

half-distracted wife, in tones of intense agony and terror.

I was about to answer her, but again the huge paws of the savage beast closed around me, and only a wild groan escaped my lips. It seemed to me, in that terrible moment, as if every bone in my body was being crushed—as if the blood in my veins was being forced upon my brain; my senses reeled, and strange lights flashed before my bursting eyeballs; and then a sudden darkness followed, which I believed to be the darkness of death.

"Heaven have mercy on me and save me!" I mentally prayed, as I thought in agony of my poor wife and helpless children.

Then, insidiously, as it were, I again grasped the throat of the beast with all my remaining strength, and again compelled him to relax his hold, and we rolled over and over on the ground together.

"The powder-horn and bullet-pouch, for the love of heaven!" screamed my heroic wife.

The thought that she might possibly save me, for the moment, gave me new life, and with almost superhuman celerity, while with one hand I clung desperately to the throat of my furious foe, I tore them from my neck with the other and cast them towards her; and in the same moment I whipped out my knife from my belt, and plunged it some two or three times into the body of the beast.

Stung to madness with the pain, he now exerted all his strength with a terrible fury; and with one blow of his paw he knocked the knife from my hand, and with the same downward stroke, tore the clothes from my right side, and lacerated it in a fearful manner. Then once more those flashes of light and darkness succeeded, and I thought that moment would be my last. It did not seem possible that I could escape with life; but with the same desperation that the drowning man clings to a straw, I still clutched his throat, and still choked him with all the energy of despair. Once more I felt his limbs relax, and I drew in another breath for another terrible struggle.

"Courage, George—courage and hope!" cried my poor wife, with fearful earnestness. "Hold out a minute more, and you are safe; the rifle is almost loaded; already I am ramming down the ball!"

I could only see dimly, for she had set the light down on the ground at a safe distance, and her form was like a shadow above me; but the words thrilled and nerved me to struggle on.

"Quick, for the love of heaven!" I gasped; "fail not to fire upon the beast as soon as you are ready."

Over and over we now rolled upon the earth, sometimes the bear uppermost and sometimes myself, and all the time I was clinging to his huge throat and choking him, and he scratching and biting me, uttering the most savage growls, and endeavouring to get me again in his deathlike embrace. The blood was now streaming from many a serious wound, and every moment I felt myself growing weaker and more weak. At length, with a furious stroke of one of his paws, he knocked my hands aside, and they dropped powerless; and then, as I felt his last awful death-hug, I gave up hope, and thought only that in another moment I should be dead.

But in that moment of living death, with my sight darkened, my brain bursting, my heart crushed, and my soul standing on the verge of another world, there came a flash I did not see, a report I did not hear, and a leaden ball crashed through the head of my foe, shot from the rifle held in the hands of my heroic companion. The bear fell back dead, and his limbs relaxed with a quiver, and I lay as one dead upon his gory breast.

I have no further remembrance of the events of that terrible night. When consciousness returned, daylight was upon the world, and my devoted wife was standing by my head, weeping forth her heart-crushing grief. It was her arms alone that had borne me from the field of battle, and her gentle ministrations that had called my spirit back to an earthly existence.

I recovered slowly, and it was many a long week ere I was again able to shoulder my rifle, and assume to be the defender of my hearth and household. Noble companion of my joys and sorrows! to her I now owed my life, and religiously did I devote it to her happiness, till heaven called her to a home and rest beyond this world of sin and sorrow.

SHOOTING A RHINOCEROS.

We were ploughing our way through long, heavy, wet grass and scrubby thorn-trees, when an old rhinoceros cow got up slowly from behind a thorn-tree, and after giving me a good stare, advanced slowly towards me. I had only my small rifle, my gun-carrier being about twenty yards behind with

my No. 9. I beckoned frantically for him to come on, but he seemed very undecided. At last, however, being a plucky little fellow, he came up, threw the gun at me, case and all, and ran up a tree like a monkey. I lost no time in getting the gun out of the cover, and gave the rhinoceros a ball in the chest. She turned round in double-quick time, panting like a porpoise. I followed, but a Kaffir prevented me from getting very near, so she got away. On climbing the top of the hill I saw two more, and sent my Kaffir below them, thinking they were sure to make down hill. I could not get near them; but just as they were about to make off, I shot one in the shoulder, but rather too low, and away they went. The dogs turned one, and brought him back not fifteen yards from me at full trot, his head up and his tail curled over his back, stepping out in splendid style, with fine, high action. He looked very much inclined to charge me; but a bullet behind his shoulders, which dropped him on his knees, made him alter his course. I felt convinced that I had killed him, and followed him. At last we saw a Lute lying down in so natural a position that I never thought he could be dead, and shot him behind the shoulder; but he had laid down for the last time some hours before. It was the one I had shot first. After cutting out his horns, some sjamboks and his tongue, and hanging them up in a tree, we went off for water, and had not gone far when I saw another, about twenty yards off, looking at me uneasily, and apparently trying to screen herself from being seen. I waited some time till she turned, and then shot her behind the shoulder, when she immediately came at me; but a ball in the centre of her forehead stopped her progress, and she fell dead not ten yards from me: a lucky shot, as I hardly knew where to fire, and I had not an instant to lose. I must have been impaled on her very long horn if I had not been fortunate enough to kill her. She had a young calf, which the dogs were fighting with, and he squealing most lustily. I got them off, and sent off my Kaffirs forthwith for half a dozen fellows to carry him.—*African Hunter.*

DUEL WITH A HIPPOPOTAMUS.

We mustered a strong party of fifteen, including the captain of the kraal, and three fellows to carry beer. We took our blankets with us, and walked a long way without seeing anything. At last an old bull buffalo jumped up close to me, and I gave him a bullet behind the shoulder, which brought him on his knees; but he soon recovered himself and went off. I sent a second ball after him, to no purpose. Farther on, I saw a large sea-bull lying asleep close inland behind some reeds, and proceeded to crawl in on him; and just as I showed myself, half-way to my waist in water, to my surprise, instead of endeavouring to make his escape, he charged right at me, at great speed. He stopped for a second about twenty yards off, and I gave him a pill under the ear, which made him spin round and round like a top. I fired two more bullets into his body without effect, missed him with a third (meant for his head), and began to fear we were to lose him altogether, as he seemed recovering, and was gradually getting farther and farther away into deep water, and giving very poor chances of a shot. The sun was shining so directly on him that I could not see to shoot a bit; the footing was slippery, and I was half-way up to my middle in mud and water, when I got a last chance, and put the ball just between the ear and the eye, and killed him. The sun was fast setting; the Kaffirs got him nearly ashore, and we lighted three huge fires with a cap and powder on the heel plate of my gun, giving it a smart blow with a stone, and fed on him, but he was horribly tough. The night was awfully foggy, and the dew heavy; and, when morning came, I had every symptom of fever. Notwithstanding, I was obliged to walk twenty-five miles home, with scarcely any shade on the road. Many a vow I made, during the day, never to return to the country.—*African Hunting.*

TURTLE EGG BUTTER.—One of the peculiar productions of Brazil, described by Mr. Fletcher, was "turtle-egg butter." There are innumerable turtles on the sand bars of the Amazon, and the natives make it a business, at the proper season, to collect their eggs, which are deposited in the sand. These are thrown into a boat, and when a sufficient quantity has been collected, they are trampled by the feet of the Indians. After a short time an oily substance rises to the surface, and is skimmed off, and this is "turtle-egg butter." Many millions of eggs are destroyed in this way every year, and the article is largely consumed. But Mr. Fletcher confessed that although he had partaken of many strange dishes in the course of his travels, and had learned to relish them, he never could taste turtle-egg butter. He didn't exactly like the manner of churning.

ECHOES FROM THE BELFRY.

BY AN OLD BELL-RINGER.

NO. XVIII.—THE GREAT BELL OF BOW.

THE great bell of Bow had just clanged out the hour of eight.

A lad, about seventeen years of age, clad in the sombre and distinctive garb of an apprentice, was walking rapidly along the Cheap. He was evidently behind time, and in fear of being locked out by his master.

On arriving at a shop, kept by worthy Master Palumbo Brigg, a haberdasher, he knocked timidly with his knuckles at the door.

Mr. Brigg was his master, and had often had occasion to reprimand him for various shortcomings, most notable amongst which was a habit he had of staying out later than was right or proper.

It was a cold, raw night in February. The wind whistled along the deserted thoroughfare, and made the hapless apprentice shiver.

It was sometime before Mr. Brigg, though he heard the knocking well enough, would take any notice of his refractory apprentice. At length, he opened the window, and looked out.

"Who's there?" he cried.

"I, master—I!" replied the apprentice.

"And who may that be?" said Mr. Palumbo Brigg.

"George Banbury—your apprentice, Master Brigg. Don't you know my voice, master?"

"I know you well enough—by the mass, I know you!" replied Mr. Brigg. "What do you want here at this time o' night?"

"It shall not occur again, master. I was at the bear-baiting, and didn't know how the time went."

"Oddsbodkins!" exclaimed Palumbo Brigg. "Is that to be an excuse? How often have I heard the same tale? Go to, sirrah—I'll not humour you! If you will gad, you must 'en take the consequences!"

"Oh, let me in, good master—let me in!" pleaded George Banbury.

"Not I."

"The watch will be here anon, and they will take me with them!"

"Ay, ay; that's true enough! You should have thought of all that before you stayed out!"

"They will have me—the watch will have me!" continued George Banbury, wringing his hands.

"Serve you right, my lad—serve you right!" said Palumbo Brigg, enjoying his apprentice's consternation.

"You'll never have the heart, master, to keep the key turned upon me?"

"Ay, marry, will I!"

"Then if you come of it, you'll have my faults on your head," cried the apprentice.

"Hey! What's this? Insubordination in its worst form! I'll have the watch down upon thee, sirrah!" exclaimed Mr. Brigg, angrily.

George Banbury remained with his arms folded, and maintained a sullen silence.

"Watch, watch!" shouted Mr. Brigg.

His voice found an echo some distance off, and his continued vociferations caused the watch—who were in reality approaching—to accelerate their pace.

George Banbury crouched in the doorway.

"Who calls?" asked the chief of the watch, as he came up.

"'Tis I, good Mr. Officer!" returned Brigg. "There is my refractory apprentice. Lock him up! Keep him on bread and water! We'll tame his obstinate spirit, I'll warrant us!"

Banbury at this moment roused himself.

Just as the officer was about to seize him, he darted between his legs, upsetting the local Dog-berry, thereby compromising his dignity, and sped along the Cheap at his best pace.

The watchmen gave chase, but they were not sufficiently nimble to overtake him, acquainted as he was with every turning, court, and alley in the neighbourhood.

After running as far as old St. Paul's, he stopped to draw breath.

He had escaped, but he dreaded punishment on the morrow.

In the reign of the eighth Henry, the magistrates were very severe with apprentices.

It was only a week back that Charles Harvey, as fine a 'prentice as ever wielded marrow-bone or cleaver (he being a butcher), had been sentenced to be whipped up the Cheap for some trifling offence.