sleepy ; the silence burdened me : and at length, to break it, I shouted to my after-rider, who was enjoying his siesta some distance off under the waggons, to saddle the horses, and taking my gun, I mounted and rode along one of the narrow game tracks into the thicket, picking up a Bushman who had remained behind at the encampment. For some time the only living thing we saw was an old bull buffalo, which with lowered head seemed inclined to bar the road until, threatened by the Bushman's spear, he sulkily withdrew. We had no need of him, and were content to let him go in peace. A shot would have disturbed the elephants we thought we might fall in with, for though we were not on a trail, the fresh footprints which were ever and again crossing the track, and the broken branches with the sap yet undried, told us they had been there very lately. Into the thorny barriers on either side of the way we could not have followed them with our horses, even had we wished, so we stuck to the path and kept our eyes open. Presently the ground to our right with its sea of thorns rose in a long low swell, and as it sank into the little hollow beyond, five or six colossal bodiless legs stood out amongst the bare lower stems of the closely woven branches. I slipped from my pony, and crawling on hands and knees, got within twenty yards of the legs, without being able to see anything more of the owners. A large tree was in advance, round whose stem the thorns did not press quite so pertinaciously as elsewhere. Slowly and cautiously I gained its side. An elephant was close to me, but though I could now see his body he was stern on.

I broke a twig to attract his attention : his head swung half round, but was so guarded by the bush that it would have been useless to fire at it. His shoulder was more exposed. There was no time to wait, he was on the move, and the dust flew from his side as the heavy ball struck him. Screaming angrily, he turned full front in the direction of the tree by which I stood motionless. I do not think he made me out, and the bush was too thick for me to risk giving him further information by a second shot. For a moment we confronted one another : and then, the rumbling note of alarm uttered by his companions decided him on joining them, and the stiff thorns bent before the weight of seven or eight bulls, as a cornfield in the wind.

I regained the path and rode along the line of their retreat, which, as shown by the yielding bush, was parallel to it. After a time the thorns thinned out, and I caught sight of the wounded elephant holding a course of his own a little to the left of his fellows ; and when he entered the tropical forest beyond I was in his wake, and very soon compelled to follow where he broke away. Lying flat on my pony's neck and guiding him as I best might by occasional glimpses of the tail of my now slowly retreating pioneer, I laboured on in the hope that more open ground might enable me to get up alongside of him. A most unpleasant ride it was. My constrained position gave me but little chance of using my hands to save my head ; I was at one time nearly pulled from the saddle by the heavy boughs, and at another nearly torn to pieces by the wicked thorns of the 'wait-a-bit,' which, although no longer *the* tree of the jungle, were intolerably scattered through it. I have killed elephants on very bad ground, but this was the worst piece of bush I ever rode into in my life. A little extra noise from the pursuers caused the pursued to stop ; and whilst clinging like Gilpin to the calender's horse and peering at the broad stern of the chase, I saw him suddenly put his head where his tail ought to have been. The trunk was tightly coiled—an elephant nearly always coils his trunk in thick bush for fear of pricking it—forward flapped the huge ears,

up went the tail, and down he came like a gigantic bat, ten feet across. Pinned above and on either side, by dismounting I could neither hope to escape nor to kill my opponent. I therefore lugged my unfortunate animal round and urged him along; but I had not taken into account with what great difficulties and how slowly I had followed the bull. He was now in full charge, and the small trees and bush gave way before him like reeds, whereas I was compelled to keep my head lowered as before and try and hold the path, such as it was, up which we had come. I was well mounted, and my spurs were sharp. Battered and torn by branch and thorn I managed a kind of gallop, but it was impossible to keep it up. The elephant thundered straight through obstacles we were obliged to go round, and in fifty yards we were fast in a thick bush and he within fifteen of us. As a last chance I tried to get off, but in rolling round on my saddle my spur gored the pony's flank, and the elephant screaming over him at the same moment, he made a convulsive effort and freed himself, depositing me in a sitting position immediately in front of the uplifted forefoot of the charging bull. So near was it that I mechanically opened my knees to allow him to put it down. and, throwing myself back, crossed my hands upon my chest, obstinately puffing myself out with the idea of trying to resist the gigantic tread, or at all events of being as troublesome to crush as possible. I saw the burly brute from chest to tail as he passed directly over me lengthways, one foot between my knees, and one fourteen inches beyond my head, and not a graze! Five tons at least! As he turned from chasing the pony—which, without my weight and left to its own instinct, escaped easily to my after-rider's horse—he swept by me on his way to rejoin his companions, and I got another snap shot at his shoulders. As soon as I could I followed his spoor, but must have changed it in the thick bush, for in five minutes I had run into and killed a fresh elephant in a small open space. The Bushmen found the first, next morning, dead.



THREATENING OF ELEPHANTIASIS

Out of all my narrow escapes this is the only one that remained with me in recollection for any time. On four or five other occasions I was half or wholly stunned, and therefore not very clear about my sensations; but on this I was well aware of what was going on and over me. One hears of night-mares—well, for a month or more I dare say, I had night-elephants.

My reader will be glad to know that this is the last mishap I am going to tell him of, and that my contribution to the Big Game of Africa is finished. I beg his pardon for not making it more interesting, but I began a new trade too late in life. At starting I only proposed to give the stories of the illustrations; this I have done as well as I am able, but I have coupled them together with remarks not strictly within the subject of 'Big Game,' because in writing of African animals I could not quite get rid of African surroundings; and, besides, entirely by themselves they looked too bare. I hope I may be excused, therefore, for going a little beyond the limits prescribed for this 'accidental' sketch.

CHAPTER V

WITH LIVINGSTONE IN SOUTH AFRICA

By W. Cotton Oswell

[The Editors are fully aware that the following cannot be considered as coming strictly under the head of Big Game Shooting. It is, however, the special wish of the late Mr. Oswell's family that the whole MS. should appear as he left it, and the Editors willingly comply with the request.—Ed.]

A few lines about my companion in my Zambesi journey. The description of the route taken may be found in his book, and of the man himself two Lives have been written. But I knew him well personally, and there was one trait in his character which, *me judice*, has never been made enough of—a kind of firm persistence to do whatever he had set his mind on. In an Englishman we might, I think, have called the phase obstinacy, but with Livingstone it was 'Scottishness.' It was not the *sic volo sic jubeo* style of imperiousness, but a quiet determination to carry out his own views in his own way, without feeling himself bound to give any reason or explanation further than that he intended doing so and so. This was an immense help to him, for it made him supremely self-reliant, and if he had not been, he could never have done half that he did. He was the Fabius of African travel. *Vicit cunctando* might well be his epitaph. He believed, as I do, that the way was to be won, not forced, if any good results were to follow. I have sat seven weeks with him on the bank of a swamp because he was unwilling to run counter

to the wishes of the people. I pressed him to move on with the horses ; no active opposition would have been offered, but he would not wound the prejudices of the natives—and he was right. We had our reward, for, after satisfying themselves that we meant no harm, we were given free passports, and even helped on our way, journeying, as an Indian would say, on 'the back of an elephant.' With his quiet endurance, and entire lack of fussiness and excitability, content to wait and let patience have her perfect work, quite satisfied that the day should bring forth what it liked, he was eminently the '*justum et tenacem propositi virum*,' on whom man or elements make but slight impression, yet strangely withal very enthusiastic. This nature fitted him for the successful traveller and trustworthy companion. His inner man and noble aspirations belong to the histories of his life. We were the firmest of friends, both a trifle obstinate, but we generally agreed to differ, and in all matters concerning the natives, I, of course, waived my crude opinions to his matured judgment. I had the management of trekking and the cattle, after he, with his great knowledge of the people and their language, had obtained all the information he could about the waters and the distances between them. This worked well.

When we reached the Chobé River, Sebitoani was on an island thirty miles down stream, but sent his own canoe with twelve paddlers to bring us to him. It was a pleasant trip, the men going with the current about eight miles an hour. At three in the afternoon we reached our destination and landed. Presently this really great chief and man came to meet us, shy and ill at ease. We held out our hands in the accustomed way of true Britons, and I was surprised to see that his mother-wit gave him immediate insight into what was expected of him, and the friendly meaning of our salutation ; though he could never have witnessed it before, he at once followed suit and placed his hand in ours as if to the manner born. I felt troubled at the evident nervousness of the famous warrior, for he had been, and still was, a mighty fighter, with very remarkable force of

character. Surrounded by his tribesmen, he stood irresolute and quite overcome in the presence of two ordinary-looking Europeans. Livingstone entered at once into conversation with him, and by degrees partly reassured him ; but throughout that day and the next, a sad, half-scared look never faded from his face. He had wished us to visit him, had sent an ambassage to Livingstone at Kolobeng, but the reality of our coming, with all its possibilities, dangers, and advantages seemed to flit through the man's mind as in a vision. He killed an ox for us, and treated us right royally ; he was far and away the finest Kafir I ever saw in mien and manner.

He had been told that Livingstone and I occasionally wrote a letter to one another, if by chance we were separated for a day or two and wished to communicate or arrange a meeting at a certain point, and asked us if his information were true that we could make one another hear when far apart, and if we could give him an example of our power. Livingstone took a man out of even Kafir earshot, four or five hundred yards away, and then whisperingly asked him his own and his wife's name, and writing them on a scrap of paper sent him to me. 'Well, Ra'chobe, and how is Seboni your wife?' I asked. The chief and his headmen, who were gathered expectant round, were amazed and somewhat frightened, taking it for magic, though they soon got over it.

It does not do to introduce Kafirs too suddenly to the common things of civilised life. I once lost an admiring audience by an act of this kind. A laughing circle was round me, and I was dispensing beads, brass wire, and tiny looking-glasses to ingratiate myself with a new tribe, the Macoba, when by way of amusing them I took a burning-glass from my pocket and ignited a pinch of gunpowder strewed on the waggon-box, telling them what I was going to do, and preparing them for it. With the puff, man, woman, and child vanished ; it was days before I could regain their confidence, and throughout my stay with them I was looked upon with awe as the wizard of the sun.

Sebitoani had allotted to us a bright clean kotla for eating and sleeping in, and after supper we lay down on the grass, which had been cut for our beds by the thoughtful attention of the chief. In the dead of the night he paid us a visit alone, and sat down very quietly and mournfully at our fire. Livingstone and I woke up and greeted him, and then he dreamily recounted the history of his life, his wars, escapes, successes and conquests, and the far-distant wandering in his raids. By the fire's glow and flicker among the reeds, with that tall dark earnest speaker and his keenly attentive listeners, it has always appeared to me one of the most weird scenes I ever saw. With subdued manner and voice Sebitoani went on through the livelong night till near the dawn, his low tones only occasionally interrupted by an inquiry from Livingstone. He described the way in which he had circumvented a strong 'impi' of Matabili on the raid, and raised his voice for a minute or two as he recounted how, hearing of their approach, he had sent men to meet the dreaded warriors of 'Umsilegas, feigning themselves traitors to him in order to lure them to destruction by promising to guide them to the bulk of the cows and oxen which they said, in fear of their coming, had been placed in fancied security on one of the large islands of the Chobé; how the Zulus fell into the trap, and allowed themselves to be ferried over in three or four canoes hidden there for the purpose, and how when the last trip had been made the boatmen, pulling out into midstream, told them they could remain where they were till they were fetched off, and in the meantime might search for the cattle; how, after leaving them till they were worn and weak with hunger, for there was nothing to eat on the island, he passed over, killed the chiefs, and absorbed the soldiers into his own ranks, providing them with wives, a luxury they were not entitled to under Zulu military law until their spears had been well reddened in fight. Then he waved his hand westwards, and opened out a story of men over whom he had gained an easy triumph 'away away very far by the bitter waters,' and to whom, when they asked for food, wishing to bind them with fetters of

kindness, he sent a fat ox, and, '"Would you believe it? they returned it, saying they didn't eat ox." "Then what do you eat?" I asked; "*we* like beef better than anything." "We eat *men*," said they. I had never heard of this before. But they were very pressing, so at last I sent them two slaves of Macobas—the river people—who, as you know, are very dark in colour, but they brought them back, saying they did not like *black* men, but preferred the redder variety, and as that meant sending my own fighting men, I told them they might go without altogether.' This was the only intimation we ever had that cannibalism existed in our part of Africa.

This chief afterwards died close to our waggons from pneumonia set up by the irritation of some old spear wounds in his chest. He was beloved by the Makololo, was the fastest runner and best fighter among them; just, though stern, with wonderful power of attaching men to him. He was a gentleman in thought and manner, well disposed to Europeans, and very proud of their visiting him. Had he not died he might have been of the greatest use in civilising and missionary work. His kingdom has, I am afraid, melted away. The sceptre descended to his daughter, who thought, as man took a plurality of wives, a queen might allow herself like liberty in the way of husbands. Bickering and strife arose, and though the rule went to her brother after her resignation, he was not of the same calibre as his father, and disintegration of the heterogeneous elements of the carefully put together and wisely ruled kingdom soon set in. The nation lost its unity, and resolved itself into its separate nationalities—in the course, I believe, of a very few years. Such has been the fate of all African kingdoms; one great man has made and held them together, and at his death they have returned to the several petty tribal royalties out of which they were welded.

And now, having had my say on Big Game, one word on the 'biggest beasts' of Africa—the slave traders—and one on the country, and I have done. It was on the Chobé that we first came across the slaver's work. We had travelled all night

through the sleeping flies. I was in advance with the gun and half a dozen Kafirs with axes, with which they had been clearing the way. In the very early morning we reached the river, narrow, but deep, with steep banks. I asked the guide if we could cross it. 'Do they swim?' he asked, pointing to the waggons. 'No,' I answered ; 'where's the ford?' There was none, he said. 'Are there tsétsé here?' I inquired, and he replied that there were plenty. 'What are we to do with the animals?' and he told me to drive them as near as possible to the water, into the reeds, as the flies were not there, only in the bush. The pests were beginning to buzz about as the sun rose, so we took the man's advice, and while the others lay down for a rest of an hour or two I volunteered to keep watch. Putting my back against a tree, I kept my eyes steadfastly fixed on my charge for a time, and then I suppose I must have closed them, though of course I should deny that I was asleep.

Suddenly I was roused from my reverie by a salutation in Sechuana—'Rumélá.' I looked up, and before me stood a tall stalwart Kafir, clothed in a lady's dressing-gown. It came scantily to his knee, and in other parts seemed hardly to have been made for him, and his appearance was so queer that I burst into a laugh. I saw the blood rise in his dusky face as he asked what I was laughing at. 'Why, you have got on a woman's dress from my country,' I told him. 'I don't know about that,' he said, 'but I gave a woman for it last year.' We had come unaware upon the southern limit of the slave trade. It was months since we had last seen any products of European manufacture except those we had brought with us, and here they were in 18° S. Lat., in the middle of South Africa, 1,500 to 1,800 miles from any sea. Livingstone woke up, smoothed down my visitor, and inquired what we could do with the cattle. We could not leave them where they were ; they would find nothing to eat, and besides, when the sun got hot the flies would find their way to them. We must drive them across the river, as there were no tsétsé there, the man told us ; and we found it was so, the narrowest lines frequently

defining the limits of safety and danger. Nothing, however, would persuade them to take the jump from the bank into the deep black water. Our friend whistled, and from the fringe of reeds on the opposite side four or five canoes full of men shot across the narrow channel. As they landed they presented the most motley appearance. They had evidently dressed to astonish us, and each bore about his neck or shoulders some article of European manufacture. Here was a fellow with a yard and a half of green baize or red drugget tied with a leathern thong about his throat, the ends streaming away behind him ; another with a yard or two of some cheap gaudy cloth with a hole cut in the middle, wearing it *à la poncho* ; two yards of calico of the commonest adorned the person of a third ; it was a most ridiculous sight, but was evidently considered most impressively overwhelming. Still the cattle resisted our united efforts. At last, a canoe was paddled over to the other side, and in three or four minutes appeared again with a tiny cow and a most diminutive calf as passengers. The little cow was lifted on to the bank, and the canoe paddled back with the calf ; we got our oxen as much together in a lump as we could, close to the river, surrounded them on three sides, loosed the lowing little mother, who instantly took a header into the water, and then by shouting, pushing, and twisting tails induced our oxen to follow the example set them, and they were safe. The horses gave no trouble.

On questioning these Kafirs and their chief (Sebitoani) afterwards as to the mystery of the fine clothes, this was the interpretation. 'Do you see that little hill? A number of men with hair like yours and with guns came from the eastwards and sat down on that hill. We sent to ask them what they wanted, and they said "to buy men." We explained we had none to sell ; it was the first time they had ever come to us, though we had heard of them before. Wouldn't they buy ivory or ostrich feathers? No, they didn't want anything of that sort ; they had beautiful cloths, which they showed us.' 'I told them,' said Sebitoani, 'that I thought it was an "ugly" thing

to sell men, but they sat there day after day, and showed us fresh cloths so beautiful that you would have sold your grandmother for them. Then I somehow remembered there were men whom we had taken in our last raid. And I at length consented to part with them. But they were not many, and they wanted more. I said I had none; if I sold now it must be my own people, and I would not do that. Then they asked, "Don't you want oxen?" What could I say—doesn't a chief always want oxen? "Well, as we came here, about five days off we passed through a country where the oxen were like the grass for number. Lend us 400 or 500 of your warriors, and we will help with our guns, and let us attack that tribe. We will take the men and women, and you shall take the oxen." What could I say? This appeared a very good plan to me, so we attacked. They got two great tens (200) of men and women, and I got all those cattle,' pointing to a plain on which a herd of these diminutive little creatures were feeding. I forget whether Livingstone described them, but they were most remarkably small things, like sturdy Durham oxen three feet high. There was not the least difficulty in carrying them about bodily; we put one into a waggon, hoping to bring it out, but it died. Pretty little gentle beasts, I wish I had taken more trouble to secure specimens. When the men milked them they held them by the hind leg as you would a goat. On the other hand, by the shores of Lake 'Ngami, a gigantic long-horned breed is found, stolen in a raid from the Ba-Wangketsi thirty years before our visit. They were originally remarkable for their heads, but in four or five generations, from feeding on the silicious coated reeds and succulent grasses near the lake, had developed wonderfully in horns and height. Through Livingstone I obtained one 6 ft. 2 in. high, with horns measuring from tip to tip 8 ft. 7 in. and 14 ft. 2 in. round from one point to the other taking in the base of the skull. We had cleared a way for the waggons through the bush, but had in many places on our return to widen it for my ox. I hoped to have brought him home and to have presented him to the

Zoological Gardens, but after driving him 800 miles the grass got very short, and his horns coming to the ground before his nose, prevented him feeding. I was obliged to shoot him, and his head now hangs over the sideboard in my dining-room.

These slave-dealers, with their devilish counsels and temptations, were Mambari, a kind of half-caste Portuguese, who fifty years ago were agents for the export slave-trade. When the survivors of the gangs reached the coast they were packed away in a slave-ship, like herrings in a cask, and transported. Through the vigilance of English cruisers this iniquitous traffic has been greatly reduced, and, but for the refusal of the right of search by the French, would be very small and unremunerative; but the Arab curse still continues, and though, now that the seaboard is partially occupied by Europeans, greater difficulty will be placed in its way, I am of opinion that through the avarice and cupidity of man—African and European—it will not entirely disappear so long as there is any ivory left. That once exhausted, is there anything else worth bringing a ten-mile journey to the coast?

In the late very cool partitioning of Africa we may congratulate ourselves in having obtained possession of Mashonaland, a district healthy enough for colonisation, and apparently rich enough to repay it. The tsétsé, that great enemy to the cattle-breeder, will disappear before the approach of civilisation, and the killing off of the game, especially the buffalo, its standing dish, as it has done many times already in African lore. I am speaking of the tracts south of the Zambesi. Of tropical lands to the north I know nothing, save from what I read and am told, and I cannot yet see how they are to be settled. Fever and general unhealthiness must weight immigration heavily, and even if the country is capable of supplying the needs of the world in the future, what philanthropic society will subsidise the workers until the industries are developed? It must be remembered the greatest prophylactics in an evil climate are movement, and its consequent excitement, and change of scene—the settler dies where the traveller lives. The rail-

way, if made, will help to suppress slavery, by giving carriage for the ivory, its only cause at present—no ivory, no slavery. May the venture turn out better than many another has done, and not end in that very questionable blessing, a rum-civilisation !

The influx of immigrants into Mashonaland will, in time, with the gold and diamond seeking population further south, tend to minimise the power of the Boers over the native tribes. Dutchmen are slow colonists, and will not be able to hold their own with the incomers in enterprise, or in a few years in numbers or power, and the evil influence and oppression they have at times exercised upon the black race will be at an end. I hope no worse *régime* may come in with the new rule. There were many good points in the Dutch farmers, and I think they compare very favourably with English squatters in other lands. Where antagonistic races are brought together, the minority, the whites, if they are to hold their ground, are almost inevitably forced for very existence to terrorise the black majority that would otherwise overwhelm them. I am not arguing that their conduct is moral or legal, but it has been, and will continue to be, the rule where whites settle in black men's lands uninvited. We may hold up our hands in a Pharisaical way, and when we are once secure, I grant we try to improve our subjects ; but they must be our subjects first. But would Englishmen under similar conditions have done much better than the Dutchmen? I think not. Without the pale of law, they would hardly have been so much of a law unto themselves. No doubt the Boers have many faults, and with respect to the native races have shown great cruelty—my contention is they could hardly have held their own without. We must not be too hard on them because they have twice got the better of us in the field, and twice in diplomacy. Englishmen have not forgotten Laings Nek and the Majuba Hills. Diplomatically, too, we were twice worsted : the Boers had very troublesome neighbours, and sought the suzerainty of our Queen for their own ends, not by a unanimous vote I know ; but

there are 'oppositions' everywhere, and at all events the seekers were the majority. The troublesome neighbours, now we are masters, call upon us to rectify the frontier line, which had been greatly encroached upon by the Boers. We refuse, or delay, to set matters right. Boers' troublesome neighbours become ours. The Zulus are conquered with some difficulty, and the Boers, relieved from their anxieties, demand and obtain the withdrawal of the suzerainty. This is not my opinion alone. The Zulus were our fast friends till we refused to undo the wrongs they had suffered at the hands of the Dutchmen—the whole story, including the subsequent withdrawal of our troops, is a page that one would like to tear out of our annals.

The character of the country in its different stages is well given in the illustrations. There are no striking features; no mountains, no large river, except the Zambesi, and only one rather uninteresting lake, 'Ngami; no great forests, no tropical vegetation; the rains are scanty, the soil dry, the plains large. What you see one day you may see for a week. In most countries you would have to describe nature in her many phases, but in South Africa one might take a paint-brush and give a broad, general idea of the land, with four or five streaks of colour—the widely extending, ascending, nearly treeless flats from Kuruman to the Molopo River; the broken, fairly clothed region of the Bakatla; and the open park-like scenery between them and the rocky homes of the Bakaa and Ba-Mungwato. Throughout this area the prevailing trees are mimosas; the flowers are of the same genera and orders, undisturbed by man—sheets of different kinds are often spread out side by side, parterre fashion, in separate beds, not mingling even at the edges. They have fought the battle out amongst themselves, and it has ended in the survival of the fittest, aliens less suited to the particular border being crowded out by the stronger natives.

From the Ba-Mungwato, however, as you dive into the Kalahari desert by the Bushmen sucking-holes of 'Serotli, thirty yards of sand suffice to change the growth and families of trees and flowers. On the side we struck the hollow, they

were old friends ; on the other, entire strangers—not even recognised by the Kafirs who had accompanied us from the south.

We had turned over a fresh leaf in Nature's book, and it lasted us until the sluggish waters of the Zouga River and Lake Kamadou came in sight, with their lonely palm-trees, and, on the upper reaches of the river, unusually thick bush. You thence passed through a country cut up with narrow sleepy streams, or by the dry barren road, eastward of Lake Kamadou, to the open flats of the Zambesi, the approach from the side of the Chobé being studded with euphorbia-trees, quaint of growth, and excellently named candelabra. Throughout these parts you hardly see a hillock ; so rare, indeed, is the sight, that one tiny, isolated mound is named 'Sisalébue'—'we are still looking at you'—by the Kafirs, in recognition of the scarcity of even such haycocks. Beyond the Zouga the wonderful abundance of animal life is not maintained. There is game, but not in large herds. The happy hunting grounds in my time began at the Molepo and ended at the Zouga.

Throughout South Africa the sparseness of the population has favoured the increase of the game, coupled with the fact that the people were not adequately armed for its destruction. The massing of animals in particular localities, dependent on the waters, which are few and far between, may perhaps have led to an exaggerated idea of the sum total ; but put it as you will, after all real and imaginary deductions from whatsoever cause, there never was a land so full of wild life since antediluvian days. It will die out before guns and civilisation, and that quickly, though the fly may bar the way to *mounted* sportsmen, for there are no dense jungles or inaccessible ranges of mountains for the beasts to fall back upon.