

SPORT IN MANY LANDS.

BY

H. A. L. *Lieut. General Anthony Lewis*

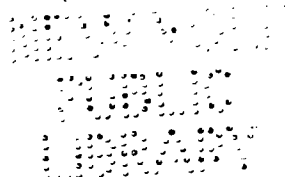
"THE OLD SHEKARRY."

AUTHOR OF "THE HUNTING GROUNDS OF THE OLD WORLD," "THE FOREST AND THE FIELD,"
ETC., ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

WITH 164 ILLUSTRATIONS.

"I cannot rest from travel, I will drink life to the lees."



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C.H.

CHAPTER VII.

THE AFRICAN RIVERS, AND THE ANIMALS FOUND IN THEIR VICINITY.

THE immense continent of Africa, although abounding with the most striking and surprising contrasts, presents on a general view a monotonous uniformity, as from one coast to the other dreary arid wastes of almost boundless extent are spread over its surface. The sun, which cheers and illumines the rest of the earth, glares upon Africa with such fatally oppressive influence that it blasts the whole face of nature, and spreads desolation over the land, for the soil, when not watered by copious rains, or the over-flowing of rivers, is scorched and dried up till it is turned into a dreary waste. Thus those vast plains of sand we call the Great Desert extend across the entire continent except where intersected by the valley of the Nile. In this waste the traveller may march for days without finding water, or seeing any vestige of animal life. He pursues his dreary course amid loose hills incessantly shifting, and having no marks to guide his course. Every breeze is loaded with dust, which enters the mouth and nostrils, penetrating even the clothes and the pores of the skin; while sometimes the sand is driven along in clouds by whirlwinds, sweeping away all before it. Such is the general aspect of all regions between the tropics directly beneath the solar influence, when not plentifully watered, as the soil moulders into sand and causes these desolate tracks to resemble the dry bed of an ancient ocean. In order to mitigate the desolating effects of the tropical sun,

Nature has provided that every district under this latitude has its periodical rainy season, when the ground is covered as with a deluge, and great rivers, swollen by the floods, lay the low lands under water, and cause that luxuriant growth of vegetation which is only to be seen in equatorial regions. There are also mountain-chains and table-lands that give rise to several rivers of great magnitude, which fertilise large tracts of country; but except in these irrigated districts, and upon certain elevated plateaux, vegetable life, in consequence of the absence of moisture, is very scantily diffused over a great extent of Central Africa.

Besides the great difficulty of travelling by land over arid wastes, which supply neither food for man nor forage for cattle, pestilential belts of mangrove swamp, reeking with noxious exhalations, and immense tracts of impregnable forest, form an almost unsurpassable barrier to the formation of any extensive intercourse with the interior. It is only by the navigable rivers, therefore, that an expedition can penetrate any distance into the far interior. Unfortunately, all the large rivers have shifting bars and lines of breakers at the embouchures that impede navigation, and only permit shallow-draught vessels to ascend; besides which in many of them are impetuous currents, that only powerful steamers can stem, and impracticable rapids and falls. In the illustrations—which are taken from drawings made on the spot by M. Mage, Lieutenant de Vaisseau of the French Navy—are represented the Makagnian and Gouina Falls, which obstruct the navigation of the Senegal. That enterprising officer, accompanied by Dr. Quintin and ten native followers, ascended the Senegal from Saint-Louis, at the embouchure, until he arrived at the Bambouk country on the Upper Senegal, a distance of over 800 miles from the coast; then he started across country, and after a fatiguing march of nearly three months' duration struck the Upper Niger at

Yamina, which town is represented in the illustrations. There the party were detained on various pretensions by King Ahmadou, who, although he treated them kindly, would not let them return for nearly two years, when they reached Saint-Louis in safety, after an absence of nearly three years. M. Mage gave a very graphic description of the country through which he passed, which entirely substantiates Mungo Park's account, who went over a good deal of the same ground.

In most of the large and broad rivers of the African continent still exempt from white man's intrusion, and in the immense forests that overshadow them, are found three species of amphibious animals of ungainly shape and uncouth proportions. These are the buffalo, the hippopotamus, and the crocodile, all of which are alike able to stalk on land, march along the bottom of the waters, or swim on their surface. The African buffalo (*Bos Caffer*) has broad, massive, curved, sharp-pointed horns, that cover the entire forehead with the exception of a small triangular space, the apex of which is directed upwards between their bases. They are huge ponderous animals measuring about 9 feet in length, exclusive of the tail, which is 3 feet long, and terminates in a large tuft of coarse black hair. They often exceed 50 stone in weight when in good condition, but their flesh is coarse and tough. They are generally found in families of about twenty, although in certain seasons several families will herd together, and as many as a couple of hundred have been seen at a time. During the heat of the day the African buffaloes, like the Indian variety, frequent pools or bends in the river, where the current is not very strong; and immerse themselves until only their heads appear above the surface, thus freeing themselves from the stinging flies that otherwise would allow them no respite. If water is unobtainable, they roll in the mud until a crust impervious to stinging insects is formed over their body, when after exposure to the sun's rays they look

like hideous clay images such as are represented in Hindoo temples.

The buffalo has been reported by some writers to be a timid inoffensive animal; but my own experience has proved them to be quite the reverse, and I think a wounded bull buffalo is one of the most cunning, malignant, and revengeful brutes in creation, as the following incident will show. I was on a hunting expedition with Captain Stevenson and a Dutch colonist named Van Jansen in the Notoanis district, and a party were following up an old elephant trail that led through thick bush, down a rather steep incline, when all at once I perceived a herd of about a dozen buffalo making their way up the same track we were going down. As a string of natives carrying our baggage was following us in Indian file, I shouted so as to try and scare them, and make them break back, and both Stevenson and Van Jansen joined me; but our shouts produced no effect, and they continued to ascend the slope in a most defiant manner, a sturdy old bull leading. Passing the word to our carrier in the rear "to look out for squalls," and take refuge behind trees, Stevenson, Van Jansen, and I prepared for offensive operations, for the elephant track was not much more than 4 feet wide, and the bush on either side was almost impenetrable from dense undergrowth and wait-a-bit thorns. Van Jansen fired first from his roah, which carried a three-ounce ball, and struck the leading bull clean between the eyes, bringing him down to his knees; but in an instant he sprang again to his feet, and shaking his head in a threatening manner continued his course up the hill in our direction. Stevenson now let drive, and his first shot went crashing through the bull's nose and entered the chest, rolling him over; whilst with his second barrel he severely wounded a second bull, that, after plunging heavily about a few moments, tore his way through the bush, where we heard him fall. In spite of the discomfiture of the two

leaders, the remainder of the herd did not seem inclined to yield the right of way; and I brought down two more of their number with my heavy 8-gauge rifle, which carried the largest-size Jacob's shells, before they thought of beating a retreat. The first shell, which I fired at less than 60 yards' range, burst in the chest of a malignant-looking old cow, who was pawing up the ground with her feet and making hostile demonstrations, and finished her career; whilst the second just escaped the horns of a young bull, and entered the nape of the neck, where it exploded, and shattered the vertebra, causing immediate death. Having cleared the way, we advanced, and were examining the horns and massive proportions of the big bull first shot at, when shouts and yells were heard in our rear, and all our carriers came rushing down the hill in a body, without their loads, having been charged by the bull wounded by Stevenson. We immediately made our way back again up the track, which was somewhat encumbered by our baggage, and at a little bend in the path came across the still quivering body of one of Van Jansen's best servants, who had been gored in two places through the body; one horn having entered the side just above the hip and ripped open the abdomen; whilst the other had entered just under the right arm-pit and pierced the lungs. A little further on lay one of our Zulu goat-boys, surrounded by five or six of his charge, insensible, and with his left arm and two ribs broken; and just beyond was the carcass of the pony that carried the water-skins, literally pounded into an almost undistinguishable heap, the intestines being scattered along the track for a dozen yards or more. I could see by the trail that, after having killed the pony, the buffalo had again re-entered the bush; so having looked to our arms, we followed him up, and after creeping through the undergrowth by the track he had made for about a couple of hundred yards, I caught sight of him lying down, with his back and hind

quarters turned towards us. He was evidently very sick, as I could see by his horns that he was resting his head and neck on the ground; so having cocked my rifle and made ready, I gave a shrill whistle, which caused him to raise his head and turn his nose in our direction, when I gave him a shell just behind the ear, which, exploding in the brain, caused instantaneous death. Stevenson's cylindro-conical bullet had pierced his shoulder-blade and entered the lungs; but his extraordinary vitality and tenacity of life were such that, although mortally wounded, he could commit such damage whilst almost in his death-throes. Having collected our people together with some difficulty, we buried the Zulu, and carried the wounded boy in a litter; but he never recovered his consciousness, and died in a few hours, having doubtlessly received some severe internal injury. In the evening I heard the whole account of the disastrous affair from some of the carriers who had witnessed it; and it appears that the buffalo, after having been wounded by Stevenson, had entered the jungle, and ascended the hill some distance; when, probably attracted by the sound of the horse's hoofs, it came crashing into the track down which the carriers were coming, and, first venting its revenge on the man, afterwards attacked the horse, merely knocking down the boy *en passant* by a sweep of his horns. After this affair I was always very careful how I meddled with a herd of buffalo, and always took care I had a good line of retreat before I commenced any hostile demonstrations.

"Behemoth" is another awkward customer to tackle when in his native element; and naturalists who represent the hippopotamus as of a mild and inoffensive disposition cannot have had much practical experience of his habits, when in a wild state, as on several occasions I have seen him wantonly attack boats and canoes. Some of the African tribes, who are fearless hunters, harpoon these ferocious-looking animals and



NATIVE HUNTERS SPEARING HIPPOPOTAMUS.

kill them with javelins, as shown in the engravings; but in these affairs fatal accidents often happen, which in a country where life is held so cheaply is not of much account.

The Rev. Mr. Moffat relates an instance of a hippopotamus having seized a boy and literally severed his body in two with its monstrous jaws; and Sir Samuel Baker, in his last work, "Ismailia," cites an extraordinary instance of the unprovoked ferocity of a hippopotamus of the White Nile. Sometimes, indeed, Sir Samuel did not give the hippopotami time to show their ferocity; I give his own words:—

"About half an hour before sunset I observed the head of a hippopotamus emerge from the bank of high grass that fringed the lake. My troops had no meat—thus I would not lose the opportunity of procuring, if possible, a supply of hippopotamus beef. I took a No. 8 breechloader, and started in the little dingy belonging to the *diahbeeah*. Having paddled quietly along the edge of the grass for a couple of hundred yards, I arrived near the spot from which the hippopotamus had emerged. It is the general habit of the hippopotami in these marsh districts to lie on the high grass swamps during the day, and to swim and amuse themselves in the open water at sunset. I had not waited long before I heard a snort, and I perceived the hippopotamus had risen to the surface about fifty yards from me. This distance was a little too great for the accurate firing necessary to reach the brain, especially when the shot must be taken from a boat, in which there is always some movement. I therefore allowed the animal to disappear, after which I immediately ordered the boat forward, to remain exactly over the spot where he had sunk. A few minutes elapsed, when the great, ugly head of the hippopotamus appeared about thirty paces from the boat, and, having blown the water from his nostrils and snorted loudly, he turned round and seemed astonished to find the solitary little boat so near

him. Telling the two boatmen to sit perfectly quiet, so as to allow a good sight, I aimed just below the eye, and fired a heavy shell, which contained a bursting charge of three drachms of fine-grained powder. The head disappeared. A little smoke hung over the water, and I could not observe other effects. The lake was deep, and after vainly sounding for the body with a boat hook I returned to the *diabbeah* just as it became dark. The next morning the body of the hippopotamus was discovered floating near us, therefore all hands turned out to cut him up, delighted at the idea of fresh meat. There was about an acre of high and dry ground that bordered the marsh on one spot, and to this the carcass of the hippopotamus was towed. I was anxious to observe the effects of the explosive shell, as it was an invention of my own. This shell was composed of iron covered with lead. The interior was a cast-iron bottle (similar in shape to a stoneware seltzer-water bottle); the neck formed a nipple to receive a percussion cap. The entire bottle was concealed by a leaden coating, which was cast in a mould to fit a No. 8 or two-ounce rifle. The iron bottle contained three drachms of the strongest gunpowder, and a simple cap pressed down upon the nipple prepared the shell for service.

“On an examination of the head of the hippopotamus, I found that the shell had struck exactly beneath the eye, where the bone plate is thin. It had traversed the skull, and had apparently exploded in the brain, as it had entirely carried away the massive bone that formed the back of the skull. The velocity of the projectile had carried the fragments of the shell onwards after the explosion, and had formed a sort of tunnel, which was blackened with burnt powder for a considerable distance along the flesh of the neck. I was quite satisfied with my explosive shell.”

Sir Samuel thus recounts the rather strange instance of

aggression on the part of an hippopotamus I have already referred to:—

“The night was cold, and the moon clear and bright. Everyone was wrapped up in warm blankets, and I was so sound asleep that I cannot describe more until I was suddenly awoken by a tremendous splashing quite close to the *diahbeeah*, accompanied by the hoarse wild snorting of a furious hippopotamus. I jumped up, and immediately perceived a hippo, which was apparently about to attack the vessel. The main deck being crowded with people sleeping beneath their thick mosquito curtains, attached to the stairs of the poop deck and to the rigging in all directions, rendered it impossible to descend. I at once tore away some of the lines, and awakened the sleepy people. My servant, Suleiman, was sleeping next to the cabin door. I called to him for a rifle. Before the affrighted Suleiman could bring the rifle, the hippopotamus dashed at us with indescribable fury. With one blow he capsized and sunk the zinc boat with its cargo of flesh. In another instant he seized the dingy in his immense jaws, and the crash of splintered wood betokened the complete destruction of my favourite boat. By this time Suleiman appeared from the cabin with an unloaded gun in his hand and without ammunition. This was a very good man, but he was never overburdened with presence of mind; he was shaking so fearfully from nervousness that his senses had entirely abandoned him. All the people were shouting and endeavouring to scare the hippo, which attacked us without ceasing, with a blind fury that I have never witnessed in any animal except a bull-dog.

“By the time I had procured a rifle from the cabin, where they were always kept fixed in a row, loaded, and ready for action, with bags of breechloading ammunition on the same shelf, the movements of the animal were so rapid as he charged and plunged alternately beneath the water in a cloud of foam

and wave, that it was impossible to aim correctly at the small but fatal spot upon the head. The moon was extremely bright, and presently as he charged straight at the *diahbeeah*, I stopped him with a No. 8 (or two-ounce) shell. To my surprise he again recovered and again commenced the attack. I fired shot after shot at him without apparent effect. The *diahbeeah* rocked about upon the waves raised by the efforts of so large an animal; this movement rendered the aim uncertain. At length, apparently badly wounded, he retired to the high grass; there he lay by the bank snorting and blowing.

"I could not distinguish him, as merely the head was above water, and this was concealed by the deep shadow thrown by the high grass. Thinking that he would die, I went to bed; but before this I took the precaution to arrange a white paper sight upon the muzzle of my rifle, without which night shooting is very uncertain.

"We had fallen asleep; but in about half an hour we were awoke by another tremendous splash, and once more the mad beast came charging directly at us as though unhurt. In another instant he was at the *diahbeeah*; but I met him with a ball at the top of the head which sent him rolling over and over, sometimes on his back, kicking with his four legs above the surface, and again producing waves that rocked the *diahbeeah*. In this helpless manner he rolled for about fifty yards down the stream, and we all thought him killed.

"To our amazement he recovered, and we heard him splashing as he moved slowly along the river through the high grass by the left bank. There he remained snorting and blowing, and as the light of the moon was of no service in the dark shadows of the high grass, we waited for a considerable time, and then went to bed with the rifle placed in readiness on deck. In a short time I heard loud splashing. I again got up, and I perceived him about eighty yards distant, walking slowly across

the river in the shallows. Having a fair shot at the shoulder, I fired right and left with the No. 8 rifle, and I distinctly heard the bullets strike. He nevertheless reached the right bank, when he presently turned round and attempted to recross the shallow. This gave me a good chance at the shoulder, as his body was entirely exposed. He staggered forward at the shot, and fell dead in the shallow flat of the river. He was now past recovery. It was very cold, the thermometer was 54° Fahrenheit, and the blankets were very agreeable, as once more all hands turned in to sleep.

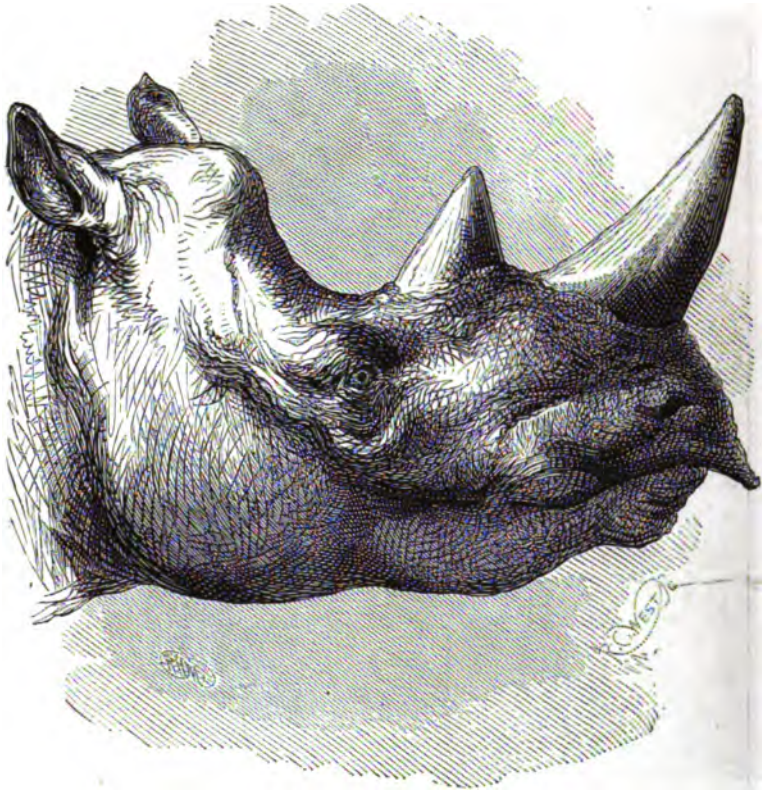
"On the following morning I made a *post-mortem* examination. He had received three shots in the flank and shoulder; four on the head, one of which had broken his lower jaw; another had passed through his nose, and, passing downward, had cut off one of his large tusks. I never witnessed such determined and unprovoked fury as was exhibited by this animal—he appeared to be raving mad. His body was a mass of frightful scars, the result of continual conflicts with bulls of his own species; some of these wounds were still unhealed. There was one scar about two feet in length, and about two inches below the level of the surface skin upon the flank. He was evidently a character of the worst description, but whose madness rendered him callous to all punishment. I can only suppose that the attack upon the vessels was induced by the smell of the raw hippopotamus flesh, which was hung in long strips about the rigging, and with which the zinc boat was filled. A dead hippopotamus that was floating astern lashed to the *diahbeeah* had not been disturbed. We raised the zinc boat, which was fortunately unhurt. The dingy had lost a mouthful, as the hippopotamus had bitten out a portion of the side, including the gunwale of hard wood; he had munched out a piece like the port of a small vessel, which he had accomplished with the same ease as though it had been a slice of toast."

Formidable as is the hippopotamus when his wrath is raised, he does not commit half the depredations of the crocodile, who lies like a log upon the water watching for his prey, and is the most dreaded of all the inhabitants of the African rivers. Thousands of lives are lost annually by the depredations of these ferocious animals, yet the natives scarcely make any attempts to extirpate them, or prevent their increase, and in some places they may be seen in hundreds together.

Livingstone in his last journal thus describes an exciting hippopotamus hunt :—

“At the Loangwa of Zumbo we came to a party of hereditary hippopotamus hunters called Makombwé or Akombwe. They follow no other occupation, but when their game is getting scanty at one spot they remove to some other part of the Loangwa, Zambesi, Shiré, and build temporary huts on an island, where their women cultivate patches; the flesh of the animals they kill is easily exchanged by the more settled people for grain, they are not stingy, and are everywhere welcome guests. I never heard of any fraud in dealing, or that they had been guilty of an outrage on the poorest; their chief characteristic is their courage. Their hunting is the bravest thing I ever saw. Each canoe is manned by two men; they are long light crafts, scarcely half an inch in thickness, about eighteen inches beam, and from eighteen to twenty feet long; they are formed for speed, and shaped something like our racing boats. Each man uses a broad short paddle, and as they guide the canoe slowly down-stream to a sleeping hippopotamus, not a single ripple is raised on the smooth water; they look as if holding their breath, and communicate by signs only. As they come near the prey the harpooner in the bow lays down his paddle and rises slowly up; and there he stands erect, motionless, and eager, with the long-handled weapon poised at arm's length above his head, till coming close to the beast he plunges it with

all his might in towards the heart. During this exciting feat he has to keep his balance exactly. His neighbour in the stern at once backs his paddle, the harpooner sits still, seizes his paddle, and backs too to escape: the animal surprised and



THE MOCHOCHO, OR COMMON WHITE RHINOCEROS.

wounded seldom returns the attack at this stage of the hunt. The next stage, however, is full of danger. The barbed blade of the harpoon is secured by a long and very strong rope wound round the handle: it is intended to come out of its socket, and while the iron head is firmly fixed in the animal's body, the rope unwinds and the handle floats on the surface. The hunter next



THE TABLES TURNED.

goes to the handle and hauls on the rope till he knows that he is right over the beast ; when he feels the line suddenly slacken he is prepared to deliver another harpoon the instant the hippo's enormous jaws appear, with a terrible grunt, above the



THE KEITLOA, OR TWO-HORNED BLACK RHINOCEROS.

water. The backing by the paddles is again repeated ; but hippo often assaults the canoe, crunches it with his great jaws as easily as a pig would a bunch of asparagus, or shivers it by a kick with his hind foot. Deprived of their canoe, the gallant comrades instantly dive and swim to the shore under water ; they say that the infuriated beast looks for them on the surface, and



JUST IN TIME.

being below they escape his sight. When caught by many harpoons, the crews of several canoes seize the handles and drag him hither and thither, till weakened by loss of blood he



THE BORELA, OR ONE-HORNED BLACK RHINOCEROS.

succumbs. The danger may be appreciated if one remembers that no sooner is blood shed in the water than all the crocodiles below are immediately drawn up-stream by the scent, and are ready to act the part of thieves in a London crowd or worse.

Next to the elephant, the rhinoceros certainly takes precedence as the largest of forest creatures; but whilst the former is



THE COUP DE GRÂCE.

one of the most peaceable animals in existence, the black varieties of the latter are without exception the most morose and mischievously inclined. There are four distinct species known to exist in Africa, two of which, the *borèlè* and the *keitloa*, are black, whilst the *mochoch* and *kobaoba* are white, or rather of a colour more approaching that than any other. The *mochoch*, or common two-horned square-nosed white rhinoceros, is the largest of the family, as it often exceeds eighteen feet in length; next to it in size is the *kobaoba*, or long-horned white rhinoceros, which is frequently seen with a main horn exceeding four feet in length, whilst that of the *mochoch* seldom exceeds two. The posterior horn in both species is seldom longer than eight inches. The white species are harmless, and will rarely attack man or beast except when provoked or wounded. The flesh is succulent and of fair flavour, and as this animal yields about two or three thousand pounds of meat, it is much sought after both by the colonists and the native tribes. The *keitloa*, or two-horned black rhinoceros, is smaller than either of the white varieties, but somewhat larger than the *borèlè*. Its horns are much longer than those of any other species, the posterior horn sometimes attaining a length exceeding five feet six inches; whilst in the *borèlè* the posterior horn is much shorter than the anterior one, which rarely exceeds two feet in length.

The white rhinoceros are flat-lipped and habitual *grazers*; whilst the black species have the upper lip prehensile, and are habitual *browsers*: the two differ much both in habits and disposition, the former being innocent eaters of grass that live in peace with all other animals; whilst the latter feed on young shoots, branches, and roots, which they dig up with their fore horns, and are the most quarrelsome and spiteful brutes imaginable, attacking indiscriminately man and beast. As a rule, most of the denizens of the forest will shun and avoid man's presence, doing

their best to escape a *rencontre*; but the black rhinoceros is an exception, for as soon as he sniffs the taint in the air denoting an intrusion in his domain, he snorts a defiant challenge, tosses his head up-wind, and, sweeping right and left with his huge horns, charges in the direction he imagines his enemy to be, and commences the attack without the slightest provocation. Should the lion and the keitloa meet, the former allows the latter a wide berth; and the elephant generally yields the path to him rather than encounter such a formidable antagonist; although sometimes he is attacked by his quarrelsome adversary before he is aware of his presence, and then a terrific battle ensues, when the elephant, if he is a tusker, generally gets the best of it, although I have seen a whole herd of elephants put to flight by two black rhinoceros.

Every African traveller who has been much in the bush has some strange story to tell of his *rencontres* with this general disturber of the peace, and the following incident is one of many instances in which this aggressive and malevolent animal has taken the initiative in the attack.

The engravings illustrate a trader's narrative of a rhinoceros hunt in Amatonga land, which is best given in his own words as told round the watch-fire after a good day's buffalo hunting. "Buffaloes are dangerous at times, very dangerous, and most big game may be made to fight; but for a thorough-going *skellum* (villain), commend me to a *bichan* (black rhinoceros), who, when you wish to hunt him, it is more likely will hunt you. I remember once I and a mixed breed after-rider, part Kaffir and part Hottentot, whom I often took with me on my trips, contrived to get a couple of bullets into a black rhinoceros, one of a pair which we came suddenly upon whilst riding through a bush path. Our quarry did not hesitate a moment to retaliate, but came down at a furious pace upon my people, who did not seem to know where to run. Charging

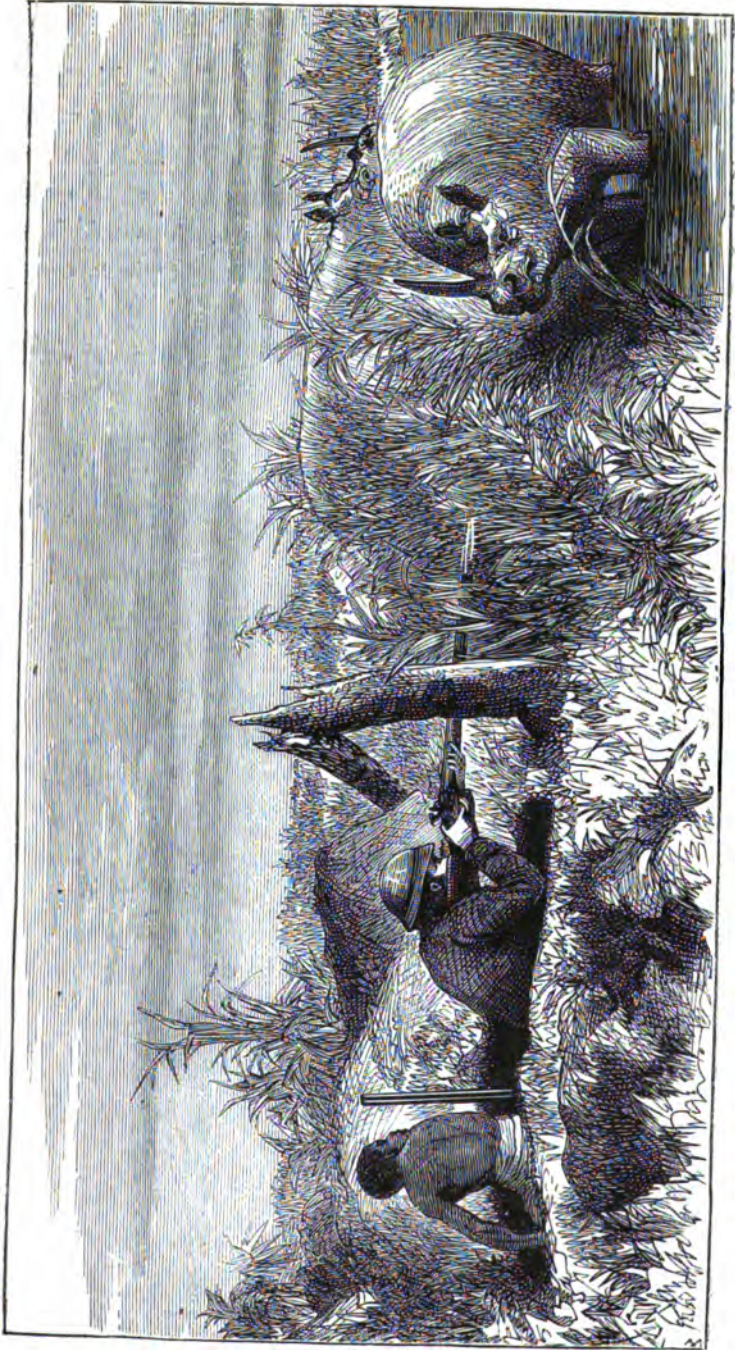
among the discomfited carriers, they leapt over the nearest, who had presence of mind sufficient to throw himself flat upon the ground, and came blundering along, apparently undecided as to which they should attack first; when my horse, generally steady and reliable, gave a loud snort, and, leaping into the air, went plunging through the rough thorny bush. Jan, my after-rider, galloped off down the bush-path, but I well knew that he would keep with us, and be ready in time of need. If I had had the advantage of open ground, I felt sure that my horse could easily have distanced the rhinoceros, but we were among tangle and timber, and upon rough broken ground, and, worse than all, my horse was frightened, and a horse is never so useless as when he is frightened. Well, after a short time—what with ducking and dodging to avoid the trunks of trees and overhanging boughs, and my efforts to guide my horse so as to keep a-head of the game, who followed grunting and groaning in my tracks, hunting me as much as a blood-hound hunts a fox—I was beginning to feel uneasy, and anxious to bring matters to a crisis. The blood was flowing, I could see, from two bullet-holes in the old bull; but as the wounds were not near a vital part, I knew they would not impede his progress, and prevent his doing mischief. Every now and then, after being lost to sight for a time, he would come charging out upon one or other of us, with his nose to the ground, making strange grunting noises, kicking up pieces of hardened soil, and crashing through the thick thorny tangle. Seeing that my light-coloured steed only made me a conspicuous object for a charge, and that riding with anything like safety was impossible with my terrified horse in a heavy bush country, I watched my opportunity, slipped from his back, and, handing him over to one of my Kaffirs, hurriedly directed him to get away to the safest place he could find, whilst I turned my attention to our infuriated pursuers. The Kaffir fastened the horse up in the



WAGON TRAVELLING IN AFRICA.

bush, and then, apprehensive of his own safety, clambered up into a tree. Whilst creeping along, almost bent double, I heard a crashing in the undergrowth some short distance from me, and climbing on a rising ground, I saw the rhinoceros emerge from some cover, and charge my horse, which would have been sacrificed in an instant if I had not stopped him in mid-career by a lucky shot just behind the shoulder-blade, which brought him up, and caused him to charge back in the direction of the Kaffir, who was shouting 'blue murder' from his elevated sanctuary amongst the branches of a good-sized mimosa. I now re-mounted, and getting into some more open ground, began to feel myself once more master of the situation; so again gave chase to the infuriated animal, who, whilst thundering along apparently in mad pursuit of something, afforded me a fair shot at his shoulder, which brought him to his knees. Jan now arrived upon the scene, and handing me a spare gun, I discharged both barrels in the region of his heart, which ended his troubles. Even while lying at the point of death, there appeared to be a vicious twinkle and a look indicative of anything rather than surrender in the eye of the black rhinoceros. After a good deal of shouting we collected all hands, and lying down under a tree quite exhausted, I confess that I was oblivious of everything else for some time, my only real wish being for utter quiet and rest."

The different incidents of rhinoceros hunting are represented in the engravings, which also give a fair delineation of bush scenery, and of the temporary residences of colonists in this part of Africa, with their general mode of travelling in a waggon drawn by twelve span of oxen. These waggons are the only vehicles that will stand the wear and tear of African travel. The wheels are made of the famous umsimbiti or Natal iron-wood, so called from its strength and durability; whilst the truck or body is of umkoba, a tough, durable, yellow wood, which



RHINOCEROS SHOOTING.

stands the climate well. The top is formed of arched laths of a lighter description covered with rough, coarse canvas, under which the hammocks are slung. These hanging beds are not at all uncomfortable, and when the waggon is in motion the occupant might well imagine himself at sea. The vehicle is naturally of a great weight, for it is necessary to have every part most substantially built to stand the bad roads and passes. It often constitutes an African trader's home for years together.

CHAPTER VIII.

REMINISCENCES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

“ Away, away, from the dwellings of men,
By the wild deer's haunt, by the buffalo's glen ;
By valleys remote, where the Oribi plays,
Where the gnu, the gazelle, and the hart-beeste graze ;
And the kudor, and eland, unhunted recline,
By the skirts of grey forests o'erhung with wild vine,
Where the elephant browses at peace in his wood,
And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood ;
And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will,
In the fen where the wild ass is drinking his fill.”

PRINGLE.

SOME twenty years ago, when Natal was in its infancy, and the district between the Limpopo and the Zambesi was a *terra incognita*, rarely visited, except by a few elephant-hunters, there were two brothers, Hans and Septimus, or, as the latter was more commonly called, Kleine van Jansen, who had the reputation of having travelled further into the interior than any of their *confrères* in the pursuit of their calling, which was trading, eked out with elephant-hunting. Their head-quarters were at Notoanis, a fine, well-watered district lying under the Hangslip mountains, and bordering on the Nylstroom, one of the tributaries of the Limpopo. In those days the country abounded in all kinds of game, and, although the Boers possessed considerable numbers of cattle, *wild braad*, or venison, was the staple article of food ; and an ox, unless disabled, was rarely killed, except on high days and holidays.

The little village settlement to which the Van Jansens belonged consisted of five Dutch families, knit together more or

less by intermarriages, and living in the same kraal for mutual protection, as there was a deadly feud raging between the Boers and the Bechuanas and Kaffir tribes, which originated in the cattle-lifting propensities of both parties.

Again, there was no love lost between the Dutch and the few English traders who came with waggons full of goods to barter for ivory with the natives in this part of South Africa; and, although there was no open rupture between the races at that time, still they seemed to regard each other with suspicion, and had little in common together. For my introduction to the Van Jansens, with whom I afterwards became intimately associated, I was indebted to chance, and our meeting took place under the following circumstances: I was following up the slots of a sable antelope that I had seen pass into a clump of mimosa close to the Makoko river, some forty odd miles to the westwards of the Hanglip range, when I noticed three waggons drawn up under the shade of a grove of makolani trees.

Although neither hungry nor thirsty, the canvas tent, curling smoke, and white women's forms in the African bush were sights that were as welcome as meeting a vessel from home after a long cruise in unfrequented seas; so I gave up the trail and reconnoitred the camp. My presence was almost immediately made known to the inmates by the baying of half a dozen dogs of a nondescript breed that gave tongue in every key, and as I approached I was hailed in a somewhat gruff tone of voice by Hans van Jansen, a stout, burly Hollander, who, roah in hand, asked me, in his own vernacular, "Who I was, and where I was going." Although my knowledge of Dutch was extremely limited I had a fair smattering of German, and, replying in that language, made him understand my answer. He then, in fair English, asked me if I happened to be a doctor, and beckoned me forward. I told him that I was not, but that I had a chest of

medicines in my waggon, and knew their use, and that he was welcome to anything I might have. "God must have sent you, my friend, in our sore distress, for we have a sick camp, and one of my nephews lies dead." I sent some of my people to my *compagnon de voyage*, Captain Stevenson, bidding him to hasten up the waggons that were some three miles in the rear, while I went to see the sick, which consisted of several bad cases of fever. It appears that the whole party had pitched their camp for some days in a low, swampy valley for the sake of the green forage for their cattle, and the malaria had brought on virulent intermittent fever, which had prostrated nearly the whole camp. There were three apparently very serious cases; Van Jansen's sister, who had lost her eldest boy the day before, was delirious and raving, whilst her younger brother was almost in a state of insensibility; and Kleine van Jansen was so weak and exhausted from constant attacks of fever that he was unable to sit up, and seemed perfectly helpless. As soon as the waggons came up I had a consultation with Stevenson, and we made up a quantity of cooling drinks, and a strong decoction of quinine with which we dosed the whole camp, for they all looked as yellow as guineas, and more or less ailing. Hans van Jansen his brother-in-law, Schmidt, Stevenson, and I then performed the last rites over the young fellow who had died the day before, taking the precaution to bury thorny bushes over the grave to prevent the corpse being disinterred by hyænas. The next morning, finding there was a marked improvement in the appearance of our patients, I persuaded Van Jansen to make a move and shift his camp to some high ground overlooking the river, where there was fine shade, whilst, at the same time, if there was a breath of air stirring, we were sure to get the benefit of it. By my directions an ox was killed and boiled down into strong soup, for the use of the sick; and leaving Stevenson in medical charge, with directions to administer

strong doses of quinine every four hours, Van Jansen and I mounted our horses, and, attended by about a score of our followers and a party of Bushmen, went up-stream for the purpose of killing some game for camp use. I was astonished to see the number of different kinds of water-fowl that swarmed on every side. Pelicans, flamingoes, cranes, herons, geese, ducks, teal, snipe, and scores of eagles, falcons, and hawks were circling about, uttering their peculiarly shrill, wild cries; whilst every now and again we passed numbers of huge crocodiles floating on the surface of the water or basking in the mud on the sloping banks. These repulsive-looking brutes, although extremely tenacious of life, are easily enough killed in the day, when they plunge into the water upon the approach of man; but at night they are always prompt to attack, and as they lie in wait for animals coming to quench their thirst, they may be easily mistaken for logs of wood; consequently one is obliged to be extremely careful when venturing near water at night. Although I always endeavour to extirpate these vermin if I find them anywhere near the haunts of man, on the present occasion, notwithstanding I had several chances of favourable shots, I forbore to fire, lest the report of my rifle might disturb other game; and after a tramp of about two hours, during which we put up several pallahs and quaggas, we came to a reed-marsh formed by a bend in the bed of the river, in which a troop of about eighty buffaloes were browsing.

Making a detour so as to get on some tolerably high cliffs of red earth that fringed the bank of the river, we approached under cover of low bushes, to the brink of the scarp which commanded an admirable view of the herd, who, unconscious of our presence, were indulging in a siesta after their morning feed. Although several were within easy shooting distance I begged my companion not to fire, as I never before had such a splendid

opportunity of watching the doings of these animals in their own wild haunts, and I wanted to observe them. Some were lying down asleep, others lazily nibbled the younger green shoots of herbage, whilst at a short distance off, a couple of young bulls were engaged in single combat, which several of the herd seemed to watch with great interest. With heads lowered and tails erect, they charged each other repeatedly, and from the crashing noise of their massive foreheads meeting, the shock must have been paralyzing, were it not for the protection the base of the horns affords. As it was, very little actual damage appeared to have been done to either combatant; they were very evenly matched, and after having fought several rounds, until they were both pretty well out of breath, they moved off in different directions, each being accompanied by a few special admirers.

Having somewhat gratified my curiosity and severely tested the patience of our native followers, before whose eyes floated visions of an unlimited supply of beef, I left Van Jansen in order to outflank the herd on the other side. I strolled gently along the edge of the cliff, keeping closely under cover, until by careful stalking I got within a hundred yards of a mighty bull who, unsuspecting of danger, was lying down surrounded by his seraglio, each member of which seemed to be more or less engaged in administering to his bovine comfort; two cows licking him behind the ears, whilst a third was rubbing him down with her muzzle and massive forehead. The old patriarch denoted his satisfaction at these gentle attentions, by alternately caressing one or the other with his tongue, and now and then giving vent to his feelings by a low guttural bellow, preceded by a succession of moaning grunts. All at once a gentle ripple in the air wafted the taint of man's presence to some of the outlying stragglers who were scouting in the direction where Van Jansen was posted; the signal denoting

"danger afoot" was given by an old cow and repeated on all sides; and in a moment the whole herd were crashing wildly through the reeds. On the first intimation of alarm being given, the old bull sprang on his legs, and rushing forward a few paces, stood for a moment with his nose stretched high in the air, as if sniffing in the wind, and his brawny chest being fully exposed, I raised my rifle—a double 8-bore, by Westley Richards—and gave him the contents of both barrels in rapid succession, aiming at the point where the neck seemed to enter the body. On receiving the first shot he staggered back a yard or two, but at the second, he pitched heavily forward and fell stone dead; whilst his companions, faithful to their allegiance, notwithstanding their manifest alarm at the reports, charged gallantly in different directions, as if to challenge the intruder who had dared to invade the domain of their stricken lord, returning from time to time to the fallen bull. Taking my second rifle from Nagoma, I dropped a young cow with a bullet behind the shoulder, and was about to pull trigger at a half-grown calf, when I heard a wild shriek, followed up by a couple of shots a short distance behind me, and immediately afterwards one of the Damara guides told me that two "keitloa" (the two-horned black rhinoceros) had turned our rear, and suddenly charged down upon our people without their offering them the slightest molestation. When the buffalo were first sighted we sent all our followers, except the gun-carriers, with the horses to the rear, there to await our return; and it appears that two of their number whilst in search of wild fruit, disturbed the "keitloa," who were enjoying a snooze under the shade of a grove of kushshai trees. The rhinoceros were lying down on their sides, fast asleep, when first discovered; but awakened by the voices of the men, in the twinkling of an eye they were on their legs, and undismayed by the shouting and a couple of shots fired at them, they charged the men furiously,

and obliged them to take refuge in trees, when, enraged at their escape, they gave vent to their spleen by tearing down the bushes in their path. Van Jansen, who had killed one buffalo and wounded a second with his heavy roah, now rejoined me, and we determined to follow up the spoor of the rhinoceros. Having carefully reloaded my big rifle with a Jacob's shell in the right barrel, and a hardened three-ounce round-headed cylindrical bullet in the left, I lent my companion an 8-gauge double smooth-bore, as a second gun, and, accompanied only by Nagoma carrying my spare rifle, we made tracks for the scene of the Damaras' discomfiture. The fresh spoor was everywhere to be seen, but the trails crossed and recrossed each other so frequently that it was scarcely possible to discover the actual line of retreat. We had followed the spoor some distance when we found it doubled back to a patch of thick bush close to where we first took it up; and we were considering what the next move should be, when, suddenly, our suspense was terminated in the most abrupt manner;—for the male rhinoceros, with a fiendish, shrill snort, came tearing down at us with horns lowered and tail straight on end, closely followed by his mate. I sprang on one side so as to let them pass, but Van Jansen, who was also right in their line of charge, trusting to the efficiency of his heavy roah, stood his ground and coolly let drive when the huge brute was within half-a-dozen paces of him. Although the shot must have told severely at that short distance, it did not disable him or even stay his course for a second: he merely staggered from the shock, and swerved a little to one side. As he passed me, I let drive and planted the shell just behind the near shoulder; when, almost instantaneously, every vital function in the whole frame of the animal seemed to be checked, for he dropped in a heap, doubled up with his knees under him, at Van Jansen's feet. I had hardly pulled trigger when the widowed mate,



RHINOCEROS GOING THE PACE

cocking her head on one side in a most knowing manner, with a vicious rolling of her cunning little eyes, and a scream of rage mingled with distress, bore furiously down upon me—but as she lowered her head as she approached, I aimed at the centre of her brawny neck, and the heavy bullet, after smashing some of the vertebræ, passed into the region of the heart; for rolling head-over-heels in the most extraordinary manner, she fell stone dead within a few yards of her spouse.

“In death they were not divided.”

“Hondred duizend losgebroken duivels! But this is hot work for a man with a large family!” exclaimed the Dutchman, as soon as he had somewhat recovered his usual equanimity of mind; for although brave as a lion, his nerves were somewhat shaken at his narrow escape from impalement. “If it had not been for your lucky shot, that horn would have spoiled the seat of the biggest pair of breeches in Namaqua Land, I’ll be bound,” continued he as he measured the front horn, which was nearly six spans, or fifty-four inches, whilst the hinder one was somewhat less than a foot.

On examination of the bull, I found that the heavy bullet of Van Jansen’s roah had ploughed up the forehead and entered the neck, but somewhat too high up to prove mortal, whilst the Jacobs’ shell I had administered behind the shoulder, bursting in the region of the heart, had caused instantaneous death. Having assembled the people by a call from my hunting-horn, I cut off the horns, which are joined to a knob of bone attached by strong ligaments to the nose and firmly set in the skin, and returned to the marsh where we had killed the buffalo. The bull and two cows were lying dead, whilst the fourth, a handsome young bull, was standing as if keeping guard over the dead cow, killed by Van Jansen, with one of its fore-legs dangling, the roah bullet having shattered the fore-arm. All

the rest of the herd had disappeared, having made their way up-stream along the bed of the river. Knowing from experience what a formidable antagonist a wounded buffalo is, Van Jansen and I approached with great caution, and when within sixty yards, as he turned his ponderous head round, my companion fired,—but his bullet struck too high and glanced off the rocky mass at the base of the horns; although knocked back on his haunches by the shock of the blow, he was on his legs again in a moment, and uttering a most unearthly bellow, came tearing down at us upon three legs. I now gave him a shot,—but as I pulled trigger, my foot slipped in a large rat-hole, and I fell on my knees, my bullet singing through the air wide of the mark. Whilst on the ground, however, I let drive with my second barrel, and the bullet entering his muzzle, partially stunned him, and again he rolled over; but such was his tenacity of life that he once more got on his legs, and with low subdued moans indicative of pain, but still full of pluck, tried to drag himself towards us. The crashing effect of our heavy projectiles, however, told with fearful effect, and again and again he tottered and fell. Van Jansen—who in the meantime had reloaded his rosh—now stepped up and gave him a *coup de grâce* behind the ear, when, with a surly groan, he staggered and fell dead.

We now remounted our horses and rode back to camp, sending a waggon and pack-bullock to bring in the buffalo hides and flesh. The rhinoceros meat we left for the natives who gathered round on hearing the shots; as, although the white rhinoceros, when young, is not bad eating, the flesh of the “keitloa” is as tough as old boots. The change of camp had proved beneficial to our fever-stricken patients, and all, whilst doing well, expressed themselves most grateful to Stevenson for his constant assiduity in administering to their comfort. Round the watch-fire that night, Van Jansen related our adventure with

the rhinoceros ; and, under the soothing influence of a bottle of hollands, it was unanimously decided that Stevenson and I should be made free of the Boer territory, to come and go as we liked ; and from that time we both received almost brotherly kindnesses from everybody in camp.



SKULL OF A HIPPOPOTAMUS.

CHAPTER IX.

SOUTHERN AFRICA.

THE pasturage being nearly exhausted in the immediate neighbourhood of our camp, and the fresh traces of lions being too numerous for us to allow the cattle to stray to any distance from it without being closely watched and guarded ; we "trecked," shifted our quarters some twenty miles to the north-east, and halted on some high and well-wooded ground, that formed a kind of peninsula between the fork of the Mokoka river and another tributary stream. Here we found abundance of good water and pasturage for our cattle, whilst the numerous spoor and fresh sign of elephant, gave us every reason to anticipate good sport. We therefore determined to make this our headquarters for some days ; and, to save ourselves trouble and anxiety about the safety of our cattle, constructed a rude kind of abattis of felled trees, interlaced with brushwood from one stream to the other, thus enclosing a good-sized strip of ground tolerably secure from night-attacks of wild animals. The entrance was closed by rude gates, and furthermore guarded by a huge watch-fire, round which most of our native followers slept.

The sun had hardly sunk below the horizon when a nocturnal chorus commenced, which proved the wisdom of our precautionary measures ; most of the "vleys" or rain pools in the neighbourhood being dried up in consequence of an unusually severe drought, a great number of wild animals came down to the river to drink, and the game was followed by several distinct troops or families of lions, whose terror-

striking roars occasioned great alarm and disquietude amongst our oxen. Several times in the early part of the night the lions came close to our fence, but they never attempted to force it, being probably deterred from so doing by the taint of man's footsteps, which they—in common with all other wild animals—will avoid crossing if possible.

During the early part of the night, whilst peering into the darkness from the gate, I frequently saw the glimmering of lions' eyes, on which the blaze of our watch-fire was reflected as they prowled round about our camp, attracted by the smell of the cattle; but they were too wary to come near enough to offer a certain shot, so I would not pull trigger at them, and towards midnight they took themselves off. We had all worked hard at the barricade, and were too tired for any of us to think of watching for game that night: but on examining the banks of the river the next morning, we found that it had been visited by separate herds of elephant, as the spoor showed that each party had come and gone in different directions. There were also "signs" of rhinoceros, buffalo, hartebeeste, pallahs, sasabys, and reed-buck, having drank at the stream within the last three days.

After having reconnoitred the immediate neighbourhood to make sure that none of the marauders who had serenaded us during the night were lurking about, we commenced the construction of two large and comfortable "skarms," or ambuscades, which commanded the gaps in the banks of the river, down which the animals came to drink. The skarm, to be properly made, for elephant shooting, is a pit from twelve to fourteen feet long, four feet wide, and four feet deep, so that two persons can lie or turn comfortably in it. About seven feet of the centre part is strongly flat-roofed over with stout logs, which are again covered with earth, and young bushes are often planted over it. Thus it resembles a barrow having

two entrances, which are left open at each end, and here the hunters sit with only the upper part of their heads above the ground. Great care must be taken that the general appearance shows no deviation from the common order of things, and that there are no signs of human occupation about it. The more natural it appears, the better chance the hunters have of close shots; and of course great attention must be paid that the skarm is constructed to leeward of the track by which the game is likely to come, otherwise their keen sense of smelling will instantly detect the atmosphere tainted by man's presence.

A couple of hours before sunset, Stevenson and Schmidt took up their quarters in one skarm, whilst Hans van Jansen and myself, accompanied by Nagoma, occupied the other. Some time before sunset a troop of zebras came gambolling round about our skarm, but we allowed them to go unscathed, as their flesh—although eatable when nothing else is to be had—is rank and strong, having, moreover, a peculiarly disagreeable odour. They were followed by a herd of pallahs, but as these drank at a bend in the river, almost out of gunshot, we contented ourselves with watching their doings. The next visitants were a fine male koodoo, with a grand pair of spiral horns, and three does, who came within sixty yards of us, and both Hans and I, firing double shots at the same moment, managed to drop the buck and two fine fat does that would have graced any larder. The report of our rifles brought half a dozen of our native followers from the camp, which was not more than a quarter of a mile away; so we sent the game in, and at the same time gave strict orders that none of our people should venture outside the gates until morning. Hardly had we retaken our position, when a running fire of five shots in the other skarm told us that its occupants were having their turn of sport; and shortly afterwards Stevenson came round and informed us that

they had killed a large white rhinoceros. This proved to be a very fine specimen of the kobaba, the anterior horn being fifty-six inches long. Both Schmidt and Stevenson had been so devoured by mosquitoes that they determined to return to camp, but as these pests of the river-side had not troubled us, we remained in our skarm, and bidding Onkombo keep a bright look-out, and awake us if he saw anything, we were soon in the land of dreams.

We must have slept soundly for some hours, when I was suddenly awoke by a curious blowing noise, which I at once recognised as being one of those peculiar sounds emitted only by elephants. Cursing my own stupidity for entrusting the watch to a native, I seized my rifle and peered cautiously round; but no elephants were in sight, although two black rhinoceros were wallowing in the river, and hordes of harte-beeste and sasabys were browsing on the young vegetation on its banks. They, too, had heard the ominous noises; for the rhinoceros, uttering grunts of defiance, made their way up the stream, whilst the antelope gathered round their leaders and prepared to make a move. Giving my henchman a *gentle reminder* for sleeping on his post, I roused Van Jansen, and in a moment we were on the alert. The moon was now well above the horizon, and our ambuscade being on high ground, we could see a good way up and down the river.

We remained on the *qui vive*, for nearly half an hour, and I had begun to think that the taint on the air of the dead game had scared away the elephants, when—without the slightest sound or intimation of their approach—seven mighty bulls, glided noiselessly as shadows into the open ground before us, and stood with their trunks raised and their great ears distended, as if seeking to wind the taint in the breeze and catch the slightest sound. The leader—whose large white tusks glistened in the pale moonlight, stood perfectly motionless for

at least ten minutes, as if undecided whether to advance or retreat; and his reverie might have continued further to try our patience had not a couple of hyenas for once served us a good turn. Attracted by the scent of the dead rhinoceros, they brushed boldly past the elephants, and, passing within a dozen yards of our hiding-place, made their way towards the other skarm where the dead beast lay. The fetid stench that these animals leave behind, probably overpowered any other suspicious odour that might have led the leader to suspect danger, for he now fearlessly approached our skarm, closely followed by the others. So stealthily, however, did they move, that no sound of their footsteps betrayed their presence: not a stone rattled, not a leaf rustled, nor a twig cracked under their ponderous weight, and they had advanced to within twenty yards of us, when suddenly the leader gave a snort, followed by a shrill scream of alarm, and throwing up his trunk, trumpeted loudly. He had come to the spot where the koodoo had fallen, and detected the smell of the fresh blood. For some time I had watched every movement with my rifle pointed towards his massive shoulder, and on the first intimation of alarm I let drive right and left, aiming just behind it; whilst Van Jansen also fired two rapid shots at the "dood plek" (a fatal spot behind the shoulder) of a second bull, scarcely inferior to the leader in height, but not so squarely built. Van Jansen's aim was more certain than mine, for the elephant he fired at fell dead in his tracks, whilst the leader, trumpeting hoarsely with rage, tore frantically towards the river, followed by his frightened companions. Having reloaded, we stepped out of our ambushade to reconnoitre, and found the herd all gathered round their wounded leader, and evidently attempting to hold him up with their trunks, for he staggered and reeled about from side to side, unable to stand without help. Seeing at a glance that he had been struck, and was in his last throes, we paid our attention to the others, and,

taking advantage of the fairest shots offered, both fired together at different elephants. This time I was more successful, for I dropped one stone dead with a bullet between the eye and the ear, and rolled over a second with a Jacobs' shell, which entered at that vital spot where the outstretched ear appeared to spring from the head. Van Jansen was not so lucky; for although the bull he fired at dropped to his shot and floundered on the ground, he soon recovered his legs, and, accompanied by an unwounded pal, charged, tail on end, straight at us. Luckily, my second rifle was loaded with Jacobs' shells and six drams of powder, and as they came tearing down with upraised trunks, I opened fire at them right and left, aiming at their massive chests—and, with scarcely a groan, they rolled over and over. We again reloaded and approached the stricken leader, who had fallen to his knees from extreme weakness, but he seemed too far gone to heed our presence; so, stepping up, I gave him a *coup de grâce* just behind the ear, when—a tremor passing over his body—he sunk gently to the ground, dead.

Only two escaped out of the herd, and they, on making their way along the bed of the river, were attacked by the rhinoceros, which turned out to be of the black "keitloa" species, the most savage and vindictive animal in Africa. We reloaded our rifles, and made our way to the scene of conflict, intending to take action against both combatants; but the field of fight being a large swamp overgrown with high reeds, above which only the backs of the elephants were visible, as they charged or wheeled round to avoid the attack of their infuriated adversaries, we declined to enter the lists, and contented ourselves with watching operations. From all appearance the elephants were getting the worst of it, for they emitted the most piteous cries of distress whilst their opponents indulged in hoarse savage grunts and snorting noises of menace. At last the elephants, thoroughly worsted, took to the water; and, with the aid of my night-glass,

I could see them wading and swimming down stream in full retreat. The rhinoceros remained the masters of the field and had won the fight. As matters stood, we did not care to spoil the victors, but, returning to our skarm, rolled ourselves up in our carosses and slept till daylight; when we were awakened by the yells and screams of delight of the Damaras and our other native followers, at the prospect of an unlimited quantity of food and great stores of elephant fat.

During the day we constructed two other skarms at a spot farther up the river, as the strong smell of decomposed flesh was sufficient to prevent elephants from quenching their thirst near the old place; and here we had great sport, killing seventeen bull elephants to our four guns in five days, besides quantities of other game. At the end of this time, our invalids being in a fair way towards convalescence, we made "tracks" towards Notoanis, as ominous rumours were about concerning a grand cattle-lifting raid in the Nylstroom district, which had been perpetrated by one of Moselikatzee's former allies; and a severe encounter had taken place between the natives and a Boer commando, in which the latter was said to have come off second best. Van Jansen and his people would not hear of our proceeding to the Zambesi until we had first seen their home, enjoyed their hospitality, and been presented in due form to the Landroost, or head magistrate of the district, who appeared to exercise the functions of civil governor; so we continued our way together.

CHAPTER X.

REMINISCENCES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

NOTOANIS, the head-quarters of my friends the Van Jansens, is a small hamlet, consisting of seven or eight comfortable one-storied farmhouses, two or three smaller domiciles, and numerous cattle-kraals and outbuildings, built on an elevated ridge overlooking the Nylstroom river, and surrounded with fields of maize and corn; whilst in the background rise the Kangslip mountains, with their blue valleys and lofty granite peaks, which, in the early morning, when wreathed with grey mists, put one in mind of the wilder parts of Scotland. Here, surrounded by their numerous flocks and herds, close upon a dozen Dutch families lived a thoroughly patriarchal kind of life; varying the monotony of farming by frequent hunting expeditions, for the surrounding country was alive with game. Two kinds of bustards—*corans* and *paaw*—guinea-fowls, four varieties of partridges, quail, and ortolans were plentiful all about the cultivated lands; whilst in the *veldt*, or open plain on the other side of the river, herds of different kinds of antelope were constantly to be found. Besides being a hunter's paradise, nowhere in South Africa have I seen such evidence of luxuriant fertility; fine trees of graceful foliage overshadowed the houses, and bananas, figs, apricots, peaches, pomegranates, and several native fruits flourished in the gardens, whilst the vineyards looked in admirable condition. The whole of the cultivation was carried on by native labour—Kaffirs, Hottentots, and Zulus, if managed with tact, making excellent

outdoor servants. We found the Dutch Boers very good-natured and agreeable fellows; and I think they certainly are the biggest race of men in the world, for scarcely an adult man in Notoanis stood under 6ft., whilst several exceeded that height by 4in. or 5in., and the average of their weight must have been between 14st. and 15st. Their breadth of shoulders, girth of chest and limbs, and muscular development are as striking as their height; but from their inert mode of life and the vast quantity of food they consume, they generally run into flesh at a very early age, and become ponderous and awkwardly unwieldy. This, however, is not the case with those who are fond of field-sports; and amongst the Boers I have found famous hunters that few men would excel in energy, activity, or endurance. The women, as a rule, were fair, plump, handsome, of goodly proportions, and most prolific, as all the benedicts in the settlement seemed to be blessed with large and increasing families, and every house was full of fair-haired boys and girls, the picture of robust health. There were also a number of grown-up young ladies; during our sojourn several dances were got up, and my friend Stevenson—who was a fair performer both on the violin and the cornet—was in great request on these festive occasions, as the only other musical instruments in the settlement were a quaint ram-shackle kind of harpsichord and a couple of guitars.

After enjoying the hospitality of the Van Jansens for nearly three weeks, and shooting only antelopes and small game of different kinds for the pot, Stevenson and I determined to make a move for the hilly Makalaka country north of the Limpopo, where elephants were said to be very numerous. Our hosts and a large gathering of stalwart hunters from different parts of the country determined to accompany us, and we looked a most formidable party as we debouched from the valley, and scoured across the plain in a widely-extended line

With the exception of our guides and a few after-riders, with spare horses for carrying in any game we killed on the march, all our natives following remained with the waggons, in order to extricate them in case of meeting with obstructions en route; and in this manner we tracked for some days along the Nylstroom river until we came to its junction with the Limpopo, which stream was too deep and rapid to ford, so a large raft was constructed, and our waggons and gear were ferried across.

We were now in a grand game country, and in many places by the river the fresh spoor of rhinoceros and elephant were plainly visible; but the low lands were very unhealthy, and as there was great danger of our losing our horses by tsetse, we continued our route by forced marches, in a north-easterly direction for twelve days longer, up the Schaschi river, when we came to a fine table-land, round which rose the Masiringee mountains. Here we encamped in a beautiful wide valley, full of green trees of various kinds, the most conspicuous of which were the majestic nwanas that towered high above the surrounding verdure like mighty monarchs of the forests. Close in front of our camp flowed the Tulne, a tributary of the Schascha river, which at that time of the year had dwindled down to a narrow stream not more than a dozen yards wide and scarcely knee-deep; but in places there were deep *vleys*, or pools, where elephant and the larger description of game came down to drink. As we had determined to halt here for some days all hands set to work to construct a large kraal to protect our cattle from marauding lions, whose nocturnal serenades had on several occasions kept us on the *qui vive* during the dark hours; round this our followers dug a deep trench, throwing the earth inward, so that from the outside our construction resembled a field-work with an abattis along the crest. Our consisted of twenty-three hunters and about eighty native

followers, and the former were divided into three sections, one of which, by turn, remained at home as a camp guard in case of any hostile demonstration being made by marauding Kaffirs; whilst the other two sections started in different directions soon after dawn every morning, and scoured the country in search of game. This is an excellent arrangement for a large hunting party like ours, travelling in a country "where might is right, and he may take who has the power and he may keep who can." Not only is the camp always more or less secure from attack, but also both hunters and their horses have one day's rest in three, which in the long run is conducive to their general welfare, considering the hard work they go through, and the hard fare they have often to put up with. The life of a professional elephant-hunter is one of considerable peril and privation; in the end most of them come to grief, either from accident or, perhaps more frequently, from sickness, brought on by constant over-exertion of physical strength under the intense heat of a tropical sun, the scarcity of wholesome water, and the want of nutritious food. Still there is intense excitement in the sport; and it is an additional satisfaction to know that every good tusker bagged adds, on an average, a fifty-pound note to the exchequer.

The second day of our arrival, as Ruyter, one of the most experienced of the Dutch hunters who belonged to our mess, was returning to camp in the evening, laden with eland beef, he came across the spoor of a large herd of elephants, which had evidently been drinking in a neighbouring vley the night before. As there was a good moon, Van Jansen, Ruyter, Vandermeir, Stevenson, and myself determined to watch by the water in case they might again drink at the same spot; and about seven o'clock we mounted, and, accompanied by about a dozen followers, who were to take charge of our horses upon our arrival near the pool, set out on our expedition.

Moonlight nights in South Africa are brilliant beyond conception, and even the most commonplace scenery, when viewed at such times, appears to possess a weird and mysterious influence that is not discernible in the daytime. Again, many nocturnal animals, whose forms are rarely seen by sunlight, boldly walk the night; and when every bush and hollow tree emits strange noises, caused by the invisible insect world, the fiend-like cry of the jackal, or the hysterical laugh of the spotted hyena, rouses the echoes and produces startling effects. As we rode along we passed a couple of white rhinoceros and several troops of pallahs and hartebucks, making their way towards the water to drink; but we were after nobler game, and allowed them to go unscathed. Shortly afterwards we nearly came into collision with a large herd of buffalo, who at first seemed inclined to dispute our right of way, but eventually, after snorting defiantly, as if to challenge us to do our worst, swerved off to our rear; which we were not sorry for, as elephants were heard trumpeting in the bush on the opposite side of the river, and had we been obliged to fire at our assailants in self-defence, the reports of our rifles might have deterred them from coming down to the river to drink. Soon after this little episode we came to a deep pool in a bend of the river, at one end of which a troop of pallah, intermixed with zebra, were drinking; here Ruyter and Vandermeir resolved to watch, whilst Stevenson, Van Jansen, and myself continued our way up-stream to another vley at the foot of a rocky gorge about a mile and a half further to the northward.

Having selected a somewhat sheltered spot between two huge boulders of rock for our people and horses to remain in, we lighted a fire, where it was not likely to be seen from any distance, as a protection against wild animals; and, accompanied by three of our followers, carrying spare guns and waterproof rugs, we made our way to the water. At the head of the vley rose a

semicircular ledge of rock, some eighteen or twenty feet high, over which a small stream of water trickled down from the densely-wooded ravine above, so that the valley we were in here formed a kind of *cul-de-sac*. The water was, however, pure and limpid, and evidently much frequented by all kinds of wild animals, notwithstanding its secluded position; for on both sides, where the banks were low and sloping, the fresh spoor of elephants were plainly visible, whilst the slots of different varieties of antelope were innumerable. When we first approached the water a troop of doe koodoos, with fawns at heel, were drinking; but they were soon scared away by a couple of ill-conditioned hyenas, who howled malignantly as their prey escaped from them. These were succeeded by five old bull buffaloes, who revelled in a cool bath, followed by a roll in the mud. Whilst they were thus enjoying themselves, a lion gave a most appalling roar from some low bush a short distance down-stream; and the buffaloes, retiring from the pool, formed up in close order, and "made a strategic movement towards the rear," dashing their horns about in a most menacing manner.

We waited with breathless impatience for some time, expecting every moment to see the Royal beast approach the water; but, finding that he did not make his appearance, Van Jansen suspected that he had detected the presence of our horses, and suggested that one of us should remain with our people; so we drew straws to determine which of us should go. Stevenson drew the shortest; so we escorted him to their retreat, and again returned to the pool, where we ensconced ourselves behind some rocks, in front of which grew a patch of high reeds. Hardly had we taken up our position, spread our rugs, and made ourselves comfortable, when, without the rustling of a leaf, the cracking of a branch, or the slightest sound denoting his approach, a magnificent bull elephant stepped forth from

some dark cover and stood out in bold relief in the bright moonlight. Fortunately, what little breeze there was blew from him towards us, so that he did not catch our wind; but, with the habitual caution of his race, he stood motionless for quite five minutes, with his trunk elevated and his great ears extended, so as to drink in the slightest sound. He now advanced a few paces, showing his vast proportions; the moon's bright rays lighted up his white tusks, which protruded over four feet from his upper jaw, and again he stood a dark, still mass, with a clearly-defined outline, as if chiselled out of solid rock. He now appeared satisfied, gave a low "*Urmph!* *urmph!*"—the signal to the rest of the herd, who came tearing down towards the river—and strode rapidly forward until he was knee-deep in the water, not more than thirty yards from our ambushade. Hardly had he entered the stream than he winded the taint in the air, caused either by our presence or that of the Kaffirs who were with us, and throwing up his trunk, he trumpeted loudly his note of alarm. It proved his last signal; for whilst his head was elevated, and his massive throat exposed he offered a most tempting shot, of which I took advantage, and, aiming at the centre of his gullet, just where the head is set on the neck, I let drive right and left with my Westley Richards eight bore, that carried two four-ounce spherical-headed plugs, each driven by seven drachms of powder. Before the smoke had cleared away a mighty splash drenched us, and the huge monster, reeling backwards at the shock, fell over flat on his side, and after a few convulsive struggles, ceased to move. The affair was over before my Dutch friend could get up his rifle; and, although he doubtless felt somewhat disappointed at not having had a finger in the pie and being able to claim one of the magnificent tusks, he was very good-tempered, and merely remarked, "*Das was sehr schlimm.*" The rest of the herd, which consisted of eight or nine majestic-

looking bulls, never gave us a chance. The fall of their leader struck them with panic, and they set off at a good round trot in the direction from which they came. Van Jansen and I now returned to the bivouac where we had left Stevenson and our horses; and, having made up the fire and dried our clothes, as the moon became overclouded, we wrapped ourselves in our rugs and slept until daybreak, when we were joined by Ruyter and Vandermeir, who had wounded two bull elephants, and killed two elands and a water-bok with magnificent horns. We accordingly sent a messenger back to camp with the information that "elephants were afoot," and desired that a waggon should be sent to carry in the meat and ivory; and soon afterwards our party received a reinforcement of eight Boer hunters and our pack of dogs, in which quantity made up for quality, for never do I think such a lot of mongrels were seen together. Some of our Kaffirs who had started at early dawn to spoor up the elephants that had visited our vley the night previously, returned, having tracked the herd up to a dense belt of wood, some five or six miles distant, where they were quietly browsing. They reported having left two of their number to watch their movements, so it was resolved to beat up their retreat the first thing after breakfast.

CHAPTER XI.

REMINISCENCES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

THE Boers are all more or less sportsmen, having been accustomed to ride and use the rifle from early childhood ; but, as they are for the most part big heavy men, and stout in proportion to their height, they must be very well mounted to hold their own in a long chase after wild animals. Out of about a dozen Dutch hunters who took part in the hunt I am about to describe, scarcely one of them could have weighed less than 17st. as they turned out equipped for the chase, with their long roers, ox-horn powder-flasks, and broad leather belts that contained bullet and cap pouches, tinder-box, knife, axe, and half a dozen other appurtenances; whilst many of their number as they rode would have turned the scale at 20st.; still their sturdy, well-knit little horses hardly seemed over-weighted as they bounded across the plain, evidently as eager for sport as their riders. Stevenson and I, being both in fair condition from constant hard work, scarcely weighed 10st., so that we were lightly handicapped in comparison with the rest.

Our Kaffir guides led the way at a pace which kept the horses at a fair amble, when, as we were crossing a plain between two belts of mimosa and mokala bush, they pointed out the pugs of a lion that were evidently quite fresh, and appeared to lead into an isolated patch of cover about a mile off. As there was but little chance of the reports of our rifles alarming the elephants, whose retreat was still some miles further on, it was resolved to lay the dogs on the trail; so half

of our number rode ahead so as to command the further side of the cover, whilst the Van Jansens, Ruyter, Vandermeir, Stevenson, and I tracked up the pugs until the dogs, which were some distance in the rear, could be brought up.

Long before we got near the thicket, smothered roars and loud growling noises told us that a battle royal was going on amongst the great carnivora, so Kleine Van Jansen and Vandermeir rode back to hurry up the dogs, whilst Ruyter, Hans Van Jansen, Stevenson, and I rode up to reconnoitre. The fearful snarling noises that continued to issue from the cover, intermingled with grumbling, moanings, and stifled whimpers, testified as to the obstinacy with which the contest was being maintained; so Stevenson and I, who were determined to get a sight of the combatants if possible, in spite of Van Jansen's and Ruyter's remonstrances, dismounted, and, tethering our horses, crept as noiselessly as possible into the cover. Guided by sounds of war, we soon reached the arena, and found that two magnificent full-grown lions were engaged tooth and nail in mortal combat for the favours of a skittish young lioness, who was looking on, and encouraging the rivals by walking round them as they were locked in each other's grasp, and making peculiar loud purring and whimpering noises. It was a grand sight, for the two noble animals were well and evenly matched, and neither seemed to have gained any material advantage; although it was evident, from the severe injuries that each had received, as well as from the trampled herbage and the appearance of the ground, which was torn up in places, that the fight had been going on for some time before we came up. As all parties were too much engaged in the fray to notice our approach, we managed to clamber up into a tree which commanded a capital view of the field of action without being perceived, and both of us were too fond of fair play to spoil the sport by interfering. For quite ten minutes we watched the

exciting struggle with intense interest, as the two huge creatures rolled over and over like two great cats, their deep-drawn grunting and hard breathing being only varied by crunching and rending noises as fangs and claws tore up each other's flesh. Suddenly, the yelping of dogs was heard at no great distance, and the lioness showed symptoms of uneasiness, and stood motionless a moment as if listening; then she whined and commenced growling, as if to attract the attention of the lions to the suspicious sounds; but they paid no heed to her warning, and she was slinking sneakingly away when, as she passed close under the tree on which we were sitting, Stevenson raised his rifle and rolled her over stone dead with a well-directed bullet, which entered the back of the skull and penetrated the brain. Neither the loud report of the shot nor the fall of the lioness appeared to be noticed by the two enraged combatants, as they did not, even for an instant, relinquish their grip of each other; but, as the dogs were evidently near at hand, and there was no prospect of our seeing the fight right out, I took the opportunity, when the brawny shoulder of one of them was fully exposed as he stood broadside on to me, to let drive a right and left almost simultaneously, and, both bullets penetrating the vital region of the heart and lungs, he fell heavily on his side to the ground, writhing in his last agonies. His antagonist, evidently surprised at his rival's sudden collapse, stood over him for a moment as if bewildered; until a bullet from Stevenson's second barrel cracked loudly against his flank, when, attracted by the smoke, he raised his head in our direction, and then for the first time became aware that other assailants were in the field. Uttering a long, tremulous roar, he rushed forward a few paces, and for a moment I thought he intended to spring upon us, for we were quite within his reach, the forks upon which we were standing not being more than ten feet from the ground, and neither of us was loaded—when suddenly he caught sight of the dead

lioness, who lay doubled up in a heap as she fell on receiving her mortal wound; with a peculiar whine of recognition, utterly regardless of our presence, he strode towards her, licked her face and neck with his great, rough tongue, and patted her gently with his huge paw, as if to awaken her. Finding that she did not respond to his caresses, he sat upon his haunches like a dog, and howled most piteously, until his attention was attracted to his late antagonist, who drew up his limbs convulsively at the moment of dissolution; with a sullen growl, he sprang up and stood over him, roaring defiantly three or four times. At this moment the yelping of the dogs and the cries of encouragement of the Kaffirs sounded close at hand; and, leaping over a low bush, he beat a hasty retreat, for which I felt extremely thankful, as reloading when perched up in a tree is rather an awkward operation.

Soon after his departure the pack made their appearance, with Kleine Van Jansen and his party of Dutchmen, and we had some difficulty in driving the dogs away from the dead lions, and putting them on the trail of the survivor; but the Kaffirs, after a vigorous application of their hippopotamus-hide zamboucs, managed to do this at last, and soon afterwards they again gave tongue, and appeared to push forward in pursuit. We followed up in their rear as fast as we could, and it soon became evident that the lion was retreating but slowly, as at times he turned upon his pursuers, who came yelping back towards us as if seeking our protection. This work continued for some time, until at length he got to the skirts of the cover, and made a bolt out into the plain. There he was met with a volley from the Boer's roers, and struck by several bullets, when he broke back into the cover, and after a few minutes was brought to bay by the dogs. Although severely wounded he committed great havoc amongst them before we could get up; it was a grand sight to see him sitting on his hind-quarters, carelessly

regarding the swarm of yelping curs that surrounded him, until one or two of the boldest of them, encouraged by his apathetic inaction, came within reach of his paw, when in an instant they were hurled back maimed, mangled, or lifeless. We arranged that the Dutchmen should fire first, and Ruyter took the lead with a huge roer, which, exploding like a young cannon, broke the lion's fore-arm only, and brought him down on three legs in the midst of the pack, who rushed forward at the report. Hans Van Jansen now fired, and his bullet, entering the chest, rolled him over; but in an instant he was again upon his legs, and stood undaunted and undismayed, grand beyond conception, with fire flashing from his eyes, his long black mane straight on end, and the crimson life-stream flowing from his open jaws. Although grievously wounded, and so weak from loss of blood that he could not charge, he still faced his foes with indomitable resolution, and growled his defiance until a well-directed bullet from Stevenson's rifle entered the corner of the eye and ended his career. Scarcely was the breath out of his body than the Kaffirs rushed up and each took a mouthful of the blood that was trickling from his numerous wounds, as they believe that it is a specific which imparts strength and courage to those who partake of it. Leaving some of our people to strip the spoils from the fallen monarchs, we continued our course after the elephants, and by noon arrived at the bed of a small river fringed with patches of thick bush, in one of which it was said that the herd were. The two Kaffirs who had seen them enter at early morning informed us that this was a favourite resort for elephants, as there were three or four deep pools, over-shadowed by great forest trees, where they bathed during the heat of the day, previous to sleeping in the cool shade.

After making a careful reconnoissance of the ground, we found the fresh spoor of several elephants leading into the cover; and, as we could not find any traces of their having

again left it, it was only natural to suppose that they were still there, notwithstanding that no sounds were to be heard indicating their presence, which seemed strange, as the belt of jungle, although stretching for some distance along the banks of the river, was of no great extent; and when unsuspecting of danger and undisturbed, a herd, when browsing, may generally be heard breaking down the young branches on which they feed.

We now held a consultation to arrange our plan of action, and, as the jungle in which the elephants were was very dense and full of wait-a-bit thorns, it was determined to set fire to the line of dry reeds and high grass along the bed of the river, so as to drive them into the open, which was tolerable riding-ground, where our horses could be brought into play. The wind was favourable to our project; and our native followers soon fired the whole line of reeds, whilst the mounted hunters, dividing into two parties, took up their posts on each flank of the cover; it being arranged that the herd should be allowed to get some distance over the plain before the pursuers gave chase, otherwise they might try and break back into the cover, or cross the river where the country was densely wooded. For some minutes we waited, anxiously listening; but although from time to time we heard the crackling of the fire, with occasional rustlings amongst the bushes, we could detect no sound that indicated the presence of elephant. At last we heard a low, grumbling noise, and an old surly buffalo made his appearance, followed by a troop of springbok, and almost immediately afterwards a herd of ten bull elephants noiselessly emerged from the cover, and strode leisurely across the plain. They were all of goodly proportions, and appeared to carry heavy tusks, and it was a grand sight to see them debouch into the open and form up into an irregular line. A huge monster with a very thick pair of ivories brought up the rear, having been the last to break cover; and Stevenson and I determined to devote our special

attention to him. When the herd had got about half a mile over the open country, they swerved off and began to quicken their pace, so it was evident that the other party had commenced the pursuit, and that the elephant had got their wind and taken alarm. All further concealment was now unnecessary, so away we went after them as fast as our horses could carry us. Elephants can get over the ground at a good speed for a short distance, but they soon get blown, and, after the first burst, a horseman can easily overhaul them. Yet a stern chase is ever a long one, and so we found it in this instance, for the herd got a good start, and our horses were pretty well blown before we got up to them. Stevenson, who led the van by some lengths, was the first to commence operations, and as he shot alongside the big tusker we had marked, he planted a right and left well behind the shoulder, and wheeled off just in time to avoid his charge; round the brute came with a shrill scream of rage, and passed at no great distance from Van Jansen, who, in self-defence, was obliged to fire; and the heavy bullet of the roer, entering just behind the ear, tumbled him over and secured the ivory. In the early part of the chase my horse put his foot in a hole and came down a cropper, giving me an awful shaking; but, finding that no bones were broken when I picked myself up, and that my nag was altogether uninjured, I continued the chase, and, although considerably thrown out by my purl, I soon managed to get close up in the wake of an old bull with decent sized tusks, and, forging up to his near-side, gave him the contents of both barrels in the temple, which brought him to his knees; in a moment, however, he scrambled on to his legs and continued his way, although his tottering gait, drooping ears, and listlessly swaying trunk showed that he was hard hit and in great distress. Seeing that he had no intention to charge, I pulled up, reloaded, and again gave chase, and this time I caught him just behind the shoulder whilst his forearm was

well advanced, and he dropped with a crash to the ground. In the meantime, on every side were heard the loud reports of the Boers' heavily loaded roers, followed by the shrieks and trumpeting of the wounded elephants that were rushing wildly over the plain, each followed by one or two hunters, who, on their strong and enduring horses, would doubtlessly have exterminated the whole herd if the chase had not led towards a belt of thick forest, in which three of the number found refuge. As it was we had no reason to complain, for seven pairs of tusks were secured amongst us; not an unprofitable day's work, as the ivory must have weighed over four hundredweight.

Our long chase after the elephant had led us quite twenty miles from our camp at Masiringe, and as the day was nearly spent we knocked up a kind of impromptu kraal for the protection of our horses, a couple of huts for ourselves, and in less than an hour had established a comfortable bivouac for passing the night. Large watch-fires were lighted, round which we reclined and talked over the events of the day and our plans for the morrow, and it was decided that three of our number, with a party of Kaffirs, should remain to collect the ivory, whilst the rest of us returned to camp to send back a waggon for its transport. All our people were regaling themselves to surfeit on elephant's flesh, and as the night came on it was a strange sight to see them cutting up the carcasses by the light of huge fires, like so many demons.

Hardly had the sun gone down than we were serenaded by a party of lions, and during the livelong night the camp was entertained by the dismal choruses of hyenas and jackals, who, attracted by the smell of the flesh, collected in great numbers round the dead elephants. The next morning we were afoot and at breakfast soon after dawn, and the sun was just making his appearance above the horizon as we got into the saddle. Leaving some of our number to make their way back direct to

camp, Ruyter, Van Jansen, Stevenson, and I took a southerly direction, so as to skirt the edge of the Linguapo hills; a range said to be full of game, lying on the left bank of the River Schaschi.

We had ridden over an undulating plain for about an hour without putting up any other game than a few pallah and reitbok, when Stevenson, after sweeping the horizon with his telescope, pointed out a couple of sable antelope that were grazing about a mile distant. Stevenson and Ruyter taking one flank, Van Jansen and I the other, we made a circuit before commencing the pursuit, as all antelope, when alarmed on a plain, make off with their heads to the wind; and our object was to get on each side of our quarry before starting him. With a little management this was effected, and the chase began. For the first mile the antelope got over the ground at a great rate, and seemed to go two yards to our one; but before the second mile was covered they were quite blown, and Stevenson and Ruyter, who were admirably mounted, were almost within shooting-distance, when we lost sight of them in a dried-up watercourse overgrown with bush and high reeds. Here a strange contretemps happened, for which we were quite unprepared; as Stevenson and Ruyter were spooring up the antelopes' slots, two black rhinoceros suddenly made their appearance, and, without the slightest provocation, charged and knocked down Ruyter's horse before he could get out of their way. Stevenson, who was riding close to him, managed to wheel his horse round, scramble on the bank, and discharge both barrels at the assailants just as they were returning to the charge; and Van Jansen and I, who came up at the time, gave them a volley which made them beat a retreat. Both Ruyter and his horse were a good deal shaken by the fall, but no bones were broken, and neither of them were seriously hurt; so, after a mouthful of "schnaps," we agreed to follow up and punish

his assailant. The spoor was plain enough ; and that one was hard hit we could see, as blood had flowed freely as he went along. Still, it was necessary to keep a bright look-out, as a wounded and infuriated borelé is one of the most vindictive and formidable animals a hunter can encounter. As we were following up the spoor of the rhinoceros the two sable antelopes sprang up from behind a bush where they had been lying, and, by a fortunate shot, I hit one of them at the back of the head, and secured a magnificent pair of antlers ; while, almost at the same moment, the two borelé broke out into the plain. Our task was now a comparatively easy one, and, moreover, it afforded considerable fun. They charged us repeatedly, and fairly snorted with rage when they found that they could not get near our horses in the open. At last, after repeated discharges, they succumbed, and we left them as they fell, for their flesh is too tough and bitter to be eatable.

The black rhinoceros are much smaller than the white varieties, and have but comparatively short horns ; but they are much more vicious and pugnacious. The black rhinoceros live upon thorny bushes, and their flesh is bitter and worthless ; whilst the white varieties are essentially grass eaters, and their flesh is succulent and of good flavour. The black rhinoceros is a difficult animal to kill ; besides being extremely tenacious of life, his brain is so small and his skull so thick, that there is very little use firing at his head, unless with hardened bullets driven by a very large charge of powder. The most vulnerable point is just behind the shoulder when the forearm is moved forward ; there the bullet, if fired from a proper angle, is most likely to penetrate the heart or lungs. Unless confronted or annoyed by them, I generally made it a practice to give them a wide berth, as they have no spoils worth taking, and their flesh is useless.

After having disposed of the rhinoceros, even to Buyter's

satisfaction, we continued our route, and as we neared the Linguapo Hills a troop of seven eland were descried. It was determined to drive them towards our camp if possible. Had our party been larger this would have been an easy matter, for a line of horsemen would have guarded each flank and obliged them to head in the direction required; as it was, the task required very careful strategy to ensure success. However, my companions were up to every move on the board in driving game, and they anticipated no difficulty. Stevenson and Van Jansen made a detour so as to get between them and the wooded hills, whilst we rode some distance on their flank so as to start and drive them forward, although without giving them any unnecessary alarm. This was satisfactorily accomplished; and Van Jansen and Stevenson at the same time showing themselves on the other flank, they set off at a rapid pace in the direction in which our camp lay, distant about seven miles. Our object was not to press them, but they went a great pace of their own accord, and kept us going at a smart hand-gallop to keep up with them. After the herd had got over about three miles of ground, they became blown, and relaxed their speed, gradually subsiding into a shuffling trot. We kept them going for a couple of miles further, when they became thoroughly done up, and almost as easy to drive as tame cattle. At last they were so exhausted that they tried to separate: and this was the signal for slaughter, which was dexterously accomplished by Van Jansen and Ruyter shooting them in the back of the head, so as not to spoil the meat. We were now little more than three miles from camp, and Ruyter rode in to bring out a waggon and people to carry in the meat, whilst we broke it up and prepared it for carriage. In about a couple of hours a number of people came out and the beef was carried in, such parts as could not be consumed whilst fresh being converted into "belthorn"—*i.e.*, salted, dried in the sun, and smoked over

wood-ash fires. Prepared in this manner it keeps good for several weeks, and, if well soaked before being cooked, is not at all unpalatable food.

As the country teemed with game of different descriptions, we remained hunting in this neighbourhood for over three weeks, by which time Stevenson and I had accumulated over 2000lb. weight of ivory ; killing in one day, near the Tsharibe Hills, nine elephants to our two guns. At the end of this time, our horses being worn out and quite out of condition, we returned to Notoanis to recruit.

CHAPTER XII.

REMINISCENCES OF SOUTHERN AFRICA.

“ I'll tell you the story ; but pass the 'jack,'
And let us make merry to-night, my men.
Ay, those were the days when my beard was black—
I like to remember them now and then.”

It was not long before we organised and started on a fresh expedition. Our camp was situated between two tributaries of the Zambesi, the Longwe and Sepungwe rivers, which rise in the Matopopo range, and flow in a northerly direction through the Matebele country. The party consisted of my old comrades, Captain Stevenson, Hans and Kleine Van Jansen, their brother-in-law Schmidt, and two stalwart Boer farmers, Emile and Yacobus Vandermeir, who were noted elephant hunters. Having left all our heavy gear at Notoanis, Van Jansen's headquarters, we took with us only three lightly laden waggons, containing food supplies and goods for barter; each of us having a couple of salted or seasoned horses for hunting, besides half a dozen dogs of one kind or another, which together formed a numerous, if not a select bobbery pack, that proved most useful in driving animals out of cover, or in engaging their attention and keeping them at bay until the hunters came up.

Game of all kinds was very plentiful in this part of the country, and in two months we had killed more than forty elephants, besides rhinoceros, buffalo, and other animals. One morning two bushmen came in with the account of a large herd of bull elephants having been seen in a somewhat extensive “vley,” near the River Longwe; and the younger Van Jansen,

Schmidt, and the two Vandermeirs, who happened to be in camp when the news came, immediately started off in pursuit. Stevenson, the elder Van Jansen, and myself were absent at the time, having started at break of day after a large herd of buffalo, of which we killed four, and whilst we were cutting up the meat, a troop of seven giraffes were seen browsing at no great distance. We immediately girthed up our horses and gave chase; after a spurt of quite two miles at a very fair pace, we each singled out one, and, putting on the steam, managed to get alongside, and let drive at the shoulder.

I had selected a fine old bull who seemed to be more massively built than the others, and "Old Stag," my horse, having soon brought me within easy range on his off-side, I planted a two-ounce ball from a Westley-Richard smooth-bore just behind his shoulder, and followed it up with a second shot in very nearly the same place; to my surprise, however, although I heard both bullets crack loudly against his hide, he made no alteration in his gait, and continued to forge ahead much as before. I had to pull up my nag to reload, a proceeding that in those days took some little time, during which the quarry had got a start of about three hundred yards, and I was just commencing a somewhat unpromising stern chase when suddenly the giraffe wheeled round, and came doubling back in my direction at full speed. Being somewhat puzzled at this unexpected stroke of fortune, I rode up just as a large black-maned lion had fastened upon the scared animal's haunches, and was being carried along. Before my horse got wind of the marauder, I let drive a fair double shot at the back of his head, and as I swerved off saw him relax his hold and roll over. My horse now became fidgety, and although he was generally full of courage, on this occasion he seemed to lose his head, and I could not stop him, even by circling round, until I approached Van Jansen and Stevenson, who had each killed his giraffe. I

explained the state of things to them, and having reloaded, we followed up the track of my horse's feet for some distance, when we found the lion dead, and the mighty bull in his last agonies a few hundred yards further on. Having put him out of pain, we rode back to camp, and sent some of our people, and the native following who accompanied the expedition for the sake of the flesh they got, to bring in the lion's spoils, as he was in fine condition, as well as some of the meat. We then heard of the expedition of the rest of the party after elephant, and as they did not put in an appearance at nightfall, we lighted a great fire that might have been seen for some miles round, and fired off guns at intervals during the night to attract their attention to it, in case they had lost their way.

The next morning at peep of day, as none of them had shown up, we inspanned and got under weigh, tracking along their trail, which led towards the Longwe river. After marching until noon, we outspanned at a small "vley," where we hardly found sufficient water for our cattle. Here we resolved to halt for the night, as our Matebele guides assured us that no water was to be found until we arrived at the river, which was still some considerable distance off. Under these circumstances we arranged that Stevenson should take charge of the camp and people, whilst Van Jansen and I, with two of our after-riders carrying supplies, food, and our blankets, should continue to follow up the track of our companions.

We had hardly left the camp an hour when we fell in with Kleine Van Jansen's after-rider galloping along in our direction at full speed, and, to our consternation, he told us that Schmidt and Emile Vandermeir had both been killed that morning by an elephant about half an hour's ride from where we met him. Tearing a leaf out of my note-book, I wrote a line to Stevenson, who had some experience in surgery, to come up with his case of instruments, bandages, and cordials, and despatched it by



THE HUNTER HUNTED.

one of our after-riders ; then, putting spurs to our horses, we made the best of our way towards the scene of the accident. There we found that the tale was too true. Schmidt lay dead, with his blue eyes wide open, his long fair hair besmirched with mud, and the lower part of his face and throat covered with blood, for his chest was stove in ; Emile Vandermeir was trampled into an almost undistinguishable mass, he had scarcely a bone in his body left unbroken. Not seeing either Yacob or the younger Van Jansen, we anticipated further misfortune, but some of the people told us that they had started off on the trail of the elephants a few minutes before we came up. "So must we," replied Van Jansen ; "for unless poor Schmidt is avenged, I shall never be able to look my sister again in the face." Nothing remained to be done, so, remounting our horses, we followed up the trail, and soon came up with Yacob and Kleine, whose horses were dead beat and could hardly move one leg before the other. Seeing their exhausted state, we induced them to go back, and leave the pursuit to us, as our cattle were comparatively fresh.

They gave us the account of the disaster, by which it appeared that soon after day-break they spooed up a herd of fifteen bull elephants, of which they killed three in the open "veldt," and severely wounded two others, who, with the rest, got into a patch of thick cover, full of "wagt ein bœtje" thorn, through which it was impossible to force the horses. Kleine Van Jansen and Jacob Vandermeir rode round to the other side of the belt of bush to intercept the herd in case they broke through, whilst Emile and Schmidt dismounted and followed up the spoor of the wounded elephant on foot, which they could distinguish from that of the others by the blood that marked their route. The bush was very dense, somewhat dark, and perfectly impenetrable, except by the track made by the herd, which, however, enabled the pursuers to enter some distance

into the cover. Presently they fell in with an elephant, at which they both fired; at this moment, one of the other wounded elephants, who had cunningly doubled back in a line parallel to the path made by the herd, noiselessly took them in the rear, first killing Schmidt by knocking him down and trampling upon him, and then attacking Emile, who pluckily tried to rescue his comrade, and pounding him piece-meal. He now attacked the two natives, who witnessed the transaction; but they escaped by scrambling up into a tree; he then again returned to Emile Vandermeir's lifeless body, and, screaming with rage, pounded it with his feet and knelt upon it, until it was almost kneaded flat, and the entrails got entwined round his legs. Having vented his spleen on his fallen foe, he rushed off trumpeting through the bush; and his cries of rage were distinctly heard by Kleine Van Jansen and Yacob, although they had no conception of the dismal tragedy that had taken place till an hour or more after it happened, when the herd was found to have vacated the bush, and the bodies were recovered, and carried into the open.

Hans and I had no difficulty in spooring up the herd, for the trail of the wounded animals was plainly distinguishable, as their steps were very irregular in length, and at times they had evidently stopped to rest, from marks of blood and froth which were found on the herbage; a sure sign that they were very sick, and too hard hit to travel far. My conjectures proved to be right; for on approaching another patch of cover, through which the spoor led, we heard noises that convinced us that elephants were not far off. Before commencing operations, I reconnoitred the ground, and found that the bulk of the herd had left their wounded comrades behind, and gone away at speed straight ahead, as their spoor was plainly marked on the plain beyond the cover, where we had heard the suspicious noises. I had a ten-gauge double rifle, and a double two-ounce

smooth-bore, both of Westley-Richard's manufacture ; Hans had his trusty roer, and another of my eight-gauge smooth-bores as a second gun ; besides which two of our pluckiest after-riders were entrusted with other spare guns. All were carefully loaded, and carried heavy charges of powder and hardened projectiles ; so we had no reason to complain of our armament.

As soon as we were ready, we slung our spare guns on our shoulders by the belts, and crept as noiselessly as possible through the bush, halting every few moments to listen to the strange gurgling noises that from time to time struck our ear. We had not penetrated very far into the cover when, whilst I was leading, and stooping almost to the ground, I saw something that at first sight I took to be the trunk of a tree move, and almost immediately, with an unearthly shriek, a splendid tusker, followed by another bull elephant, charged, with his ears expanded like two huge fans, in the direction of one of our after-riders in the rear, who had incautiously showed himself. As he dashed past, within ten yards from the spot where I was crouching, I sprang up, gave a loud shout to attract his attention, and, getting a momentary glance at his temples, rolled him over stone dead with a bullet through the brain. Van Jansen brought the second one to his knees with an admirably planted "dood plek," just behind the shoulder, and we gave him his quietus with a double discharge as he was vainly attempting to get once more upon his feet. That one of these brutes was the destroyer of our friends, I have no doubt, as they had both received several fresh gunshot wounds ; and the one I killed first was evidently a very cunning fellow, as he must have been standing listening to our approach, for some time before he made his charge. We both believed that he was the guilty party, as his knees, as well as his hind feet, were covered with dried clotted blood that could not well have issued from his own wounds, which were in the shoulder and seemingly well planted.



A MURDEROUS PAIR.

Having avenged our comrades' death, we felt as if a weight were lifted off our minds, and returned to the scene of the catastrophe in much better spirits than when we left it. Here we found the waggons had arrived, and two deep graves having been dug side by side on a little eminence, we buried the remains of the two hunters by torch-light, Stevenson reciting such portions of the burial service as he could remember, and improvising a short prayer before the graves were filled up.

The next morning at day-light we tracked on to the river, which we found nearly dried up, except in deep pools; so we continued our course up stream until we came to a "vley," where from the general appearance of the place there seemed every likelihood of our cattle getting some good forage.

Having selected a suitable spot for our camp on a rising ground some two hundred yards away from the river, near some fine shady trees, we held a consultation, and determined to make a halt for some days so as to give our animals a rest. Whilst the people were engaged in constructing an enclosed fence as some safeguard against the carnivora, Stevenson and I strolled down to the river, where we found two deep pools in the bends about half a mile from each other. The one nearest our camp offered every facility for watering our animals, so, after we had filled the casks for our own use, horses, oxen, and dogs came tearing down the slope, and plunged into the pool, where they wallowed for a time in perfect happiness.

Yacob was entirely prostrated with grief at the loss of his brother, from whom he had never been separated, and the Van Jansens were also very much cut up; so I did not care to return to camp, but, shouldering my rifle, strolled to the other pool for the chance of falling in with some kind of game. As I went along the dry bed of the river, I saw several fresh pugs of lions, as well as the spoor of elephant and rhinoceros, and any number of slots of different kinds of antelope. The second

pool was surrounded, except on one side, with reeds and low bush; the water was remarkably clear wherever the banks were steep, but at both ends, which were shallow, the water had assumed the consistency of porridge, from the pounding up of the mud by the trampling of elephants' and rhinoceros' feet. Numberless spoor of both animals crossed and recrossed each other in different directions, and all round the margin of the pool were runs and paths in the reeds made by different kinds of antelope and other wild animals. Some of these marks were evidently quite fresh; so we directed our people to construct a couple of substantial "skarms" or underground ambuscades, sufficiently large to hold two persons comfortably, one at each end of the pool. These were strongly roofed over with stout logs, covered with earth, leaving only a small opening at each end, and, being on the same level as the plain, were scarcely distinguishable from the adjacent ground even in broad daylight. At each end of the pit I had a broad plank fixed so as to form seats upon which we could sit comfortably, with the upper parts of our heads only showing above the surface of the ground; otherwise we should have been obliged to stand during the long hours of the night.

The banks in some places were overshadowed with huge forest trees, amongst which the matundo and two gigantic mowana or boababs in full foliage, and covered with pendant white flowers, were most conspicuous; whilst in the bends of the river were beds of high canes and reeds, the haunt, not only of numerous gigantic cranes, storks, herons, egrets, and white and black ibis, but also of hideous monsters of alligators and scarcely less repulsive smooth-headed snakes, which glided about half hidden by rushes and strange unnamed weeds. Wherever the water was shallow and somewhat clear of reeds, were patches of beautiful liliaceous plants, with flowers of every shape and hue, over which hung glittering in the sunshine gorgeously

painted giant butterflies, strange metallic-coloured insects, and gauze-winged dragonflies.

In these regions, during the heat of the day a dreamy silence reigns, or rather a strange living, murmuring stillness, which is only felt in tropical forests, and which seems to extend a sense of extreme lassitude and inaction not only over the animal but also the vegetable world; for at this time, when all nature seems hushed, and all living things seek refuge in the shade, the most delicate leaves droop, although completely sheltered by overhanging trees from the direct rays of the sun, and even the flowers for a time cease to disseminate their odours. The mosquitoes and some few of the insect world alone resisted the drowsiness of the hour, and murmured softly as they glided by or buzzed round the thin gauze veil that protected my head and neck.

The uninitiated in woodcraft may talk of the dull uniformity of the forest, but the real lover of Nature knows that the aspect of the woods is ever changing. No one can really appreciate the forest who has not passed whole days in watching it from the early morning hours to the deep dark shades of night. Different animals, birds, insects, and flowers, emerge from their secret hiding-places, and make their appearance at different times. As each hour passes away, the scene assumes a new aspect. The voices of the feathered songsters have their appointed hours, and even the aspect of the foliage and the perfume of the flowers change with the march of the sun.

In the afternoon I returned to our camp for dinner, after which Stevenson and I adjourned to the ambuscades, as the others were in no mood for shooting. Stevenson took the skarm nearest the camp with one of his people, whilst I and my Hottentot boy, Hans, went to the further one, which was about a mile beyond. Here we arranged a tarpaulin, mats, and rugs, so as to make our abode pretty habitable; and, having trimmed

the bull's-eye lantern, stowed away the food and cold tea, and looked to the arms, we took up our positions, one at each end of the skarm. My battery consisted of a double 10-bore rifle, and two double 2-ounce smooth-bores, carrying the boluses of the Bishop of Bond Street.

Towards eventide scores of graceful antelope, zebras, and quagga, came and slaked their thirst; and troops of chattering monkeys scrambled down the banks and drank from their small hollow palms, pausing every moment to look round with a wary, suspicious glance to reassure themselves that no scaly denizen of the pool was lurking in their immediate vicinity. Guinea-fowl, partridges, pigeons, doves, palm-birds, and finches of every hue, came unsuspectingly to the water and drank; whilst large flights of fly-catchers kept up a fluttering sound in mid-air, like the zephyrs rustling amongst forest leaves.

There is something peculiarly fascinating in watching the habits and propensities of wild animals in their own haunts, and as long as daylight lasted, having constant visitors, the time passed pleasantly enough. Just as it was getting dusk, two pugnacious keitloa, or black rhinoceros, came close by my skarm, and evidently got my wind, although they could not catch sight of me; for they rushed forward with their noses facing the wind, sniffing and snorting in a most defiant manner; and had I not been waiting for elephant, and feared lest the report of my rifle might scare them away, I could easily have rolled both over, as they presented most tempting broadside shots. Whilst they were looking away from me, I hit one with a clod of earth, in order to drive them off, and, he, thinking his companion had assaulted him, lowered his head, and, catching him unawares, almost rolled him over. After this they left, and a couple of water-buck, one of which had magnificent antlers, took their place in the fore-ground; whilst a large flock of flamingoes, with white bodies and scarlet wings, alighted and

formed up close to the water's edge like a row of soldiers, or rather ballet-dancers, for they had rose-coloured bills and pink legs.

The night soon became dark as pitch; nor moon nor star were visible; mist and wreathing vapours seemed to hang over the dark surface of the water, on which the moaning night-breeze raised a gentle ripple, that gurgled against the shore with a dull, monotonous lap.

As I was peering into the darkness, listening to the unearthly noises that seemed to float on the night air, I stretched forward, leaning against the edge of the pit; when I suddenly felt something clammy and soft moving under my hand. Feeling startled, thinking it was a snake, I sprang backwards with such haste as nearly to smash my skull in against the logs forming the roof of the skarm; and hearing something fall into the pit, I was in a state of mortal funk until, by turning my bull's-eye lantern round, I discovered that the intruder was only a harmless green frog, who, doubtless, was quite as frightened as I was at the *rencontre*. Having dislodged my visitor and thrown him into the pool, I felt considerably relieved, and, taking a long pull at my cold tea, resumed my vigil.

Now and then there was a low rustling amongst the bushes, and distant breathings; but the night was too dark for us to discern anything, although at times dark, shadowy creatures seemed to pass silently in front of us like ghosts in Indian file winding amongst the bush. That their presence was real, however, we knew from the creaking of the reeds as they passed through them, the twittering of startled birds, the flapping of wings, and the quick plunges and splashes in the water, caused by the scared bull-frogs taking to their native element. But there were other creatures than the loud-throated bull-frogs moving in the pool, for at times we could hear great fish or other scaly reptiles swimming slowly round under the bank,



A MIGHTY HUNTER.

and causing the water to ripple in their wake, as they darted in pursuit of their prey.

At times we could hear close at hand the subdued moaning of hyenas, or the dismal howling of jackals; and occasionally a darker shadow of some large animal came suddenly out of the gloom into view, only to disappear in a moment like a phantom, leaving somewhat startling impressions behind upon the imagination. On either side we looked into depths of blackness as unutterably dreary to us as the gloom of the grave. Ever and again we heard, with a nervous bound, a rustling of some creature moving rapidly behind us, while on all sides weird shadows crossed restlessly to and fro.

In these dark hours a dread feeling of helplessness seems to creep over the frame; for the hunter, however experienced he may be in woodcraft, and confident in his aim, at such a time feels that he is powerless—his right hand's cunning is useless—and it needs no ordinary nerve and great self-reliance to keep cool and ready to act on an emergency. At such a time the dread of an unknown danger weighs upon the spirits, and I have felt inclined to relieve my lungs by a lusty shout to assure myself that the shadows that appeared to float before me were not imaginary, and creations of a diseased brain.

On this occasion there was no room to doubt, for hoarse deep whimpers came booming through the darkness, which I knew denoted the presence of lions, even had I not heard them lapping the water, and breathing heavily as they paused now and again between their draughts to draw breath. Breathlessly I gazed into the darkness or bent forward with one ear turned towards the earth in the direction of the ominous sounds.

Before night drew in, I took the precaution to close up the other end of the skarm, as my henchman, Hans, although really a plucky and devoted fellow, was an incorrigible sleeper, and no danger or excitement could ever keep him awake; moreover, I had

to kick him repeatedly to prevent him snoring loud enough to be heard fifty yards off on a still night. I had just stooped below to administer a gentle reminder of this kind, and pull up the wick of my bull's-eye lantern, when, as I returned to the opening, and was about to reseat myself, a loud "wh'uff," "wh'uff" was heard just overhead, followed by the heavy breathing of some animal that was clawing the ground and sniffing close to the other entrance of the skarm. I gently cocked both guns, rested one noiselessly against the corner of the pit, and had just peered over the outside edge, when I was greeted by another "wh'uff," followed by a low sulky growl in the opposite direction, and then I knew that my footsteps had been tracked up to my retreat by a troop of lions, who were only waiting for my appearance to commence hostilities.

Although I felt my heart thump against my ribs, and my pulse quicken with excitement, I determined to take the initiative, and at that moment, catching sight of a pair of greenish fire-like orbs shining in the dark, scarcely four yards from me, aiming right between them, I fired both barrels almost simultaneously. With a mighty bound the lion sprang many feet over my head, and began rolling over and over, evidently hard hit and very sick. The moment I fired, I stooped, so as to get hold of my second gun; an action perhaps, that saved me from a mauling, as the lioness rushed forward at the cry of her mate, and I almost blew her head to pieces by a double snap shot aimed at her eyes, that glowed like red-hot coals, as she stood whimpering over his writhing body. I do not think she was more than three feet from the muzzle of my gun when I fired, as what remained of her face was all singed and blackened when I found her in the morning.

Hans was now all awake, and slipped my rifle in my hand directly the other was discharged, but I kept my last two shots in reserve until I had reloaded the other guns, notwithstanding

a constant moaning, varied by angry snarls, which told me that the game was not yet over.

It was too dark to discover anything, although the moon was just beginning to rise, and as my antagonists could see in the dark, whilst I could not, I thought discretion was the better part of valour ; so I fastened the tarpaulin down over the



A DUEL.

entrance of the skarm, and lay down on my rug to wait until the moon gave me sufficient light to resume offensive or defensive operations. In spite of my efforts to keep awake, I must have dozed off and slept for some time, for I was roused up by the Tottie, evidently in a state of great alarm, who bade me listen. Pulling myself together, I caught hold of my rifle, and gently raised the tarpaulin, when I found the moon's rays were making the night clear as day. The lioness lay dead close to the skarm ; but the lion had managed to crawl away to the water,



LION SHOOTING BY MOONLIGHT.

where he was surrounded by two other troops, one consisting of three, and the other of four, whom he kept at bay by repeated snarling and threatening growlings.

Now and again the leader of one or the other troop would give a roar of defiance, which was at once replied to by his rival; and at times they would couch down, as if to make a spring, and tear up the earth with their claws. They were evidently so engrossed with each other's presence that my ambush did not attract any attention; so watching my opportunity, I levelled my rifle, hit one leader of a troop hard just behind the shoulder, and gave the other one the contents of the second barrel in the same place, as near as I could judge. Shooting by moonlight is very uncertain work, even at short ranges; so I was not much surprised that neither fell, but, rushing madly at each other, were soon locked in mortal combat. I reloaded my rifle, and dropped my first antagonist, the old lion, with a bullet in the back of the head; and with the second barrel tumbled over a lioness, who was looking inquisitively in my direction in a manner that boded me no good. Picking herself up, she was couching for a spring in my direction; but I ended her career with a right and left in the chest, when she rolled upon her back, and, after pawing the air for about half a minute, lay motionless. The two lions were still at it tooth and nail; so I reloaded and let drive four shots at them as they were locked in each other's arms, and although I heard the heavy bullets crack against their flanks, neither fell, and before I could again reload, they made off into the bush.

At this moment I heard some heavy and continuous firing from the direction of Stevenson's post, and a few minutes afterwards a troop of about a dozen bull elephants came tearing down along the water-side, their white tusks gleaming in the bright moonlight. As they got near the dead lion, they must have winded the blood, for they turned off sharp in my direc-

tion. Picking the biggest tuskers, I gave them the contents of all six barrels, at ranges varying from fifteen to forty paces ; and had the satisfaction of seeing one drop in his tracks, and another tumble about in the reeds as if he could not rise from his knees and regain his legs. As soon as my arms were reloaded, I scrambled out of the pit, bounded over the dead lioness, who gave a "squelsh" as I trod on her side, which somewhat scared me, and after four more shots I managed to put the wounded elephant out of his pain and secure the ivory.

As soon as I had reloaded, I ventured to look round at my night's work, which consisted of a lion, two lionesses, and two bull elephants, all of which were lying within two hundred yards of each other. I now felt dog-tired, so once more crawled into my skarm, closed up the entrance, rolled myself up in my rugs, and slept until broad daylight, when I was awakened by Stevenson, who had also been lucky, having killed an immense bull elephant and three white rhinoceros. Later on in the day we spooed up the wounded lions, and found one dead, and the other so weak that he could not get away from the dogs ; so we gave him a quietus, which ended his pain. Hans Van Jansen killed three fine bull elephants the next evening, and in less than a fortnight we got about twelve hundredweight of ivory amongst us ; but we began to lose our horses by the tsetse fly and were obliged to commence a retrograde movement for Notoanis.