



Clement Sykes

SERVICE AND SPORT ON THE TROPICAL NILE

SOME RECORDS OF THE DUTIES AND
DIVERSIONS OF AN OFFICER AMONG
NATIVES AND BIG GAME DURING THE
RE-OCCUPATION OF THE NILOTIC
PROVINCE

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WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
PHOTOGRAPHS AND FROM DRAWINGS MADE
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CHAPTER XV

THE ARMED RHINOCEROS

I'll hunt thee for thy hide.

Act V. Scene 6, *Troilus and Cressida*.

All things that are,

Are with more spirit chased than enjoyed.

Act II. Scene 6, *Merchant of Venice*.

They are as sick that surfeit with too much,

As they that starve with nothing.

Act I. Scene 2, *Merchant of Venice*.

THE officer commanding at Wadelai was at this time struck down with blackwater fever, and invalided home, so that I found myself ordered to that place. The only intimation we got was a small piece of paper upon which was scrawled the pathetic words, "I am down with blackwater." The doctor was at the time attending another case of the same fell disease at Afuddu, and could not get to Wadelai until the crisis was over. By pluck and determination my friend pulled through, though he had no

other nursing than such as a Swahili boy gives. He kept his senses enough to tell the boy to feed him with milk and to administer quinine ; but it was nothing short of marvellous that he recovered.

On my way to Wadelai I came across some very old chiefs, who had known Gordon and even Baker, and interested me with their reminiscences. One aged old gentleman named Wad-el-Aguz showed me some bells and small treasures that Baker had given him. He still looked upon the explorer as a species of demi-god, and described him as a thick man with short legs and immense strength. He said that if Baker took up a man and shook him, that man withered and died, and I can quite believe it ; for they are a fragile looking race. He further asked me to tell " El Sitt " or " The Great Lady," *i.e.*, Lady Baker, that " Wad-el-Aguz still was," of which fact he was justly proud. They all revered the name of Lady Baker, though few of such a comparatively short-lived community could remember her. Directly the old man saw me he looked at my hat, which happened that day to be a double terai, and said " That hat is the brother of Gordon's hat." Amongst other things he said about Gordon was that he had been with him when he had killed an elephant ; but I am not sure the old man was not wool-gathering at the moment, and mixing up Baker and Gordon.

I soon settled down for my few remaining months in Wadelai, and began to make the acquaintance of

the chiefs. Sheik Ali was the biggest swell, and after he had come in to see me and assure me of his unwavering loyalty, I sought him in his own hearth. I chose an unfortunate day, as one of his subjects had just departed this life, and was being honoured with extraordinary funeral rites. To commence with, they buried him in the middle of the village, and must have been fond of him in the life, to keep him so close to them in death. Hundreds of mourners circled and swarmed round the grave, chanting a lugubrious lay. Howls and groans rent the air, as though the agony of grief was insupportable. I met many of these howlers, howling even in the wilderness, as they came towards the scene, and commencing miles away. Many of them must have had but the slightest acquaintance with the extinct one; but death seemed to have turned it into a great love, and I can hardly believe he deserved such lamentations. It was one of the few signs of feeling I ever observed in those apathetic people, and whether it was real or assumed I am not prepared to say. The wailing was accompanied by such music as emanates from wooden drums and other similar noise-giving instruments. Having observed the proceedings for a few minutes I was not sorry to leave such a grievous atmosphere.

My days were fairly busily employed in building, brick-making, agriculture, accounts, drill and musketry, and my evenings in shooting. As I was

administrating the district in a civil capacity, all petty squabbles and feuds were brought to me for adjustment. I held my court upon a camp stool, the heavens were the roof to my *palais de justice*, and the execution of sentences was, as a rule, immediate.

Some cases were not without their humorous side. On one occasion the point in question was the intrinsic value of a lady. A poor civilised creature like myself had no precedent to go upon, and who on this earth is going to assign any particular value to any particular woman? Should I put a low price upon her, I must disappoint one man, please another, and hurt the feelings of the poor lady herself, should she have any. On the other hand, if I put a high price upon her, the faces of the two men might be changed, and the lady become insufferable. I took refuge in a golden mean, half-way between the sublime and the ridiculous, and avoided dangerous extremes.

Sometimes these barterings took place just before the advent of an offspring, and then the hopeless problem of whose property was the new arrival, had to be brought in front of me for decision. One man inevitably went sadly away, whilst the other rejoiced, for there are always two sides to every picture. To act as Solomon did would have been idle; Solomon had the enormous advantage of dealing with people who had feelings other than physical.

On one occasion a solemn conclave was awaiting a momentous verdict, and a crocodile, recently shot

by the officer commanding (who happened to be there) was lying close by. Amongst the other curios which had been removed from his interior economy was a brass ring, which was being vapidly gazed upon by the bystanders. Suddenly one of the disputants caught sight of it, and asked to see it in his hand. He examined it for an instant, and then said reflectively, "Ah, that accounts for the whereabouts of my son during the last three months." I presume these three months had assuaged his grief, for not a tear fell to the memory of his luckless heir.

At other times porters attended my session, who might have incurred the law. These beings had sometimes to carry loads from place to place, with only an escort of two or three Soudanese soldiers. Like children they would dally by the roadside and waste a day, or pilfer from the loads, or do any of those little deeds which they dared, when the white man's eye was off them. The present opportunity was too much for them, but they learnt in time to peep into the future. As many as four and twenty of them have been laid out on arrival and given four and twenty apiece, this summary justice smoothing out the little wrinkles.

In that region evil doing will out in a miraculous manner. I had a rare thing amongst my soldiers, a thief. A pile of brass wire for which there was no room in the store, had to be left in the open, and the sentry guarding it chanced to be

this individual. His proclivities got the better of him, and he managed to pass a whole load of the precious metal to one of his wives. Next morning it was missing, and I harangued the army, and reproached them with keeping such a miscreant in their midst without declaring him. The thief did not give me credit for many wits. I knew he could not get rid of this commodity in Wadelai itself, and must foist it upon the villages down the river ; so I waited for intelligence of its appearance. The men had that touch of honour common to all classes, of not peaching, I therefore brought pressure to bear by saying that each man would help to defray the loss by contributing one rupee.

The wire soon began to leak out, and natives were brought to Wadelai in boats to identify the vendor. This simple expedient did not seem to occur to the robber, who suddenly found many fingers pointed at him. He confessed, and got nine months hard labour and costs, which would take him an additional year to work off. Such a lucky stroke must have nipped any tendencies of the sort in the bud ; but a Soudanese thief was an exception, and this incident was in any case unlikely to recur.

Wadelai was an Elysium for the hunter, and I usually devoted from Friday to Monday to the pleasures of the chase. One could shoot antelope 800 yards from the fort, and the Nile banks were teeming with duck, teal, snipe, guinea-fowl, and

bustard. Within three hours' walk was a patch where the rhinoceros was a sure find, and lions were audible frequently by day and night; grunting gruffly or roaring in unison. I generally knew whereabouts they were, and heard them sometimes from a distance of ten miles. Leopards also had the audacity to come and steal goats that were grazing in oblivion close to the fort.

It is not my intention to weary the reader with many shooting trips; but I cannot refrain from calling to mind two or three days of unalloyed bliss. For every successful day one enjoys, several weary blank ones must be endured, blank only as far as intense excitement is concerned; for one could always pick up such sport as antelope, wart-hog, hippos, and crocodiles afford. It was my custom to send my tent to some distant water in the morning under escort, and to follow in the evening myself, after my ordinary daily duties had been discharged. With the escort would go some knowledgeable person to make inquiries from the natives of the exact whereabouts of any game. Should they have found out nothing on my arrival, I would set forth at 4 A.M. next morning to search the woods myself.

The unrestrained delight of such an occupation is far beyond my poor powers of description: indeed, I think that words cannot convey the sensation, for to know what it is like, it must be experienced. At home man sets forth in the morning, ready for enjoy-

ment, but knows what is about to come, and is robbed of half his pleasure. Does he enjoy a meal so much if he knows beforehand what he is going to eat? Surprise is a sauce surpassed only by hunger. There, in the wilds, the unseen and unknown are always in front of one; the day never palls, for who can say what lies before him?

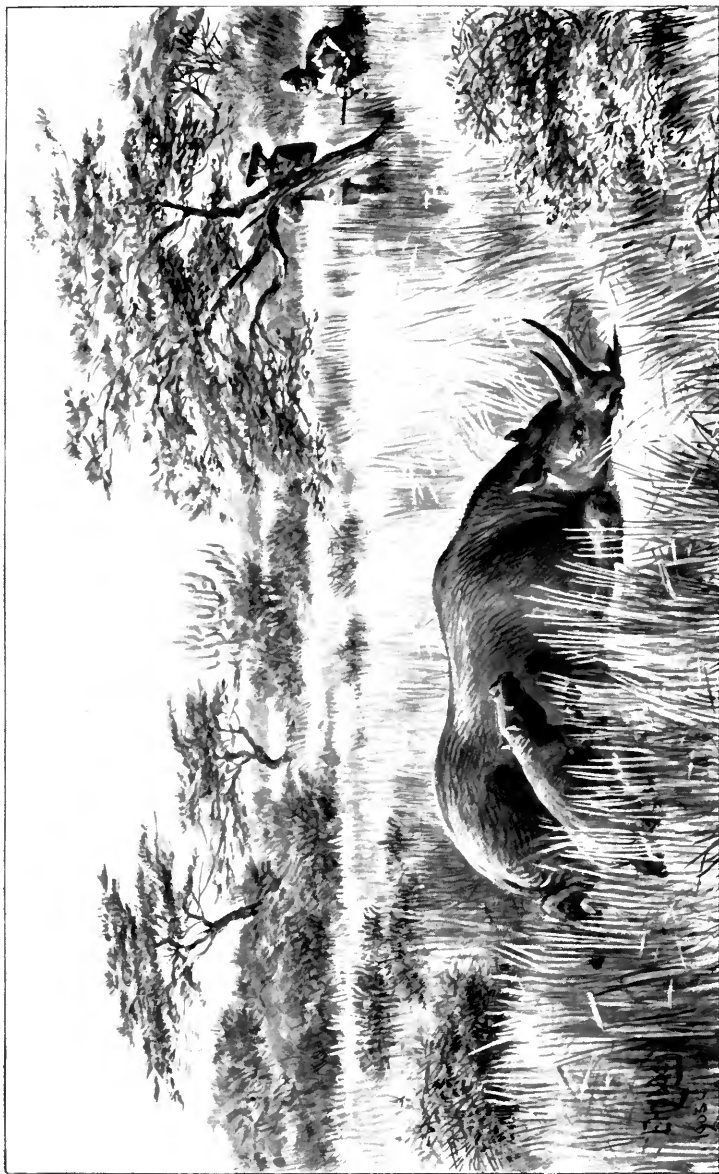
If nothing worthy of pursuit crossed my path, then I would sit down under a shady tree, and send forth barbarians in all directions in quest of a trail, or, if my humour was such, I would walk on and on myself, hoping at every step to see the much wished-for footprint. As we walked on, every eye was fixed now on the ground, and now on the landscape. I cared not which way my footsteps took me. North, south, east, and west, were all the same to me, it mattered not; my thoughts and wishes were free and unconfined, and the unexpected was what I most craved. When hungry I would eat, when thirsty drink, when tired lie down, or when sleepy slumber. What more could the heart of man desire! The irksome demands of civilisation were not there; troubles of the mind were absent; poverty had no pangs, nor wealth either; and if health was not all it might be, such a life tended to ward off sickness. Nature with her infinite variety was around on all sides, sufficient danger to titillate the nerves, and stimulate the capacity for enjoyment. Different men have different tastes; but I cannot understand any man of flesh

and blood not thrilling with such joys as the jungle yields, and men who detract from its merits, cannot have experienced it.

With such thoughts in my mind I sat one day beneath a tree drinking my tea, and glad of its recuperative properties, for I had been walking for six hours in the sun, and was feeling pleasantly tired. Several natives were searching the vicinity for fresh tracks, and whilst they were so employed I wiled away the time with a book. Should their errand have been bootless, I had intended to keep quiet and rest all hands until the coolness of the evening would enable us to proceed without fatigue. I was contentedly smoking my pipe of peace, when a messenger was seen to be returning at full speed. My nerves tingled, and I could hardly restrain myself from running out to meet him. He never checked, for he knew his intelligence would please the white man, and earn for him the reward of a string of beads or so. Sure enough, he had seen the "Anas" or rhinoceros in a thicket, chewing thorns. He gave me to understand that it was a female with her young one beside her, and so I forthwith turned him round and gave him injunctions to lead me to the spot, at the same time to lead me in such a manner that my presence would not be betrayed. He did exactly as he was told, and soon disclosed the well-known mass of flesh that constitutes the rhinoceros. She was chewing pensively, and had no idea of the

sudden change that was about to take place. I was screened by a bush, and the distance between us was about 200 yards, which is a long shot in ordinary circumstances. However, the space between us was open, and I did not feel inclined to trust the wind and shift, so made up my mind that I would shoot where I was. I lay down, rested my double .303 on a small lump of earth, and waited for a good chance. She was moving about, and soon presented a whole broadside. I drew a bead on the point of her shoulder and fired. A shrill snort, such a noise as an engine gives forth when letting off steam, told me I had struck the beast. I never stirred a muscle, and watched. She seemed much agitated, and at first came directly towards me, whether by chance or design I could not tell; but I should think the former. I took another steady aim, and waited again. In a few moments she raised her head, as though feeling for the scent. I at once fired at her chest and struck her again. At this she lost her head or made a mistake, for in a great rage she dashed off towards my left. I let her get out of sight before I budged, and then I followed her tracks leisurely, having a mind to let the two bullets do their work. I had the conviction that my aim had been correct, but I knew so well then that a .303 is a flimsy weapon to meet a charge with.

The tracks led me on for a mile or so, and then became confused, when suddenly I heard terrific



RHINOCEROS COW LYING DEAD IN KNEELING POSITION, AND CALF.

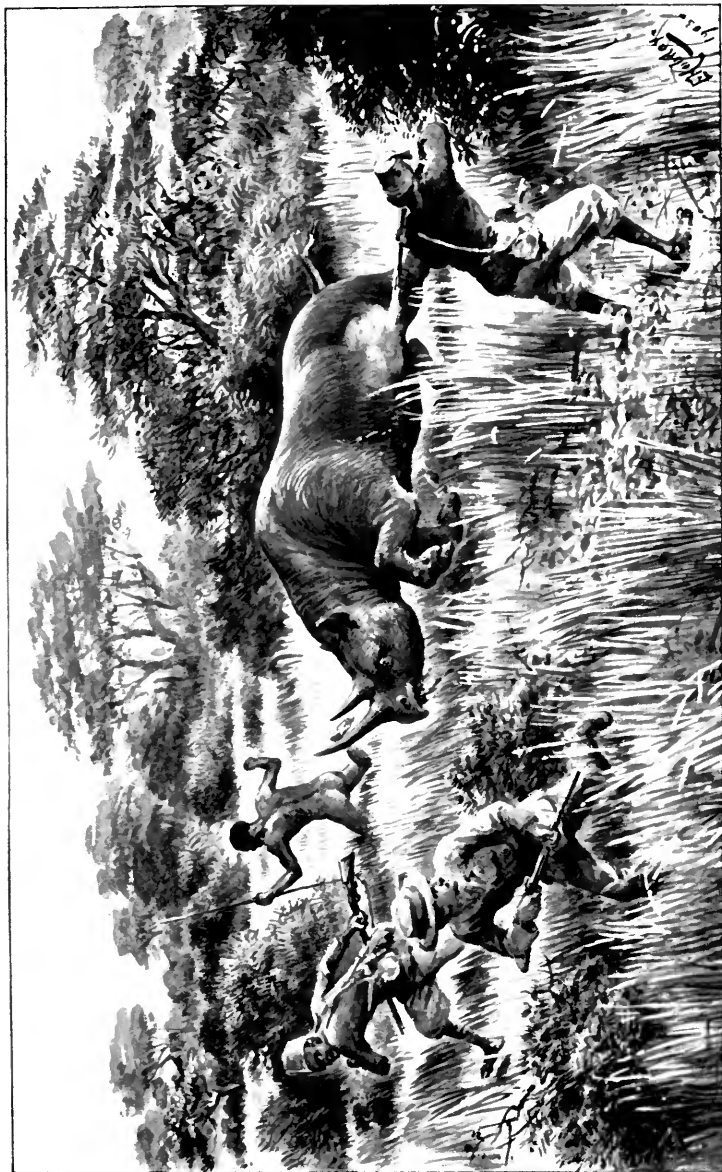
snorting, and a great commotion close ahead in the thick scrub. My orderly told me she wanted battle badly, but I thought she was hard hit, and had got into the scrub to try and baffle pursuit. I advanced foot by foot with extreme caution, when she suddenly broke covert, and charged down upon us as straight as a die. We ran to either side for all we were worth, and she passed between us, in the blundering blind way peculiar to the rhinoceros. I just caught sight of her, and could see that she was in a bad way, and that unless I behaved like a fool, she was mine without mishap. I crept on after her, and could see the great drops of blood on the ground she passed over. We had to fly once more for our lives, for she returned to the charge; but I could see her roll over about fifty yards off. She was squealing, and my orderly informed me that she did not want battle half so much. Even then I did not trust her, for I knew her fury both on account of her wound and also her calf; and lucky I did not, for she managed to regain her legs. The scrub was so thick that we could not see in most directions more than a few yards; but I found a tree from behind which I sent a bullet clean through her heart at a very short range. She fell, and I knew she would not get up again. I walked up; but as I got to within a few paces, I saw the grass being violently disturbed, and thinking it was the old lady in her death throes, I, in mercy, gave her another

barrel. This was greeted by a succession of piercing screams, and the poor little calf came dashing out and disappeared into the jungle. It had been dancing round its deceased mother, and wondering why she did not get up and depart. I was much vexed at my mistake, especially as the natives afterwards ran the little thing down, and then ate it. It was to me a touching incident ; but the pathos of it did not seem to occur to my orderly, who laughed immoderately.

I found the old one in a kneeling position, stone dead. Her last hour had certainly been an exhilarating one for me, and she had died game, as the rhinoceros always does.

I look upon them almost as the quaintest of all big game. They will charge through a caravan, and do little or no damage, contenting themselves with just dispersing it in all directions, and passing on puffing and snorting. Their charge is rather like the bull's, straight and blind ; but they must not be taken too much on trust, for they can dodge and turn in pursuit like a hound ; and if they ever get to terms, the wound they inflict is very terrible. Their speed far surpasses that of any man, and in such going as they sometimes choose, than any mounted man ; but they have not the sagacity of elephants, who will go round small hills and then resume their original direction, to deceive their pursuers.

I sat down, pouring with perspiration, ready to



RHINOCEROS CHARGING.

watch and superintend the cutting up of the beast, and the separating of the trophies. The two horns were small. She was not of the square-lipped graminivorous white species, and though she was by no means a young specimen, her anterior horn measured only about eighteen inches. The former is said to exist on the banks of the Nile; but the black one is by far the commoner, and unlike his East African brother, the Nilotic rhino carries a comparatively small horn. I speak of the Nile district proper of the Uganda Protectorate, but some of the Nyam-Nyams amongst my men told me the rhinos of their country grew horns as long as a man's arm.

The feet, teeth, and portions of the skin are all worth keeping, the last polishing into that beautiful transparent substance that resembles clouded amber.

The spot this animal chose for death was in a low lying piece of ground shut in by bushes, so that no breath of air could find a way in. The heat was stifling, and I was glad when all the surgical operations were over. Though it appeared to be as deserted a place as could be found on the globe, where no human being or habitation was visible; nevertheless, during the course of half an hour or so, dozens of human vultures, far outstripping their feathered relations, had arrived with their fire-sticks, and squatting on the ground in a circle, were awaiting our departure. The interior of a rhinoceros is not a savoury portion, but such is the depravity of

these savages' taste, that their mouths were literally watering with anticipation. I have seen some quaint black races; but this universal craving for flesh always seemed remarkable to me. I suppose they, on their hand, wondered at the Europeans' desire for sugar. Even my own immediate followers indulged incontinently in such orgies, and made themselves ill. It became such a nuisance to me that I afterwards made it an understood thing, that any man who made himself ill was flogged. I think all will agree with me that this penalty was most hygienic. At home pounds of Gregory's powder or Epsom's salts would have been squandered, with only a fraction of the same success.

CHAPTER XVI

LAST DAYS ON THE NILE

Tongues of men are full of deceits.

Act V. Scene 2, *Henry V.*

Go see this rumourer whipped.

Act IV. Scene 6, *Coriolanus.*

i. Farewell, at once ; for once, for all, for ever.

ii. Well, we may meet again.

Act II. Scene 2, *Richard II.*

I BEGAN to realise that those nations which make paradise a hunting-ground, and the abode of many beautiful ladies, know what they are about. By holding out such inducements, religion must claim a powerful influence. At Wadelai, the beautiful ladies were not present ; but the other half of paradise with its earthly limitations, was always close at hand, and I spent many a happy day in the society of pachyderms, the fair ones being absent. It appears to me that paradise could hardly have the same attractions for these ladies, for they cannot possibly wish to chase

rhinoceroses, and the proximity of more of their own sex must be to them insipid. However, the solution of such a problem is not within the province of this work : I deal essentially with terrestrial matters.

Even in its blank days, this life at Wadelai approached the joys of paradise, for do not blank days enhance productive ones? The delights of anticipation would be modified by unchanging success, and by always getting the object of our desires, we should soon cease to set any value upon it. The mingling of disappointment sets off accomplishment of one's aims, and whets the capacity for enjoyment. The pleasures of the chase would otherwise pall : and so let no man curse an empty day !

With such consolation in my heart, the fierce sun, the raging fever, and pangs of thirst and exhaustion lost half their terrors. At the same time there was not such scarcity of big game as to engender the feeling of hopelessness in the breast. The fleeting rhino often gives but a glimpse of himself, but he thereby gains attraction.

One week-end I was occupied in my favourite pastime of trying to catch this glimpse near an outlying village. I had become happy in finding some delicate little footprints about three feet in circumference, and was following them as though they led direct to the Elysian fields. Puzzled at last, I halted and made as intelligent an examination as I was capable of ; and whilst so engaged, the object of

my deliberations, who had doubtless been watching us, suddenly dashed out of a thicket, and bristling like a gigantic pig, disappeared over the horizon. I, of course, refrained from firing at him, but contented myself with following his tracks. His only idea seemed to be to make as many of these as he possibly could in a short time. Once more I viewed him for an instant: he was standing quietly looking round for us, and the instant he sighted us, he resumed his way in an unnecessary hurry.

Tired and subdued, I walked to a village to sleep the night, and acquire "Khabar." The chief waited on me with all his villagers, and I closely questioned them. Some of them obviously told the truth, and others obviously the contrary. I remembered the latter with the object of afterwards inculcating a little of the greatest of all Christian virtues in the customary manner, and my opportunity soon came.

One of the seeming truth-tellers was thrust forward to relieve himself of an exciting account of a vision of elephants which had been vouchsafed him. He had—so he said—been paddling about in his dug-out near the opposite bank of the river (the Nile) the evening before, when a dinner-party of elephants arrived and commenced a repast of fruits. He knew the very tree that had yielded them their evening meal, and so emphatic was the gentleman's pantomime, that I gave a sort of unwilling credence to him. The chief assured me that this gentleman

never made mistakes, and I accordingly repaired to rest, to dream of grassing a whole herd of magnificent tuskers! The only little flaw that appeared, was the individual's desire for a prepaid reward. I was much too old to be caught like that, and at once gave him into the care of my orderly, with strict injunctions as to his safe custody. He made one or two attempts to rid us of his company during the night, but was deterred by the business end of a bayonet. However, I knew the savage well enough not to wholly disregard him, and long before the sun was up, we commenced the laborious process of crossing the water in rickety dug-outs. In and out of the sudd we found our way, and eventually landed safely upon the left bank.

Our guide became uneasy as we climbed the first hill, and volunteered an idea that the elephants would not be there. At last he was dragged to the wondrous tree, which he had made into a banqueting-hall. Finding some tracks, he saw a last loop-hole of escape and pointed to them as a corroboration of his story. I gazed at them, and satisfied myself at once that they were at least a fortnight old. Turning my eyes upon the cowering wretch, he saw in them the fact that he had been found out, and that further disguise was useless. It was superfluous to speak, for the guilty one confessed himself *in toto*, and cried for mercy.

I am aware that the quality of mercy is not

strained, but I was also not unmindful of future commandants, and I knew that if I passed by this attempt at duping, it would be practised again. There are times when mercy is a wrong—in other words, my orderly and lord high executioner laid him out, cut a supple sapling and gave him a dozen forthwith. In those parts the law's delay is hardly worth mentioning, and in place of a long-drawn-out trial, during which the victim might have grown to look upon himself as a martyr, he arose in twenty seconds a changed man. From abject prostration, he jumped into amazing activity, and assisted from behind by his stinging corrections, he passed into the unknown with the best of intentions.

At first I conjectured that his idea was to place as much ground as possible between himself and the scene of his recent sorrows; but those who understood his nature, assured me that he would return. Far and wide he scoured the plain, until I began to think of other things, when he suddenly reappeared, still at his utmost speed. On he came, and at last was able to pour out his glad tidings of a rhino's locality with a truthfulness that was beyond question. Sure enough he led me on to a small rise, from which I clearly defined three of these beasts lurching. Unluckily, my guide's eagerness revealed our presence, and before I could get a shot, they all three started off in such a manner that I cast aside all thought of pursuit.

I got back weary to camp in darkness, with the proud consciousness that, not only had I done no animal a harm, but that I had been a benefactor to the human race. I afterwards questioned the temporarily reformed character as to the reason for such a course as his, and he said that he had been a bad man, and had been led away by visions of beads; but that he now saw the folly of trying to outwit the white man: and further added some lies to give colour to his sentiments. We all returned to Wadelai a little out of temper; but I soon brought smiles on all faces by shooting a cobus, for general consumption.

That was a blank day; but only served to make me more eager for the next meeting with my friends. The little outing was followed by the usual week of quiet country life.

And so my time gradually grew to a close, and I received an intimation that my relief had left the capital, and was on his way to take my place. Though I should leave my hunting and my surroundings with much regret, I had begun to realise that it was time for me to take my departure. Constant fever showed me that I was reaching the end of my tether, and that if I tarried longer, I might have to pay for it permanently: but as it was, I felt that there was no further harm done to my constitution than could be undone by a few years in temperate climes. It was a recognised thing that

three consecutive years in that climate were usually fatal to the white man, and I had already entered upon my third year. One or two exceptional men withstood the ravages of sickness, but a great majority gradually gave way. Still, when once men leave that atmosphere, they pick up marvellously, and soon regain their former robustness; but they must ever remember that the white man was not born to such hardships, and that as his constitution loses tone, so must he repair it, or one day he will find it irreparable.

One cool early morn I set forth for my last excursion, to say farewell to my friends—the denizens of the forest. I cannot refrain from narrating my proceedings on that day, as I can never forget it, and have often since wished for another such day: one cannot get them elsewhere.

A certain refractory chief, named Fokwatch, had been irritating the paramount power, viz., ourselves, and it was considered that a short visit to his property might alter the complexion of things, and changè his views on certain little questions. He had been misguided enough to intrigue with another distant chief, who did not want the English, for no other apparent reason than that he felt like a naughty schoolboy, and also to fill in his idle times. I took with me an imposing bodyguard, and determined to mix a little sport with my politics.

Mr Fokwatch's preserves were the best in my

district, and I knew him well enough to be sure that he would try and propitiate me with reliable "Khabar," when he saw me and an array of Soudanese. In this case pleasure was to come first and business afterwards. I arrived at Fokwatch's residence, which consisted of two or three disreputable looking grass huts, at about 10 A.M., and could see by his anxious glances that his conscience was disturbing him. However, he received me affectionately, and professed much solicitude on the score of my health, and also the usual undying love he had ever cherished for me personally and the English generally. I looked keenly at him whilst he unctuously rolled out his platitudes, which made him feel uncomfortable; and then told him to find me a rhinoceros, without perjuring himself any further for the present. Much relieved at this diversion, and possibly thinking his glibness had gulled me, he vanished, to carry out my wishes with undeniable sincerity. No black man enjoys the white man's steady eye—it is disconcerting, especially when all is not as it should be within the black man's breast!

I very soon got on to the track of a cow and calf, and followed up for more than an hour. I was standing with my orderly searching the tracks, which had become confused, when we heard the crisp crackling of small twigs near in front. I looked up quickly, and in the brushwood directly opposite to me, at a distance of about twelve yards, was an enormous cow

rhinoceros and calf. She was engaged in snuffing about for thorns, and obviously thought she was alone with her offspring. Suddenly she seemed to become conscious of something unusual, and looked up. I was hidden by brushwood, and she did not see me ; but for one instant, gave me a most tempting shot in the chest. I raised my rifle, but my valour waned ; and the best part of it, viz., the discretion, remained. I was armed, as usual, only with my .303. and could have made certain of piercing her heart with one of its little projectiles. Two years' experience were momentarily thrown away, and my finger was on the trigger. Luckily it then occurred to me that this great animal, armed with its terrible weapon in front, would make nothing of a dozen yards, even with its heart pierced by lead. I must admit that life seemed enjoyable, and that I shrank from the chance of throwing it away. Those who have engaged in these dangers will, I think, give me credit for wisdom ; but those who have not, and who have stout hearts and firm nerves, may write me down as white-livered. As certain as I should fire, so certainly should I be charged, and what chance had I with such a beast in brushwood ? Had I had in my hands a heavy rifle, such as an eight bore, there would not have been a debate in my mind ; but as it was, I thought I would live to fight another day. All this had to be argued out in a moment, and in the latter part of that moment there flashed through my mind a certain hunt in which

I had played the part of the hunted. Any lingering trace of rashness was cleared away, and I stepped aside politely, to let the lady pass. She heard the movement, and her passing was remarkably rapid! The hidden peril quickened her footsteps, and I never saw her again.

The customary self-recrimination followed, and I sat down and swore, to ease my choler. Still, sitting here years afterwards, I beg to consider myself to have been right, for had I done otherwise, this arm-chair I am now filling might have been vacant, as far as I am concerned. Rhinoceroses were not so rare that I should have to fire at such a disadvantage.

Angry and disheartened, I trudged along, feeling so exasperated with myself, that I would have essayed anything. I had not long to wait, for in a few minutes I heard the snort of a disturbed rhino, and caught sight of him as he fled. He had evidently been indulging in a midday siesta, as I saw the mark his body had impressed during repose. He led me through an intricate mass of wait-a-bit thorn bushes, regardless of my wardrobe and the surface of my skin. In the stifling heat I tracked him, and peeping over a piece of rising ground from amongst some tufts of grass, I saw him under a tree. He was looking about as if uncertain which way to go, and as he stood broadside on, with his head turned towards me, he afforded me a grand shot. I had no time to wait; but aiming behind

the point of his shoulders at his heart, I fired. The range was little more than forty yards, but all breathless as I was I should not have been surprised if I had bungled. He gave an angry snort, which showed he was hit, and my orderly said that he was hit in the right spot and that he was ours. I resumed the pursuit, and the blood rendered tracking easy, telling me there was no occasion for great hurry.

On my right was a beautiful herd of hartebeest, which had been grazing, now all with their heads up wondering what was happening. I stopped for a moment to look at them, and they turned tail and went off. Just then a magnificent lion jumped up, gave two or three quick gruff grunts, and vanished into some high grass. I got a good view of him and clearly saw he had a grand mane, and that his skin seemed clear of mange. So many lions are covered with this disease, that this was a rare specimen, and I turned to go after him. The last I saw of him was the tuft of his tail as the grass covered him up, and I then turned to the orderly to see what his views were. He was for capturing the rhino, without trying any wild-goose chases, and reiterated several times that if we persevered, the rhino was ours, whereas the lion was gone. It certainly was an *embarras de richesses*, and to my after regret, I chose the certainty. A well-conditioned lion, such as this was, was finer quarry than a rhino—even though he had gone. He had evidently been lying in wait for

the hartebeest, and I had spoilt his dinner. Though I heard lions frequently, I rarely came upon them, and not without a pang I said good-bye to him. The orderly assured me I should not find him now, and so I put him out of mind, and turned my attention once more upon the wounded animal. The excitement of the chase so intoxicated me that I felt how happy I could be with either ; at the same time it was unfortunate that the choice of two such beasts should have been thrust upon me without the refusal of either, and one of them might well have filled a blank day.

In another hour the increased quantity of blood in the tracks betokened the fact that our rhino was at hand, and it behoved us to advance cautiously. In another minute I saw him lying by a tree, lashing his tail and obviously hard hit ; but his last quarter of an hour on earth was to be a lively one for us. I fired at him, which caused him to jump up, and got two more shots into him as he advanced slowly, and one more with a Martini, at about fifteen yards, whilst he was charging, which I thought I could fairly safely wait for, because he was lurching badly. However, he did not fall, so I was forced into precipitate flight, and it must have been grand to see him scatter me and my followers in all directions ; but the poor beast could only make little desperate charges, whenever he saw anybody within reach.

My orderly had become disorderly, and was firing

his Martini on his own account. Knowing this to be dangerous for any one in the vicinity, I took the weapon from him, and got one into the rhino's neck, which toppled him over. He was kicking the ground and squealing piteously like a pig, as I ran up to finish him off; but he made a last expiring effort and got quite close to me. One more bullet terminated his career, and I must say his gameness excited our admiration.

He was cut up on the spot, and I sat and studied his anatomy. I felt no weariness in spite of ten hours' walking — so exhilarating had been the last half-hour. I tried to recover some of the bullets to see the various effects, but I could find none of them: they were lost in the masses of flesh and bone. In the evening some of the blacks at their meal, picked one or two out of their teeth and brought them to me. The Martini bullets had slightly mushroomed at the ends.

I returned to my friend Fokwatch, and pointed out to him the iniquity of his ways, and the inevitable doom he would bring upon himself if he continued in them. I implored him to share my views on certain questions, and to dismiss his, which were jaundiced. I left him professing unswerving obedience to my every wish; but I did not forget to give backbone to my arguments by borrowing a quantity of his goats!

This was my last hunt, and I spent most of my

few remaining days in watching the summit of a hill over which a certain caravan had to pass. Somewhere in its length would be the officer to take my place. Several weary days after I had expected him, he arrived; and I handed over all Her Majesty's possessions in my charge, and rapidly recounted the most vital parts of the history of the Upper Nile, so that he might not start his jurisdiction in ignorance. In those parts it is a case of *Le Roi est mort! Vive le Roi!* and, doubtless the chiefs hastened to pay their court to the new Governor. The good ones possibly hoped that their various virtues had been extolled, and the bad ones that the new ruler might be taken in easier than the old one.

But they little knew that there existed in every station a book wherein the commandant, like a recording angel, set forth in black and white the chronicles of the times. Each chief has his character, and deeds, or misdeeds, enumerated, and was taken over for better or for worse, as the case might be, by his new ruler.

When it came to saying a long farewell to my Soudanese troops, I must confess the tears came to my eyes. After what I have said about them in this book, the reader can perhaps sympathise with me. They begged me to return to them, and I had not the heart to say I should never see them again. I explained to them that the great Queen was

waging another mighty war, and that I had to go and take my part in it. They would go themselves, they said, and fight; but I asked what would become then of all our new possessions if the Soudanese were not there to protect them! They came one after another and kissed my hand, and eventually I got away, feeling a lump in my throat. A number of them escorted me to Fajao, where I crossed the Nile and saw the last of them. My recollections of them are most affectionate, for mixed with blood-thirstiness and some of the evils of the savage, are the most lovable traits.

Having got my nose directed towards home, I soon forgot the gloom which my farewells had cast over me, and covered about twenty miles daily. A few days took me through Unyoro, which I was glad to see was recovering from the ravages of war. Inhabitants were returning and cultivation was spreading.

A few more days carried me through Uganda, and I was granted permission to march round the lake with porters, in place of the less costly method of crossing the water in canoes. My march, however, had its drawbacks, and in one part was most gruesome. The confines of Usoga and Kavirondo were at this time undergoing a famine, and ghastly sights met my gaze at every turn. The people within reach of Uganda proper were able to procure a certain number of bananas from that country, but

those in remoter parts were reduced to subsisting on wild berries. The rains had failed and there was no banana crop. Many of these banana-eaters make no provision for a fruitless year, as grain-eaters do, and so starvation may stare them in the face at any time.

Dead bodies were lying in all directions unburied ; and the stench was sickening ! My porters and a few time-expired Swahili soldiers who journeyed with me to be discharged at the Coast, refused to pass near them. With difficulty I induced them to lift a body from the path and put it to one side. I found these in every attitude, as death had found them. In one place were several skeletons bleached by the sun ; in another I saw a corpse leaning against a tree in a sitting position, with a spear still resting against the shoulder, and a wrist folded over it. The living, overwhelmed with their calamity, had a scared look in their faces, as they wandered about looking for berries and grubbing for roots. It was a piteous spectacle, and being powerless to render any assistance, I was glad to leave such an awful scene. There is no freemasonry amongst these African races : one tribe cannot ask another tribe for hospitality under the circumstances. They would buy for a time, until all their possessions were gone ; but could not plant themselves on another tribe, for no tribe could possibly support another, except perhaps the Baganda : and if they did crave such a boon, it would endanger their independence—which has to

their minds greater terrors. But they seemed incapable of effort in their distress, and sat down and died as though it were useless to cope with kismet. The heavens had denied them the gentle rain, and had therefore denied them life!

This awful disaster must have decimated the race, and now the same unfortunate people are being visited by the sleeping sickness. I wandered on and found even the poor domestic animals had suffered from the universal famine, or some disease, and their bodies strewed the plain. Over this grim scene thousands of brilliant butterflies were hovering, settling now and again to gorge themselves upon the hideous food. My passion for entomology drew me on, and I caught many beauties upon the rotting flesh. My gorge rose, as I pursued my ends, and I felt it was an indignity towards the dead: but such an opportunity was unique, and one which would never occur to me again. I have no desire for such an experience again, however profitable might be the result!

Passing through the Nandi forest and over the beautiful Mau plateau and across the plains beyond the Eldoma Ravine, I reached the famous Uganda railway, now happily completed. But my adventures had by no means ended yet; for this great work made several attempts upon my life. First of all the train ran away, broke its brakes, and rushed round awful curves at a totally unauthorised speed.