

SPORTING SCENES

AMONGST

THE KAFFIRS OF SOUTH AFRICA.

BY

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ROYAL ARTILLERY.

" Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bushboy alone by my side ;
Away, away, from the dwellings of men,
By the antelope's haunt and the buffalo's glen ;
By valleys remote, where the ourebi plays,
The gnu, the gazelle, and the hartebeest graze ;
Where the gemsbok and eland unhunted recline,
By the skirts of grey forests o'erhung with wild vine."

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRISON WEIR,

FROM DESIGNS BY THE AUTHOR.

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up the coast. The ivory is valuable, as it is curved in the shape of the nautical sextant, and being very hard, is especially adapted for the fine lines used upon Vernier scales; the skin is cut up into whips, called by the colonists *sjamboks*; the flesh is good eating, tasting when salted something like pork.

The elephant (*Loxodonta africana*): male twelve feet high, droops towards the tail; extreme length eighteen feet; colour blackish-brown; tail short, tufted with coarse hair at the end; ears very large, and front of head round; tusks large, from three to seven feet in length, weighing nearly a hundred pounds: female smaller, with tusks, except solitary specimens. Gregarious; found in large troops in the forests; wary, fierce, and vindictive.

Besides the animals that I have described, there were baboons, monkeys, rock-rabbits (the *hyrax*), a species of hare, porcupines, the ratel, many small vermin, such as the ichneumon, &c., in great numbers. All these animals were to be found in the Natal district in numbers, whilst across the Drookensburg Mountains were camelopards, rhinoceros, zebras, koodoo, wildebeest, guoos, sassybys, water-buck, roan-antelope, blesbok, springbok, pallahs, ostriches, and many other magnificent animals, in countless herds.

A curious creature inhabits the African forest,—many specimens were found by me in the Berea, near Natal; it is called the Manis. It looks like a large and scaly lizard, being covered with hard scales, or plates, like thick short leaves; when lying on the ground motionless, it resembles a vegetable. Its body is long; tail twice the

bared his arm and shoulder, where the terrible marks were yet apparent.

“When you come across a wounded leopard, you ‘*pas-op*’” (take care), was Hendrick’s moral.

I thought over this story frequently during the night, and impressed on my mind that I would always be careful of leopards; another instance having occurred, in which a bombardier of artillery was much torn by a wounded leopard close beside his barracks at Natal. With the usual bravery, but want of sporting skill, of the British soldier, he went into the bush armed with a sword to finish a leopard that had crawled in badly wounded. The savage animal sprang upon him, seized his hand, and would have killed him, had not a fortunate shot from a civilian, who had followed the soldier, laid the leopard low. The loss of the use of his hand was the only damage this man suffered, fortunately for him.

These Dutchmen seemed to think that the black rhinoceros was the most formidable customer in South Africa. The lion, which is considered in England so far to exceed all other animals as dangerous game, did not seem to be held in greater awe than either the rhinoceros or a solitary old bull-buffalo. The latter is sometimes sent from a herd by a combination of young bulls, who, disliking his monopoly of the ladies, combine, and turn him out; he then seeks some deep ravine, and buries himself amongst the bushes. He is always sly and vindictive, and will suddenly rush out upon an intruder. One of these brutes once sprang upon a gallant friend of mine, tumbling horse

Far in the interior the game is unlimited in quantity, and the numbers are quite correctly spoken of by Harris, Cumming, and other sportsmen. Any one anxious for pure slaughter may there indulge his fancy to any extent; but I think that the amount of slain is no criterion of the amount of sport.

The sports of Africa are excellent as remedies against attacks of ennui. Should any gentleman feel that he has finished everything in Europe, and is disposed for sport and excitement, let him at once give up white kids and patents, and take to skin shoes and leather breeches; lay out a couple of hundreds in rifles, saddles, and powder, and start for the wilds of South Africa. Thirty days to Australia is now talked about, therefore twenty to the Cape ought to be work easy enough. That man must be composed of strange stuff who does not find a new pleasure in stalking through tropical forests, well stocked with elephants and other large game; or in riding over plains sprinkled with thousands of magnificent antelopes; in dodging the charge of an angry rhinoceros; or escaping the rush of a troop of elephants.

There will be the excitement of midnight hazard, for ivory is plentiful in Africa, although only in the rough at present, while lions' teeth may be looked upon as the "bones," and are nearly as fatal. And if the traveller is not wide awake, the lion will carry off the stakes to a certainty.

A man who has passed through an African shooting campaign, will find that his health is improved; that he is better able to help himself, has a greater trust in his