

WILD SCENES
OF
A HUNTER'S LIFE;

OR, THE
HUNTING AND HUNTERS OF ALL NATIONS,
INCLUDING
CUMMING'S AND GIRARD'S ADVENTURES.

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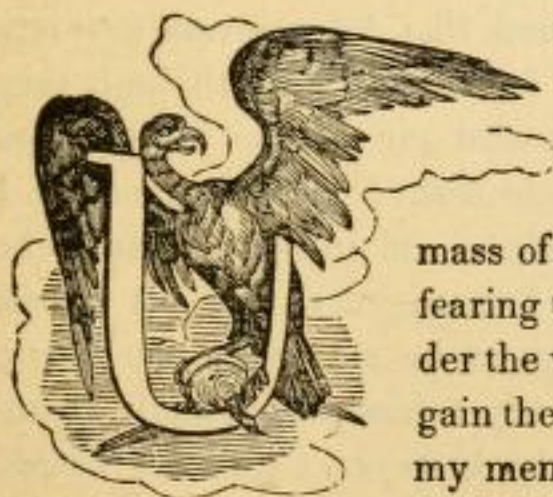
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WHITE RHINOCEROS.

CHAPTER XLVI.

HUNTING THE WHITE RHINOCEROS, LION, BUFFALO AND GIRAFFE.



U PON the 9th, says Mr. Cumming, it rained unceasingly throughout the day, converting the rich soil on which we were encamped into one mass of soft, sticky clay. In the forenoon, fearing the rain would continue so as to render the vley (through which we must pass to gain the firmer ground) impassable, I ordered my men to prepare to march, and leave the tent with its contents standing, the point which I wished to gain being distant only about five hundred yards. When the oxen were inspanned, however, and we attempted to move, we found my tackle, which was old, so rotten from the effects of the rain, that something gave way at every strain. Owing to this and to

the softness of the vley, we labored on till sundown, and only succeeded in bringing one wagon to its destination, the other two remaining fast in the mud in the middle of the vley. Next morning, luckily, the weather cleared up, when my men brought over the tent, and in the afternoon the other two wagons.

We followed up the banks of the river for several days with the usual allowance of sport. On the 16th we came suddenly upon an immense old bull muchocho rolling in mud. He sprang to his feet immediately he saw me, and charging up the bank, so frightened our horses, that before I could get my rifle from my after-rider he was past us. I then gave him chase, and after a hard gallop of about a mile, sprang from my horse and gave him a good shot behind the shoulder. At this moment a cow rhinoceros of the same species, with her calf, charged out of some wait-a-bit thorn cover, and stood right in my path. Observing that she carried an unusually long horn, I turned my attention from the bull to her, and, after a very long and severe chase, dropped her at the sixth shot. I carried one of my rifles, which gave me much trouble, that not being the tool required for this sort of work, where quick loading is indispensable.

After breakfast I sent men to cut off the head of this rhinoceros and proceeded with Ruyter to take up the spoor of the bull wounded in the morning. We found that he was very severely hit, and having followed the spoor for about a mile through very dense thorn cover, he suddenly rustled out of the bushes close ahead of us, accompanied by a whole host of rhinoceros birds. I mounted my horse and gave him chase, and in a few minutes he had received four severe shots. I managed to turn his course toward camp, when I ceased firing, as he seemed to be nearly done up, and Ruyter and I rode slowly behind, occasionally shouting to guide his course. Presently, however, Chukuroo ceased taking any notice of us, and held leisurely on for the river, into a shallow part of which he walked, and after panting there and turning about for a quarter of an hour, he fell over and expired. This was a remarkably fine old bull, and from his dentition it was not improbable that a hundred summers had seen him roaming a

peaceful denzien of the forests and open glades along the fair banks of the secluded Mariqua.

During our march on the 19th we had to cross a range of very rocky hills, covered with large loose stones, and all hands were required to be actively employed for about an hour in clearing them out of the way to permit the wagons to pass. The work went on fast and furious, and the quantity of stones cleared was immense. At length we reached the spot where we were obliged to bid adieu to the Mariqua, and hold a westerly course across the country for Sicheley. At sundown we halted under a lofty mountain, the highest in the district, called "Lynché a Chény," or the Monkey's Mountain.

Next day, at an early hour, I rode out with Ruyter to hunt, my camp being entirely without flesh, and we having been rationed upon very tough old rhinoceros for several days past. It was a cloudy morning, and soon after starting it came on to rain heavily. I, however, held on, skirting a fine, well-wooded range of mountains, and after riding several miles I shot a zebra. Having covered the carcass well over with branches to protect it from the vultures, I returned to camp, and inspanning my wagons, took it up on the march. We continued trekking on until sundown, when we started an immense herd of buffaloes, into which I stalked and shot a huge old bull.

Our march this evening was through the most beautiful country I had ever seen in Africa. We skirted an endless range of well-wooded stony mountains lying on our left, while to our right the country at first sloped gently off, and then stretched away into a level green forest (occasionally interspersed with open glades), boundless as the ocean. This green forest was, however, relieved in one direction by a chain of excessively bold, detached, well-wooded, rocky, pyramidal mountains, which stood forth in grand relief. In advance the picture was bounded by forest and mountain; one bold acclivity, in shape of a dome, standing prominent among its fellows. It was a lovely evening: the sky overcast and gloomy, threw an interesting, wild, mysterious coloring over the landscape. I gazed forth upon the romantic scene before me with intense delight, and

felt melancholy and sorrowful at passing so fleetingly through it, and could not help shouting out, as I marched along, "Where is the coward who would not dare to die for such a land?"

In the morning we held for a fountain some miles ahead in a gorge in the mountains. As we approached the fountain, and were passing close under a steep rocky hill side, well wooded to its summit, I unexpectedly beheld a lion stealing up the rocky face, and, halting behind a tree, he stood overhauling us for some minutes. I resolved to give him battle, and seizing my rifle, marched against him, followed by Carey carrying a spare gun, and by three men leading my dogs, now reduced to eight. When we got close in to the base of the mountain, we found ourselves enveloped in dense jungle, which extended halfway to its summit, and entirely obscured from our eyes objects which were quite apparent from the wagons. I slipped my dogs, however, which, after snuffing about, took right up the steep face on the spoor of the lions, for there was a troop of them—a lion and three lionesses.

The people at the wagons saw the chase in perfection. When the lions observed the dogs coming on, they took right up, and three of them crossed over the sky ridge. The dogs, however, turned one rattling old lioness, which came rumbling down through the cover, close past me. I ran to meet her, and she came to bay in an open spot near the base of the mountain, whither I quickly followed, and coming up within thirty yards, bowled her over with my first shot, which broke her back. My second entered her shoulder; and fearing that she might hurt any of the dogs, as she still evinced signs of life, I finished her with a third in the breast. The bellies of all the four lions were much distended by some game they had been gorging, no doubt a buffalo, as a large herd started out of the jungle immediately under the spot where the noble beasts were first disturbed.

Showers of rain fell every hour throughout the 24th, so I employed my men in making feldt-schoens, or, in other words, African brogues for me. These shoes were worthy of a sportsman, being light, yet strong, and were entirely composed of the skins of game of my shooting. The soles were made of either buffalo or camel

opard : the front part perhaps of koodoo, or hartebeest, or bushbuck and the back of the shoe of lion, or hyæna, or sable antelope, while the rheimpy or thread with which the whole was sewed consisted of a thin strip of the skin of a steinbok.

On the forenoon of the 26th I rode forth to hunt, accompanied by Ruyter ; we held west, skirting the wooded stony mountains. The natives had here many years before waged successful war with elephants, four of whose skulls I found. Presently I came across two sassaybies, one of which I knocked over ; but while I was loading he regained his legs and made off. We crossed a level stretch of forest, holding a northerly course for an opposite range of green, well-wooded hills and valleys. Here I came upon a troop of six fine old bull buffaloes, into which I stalked, and wounded one princely fellow very severely behind the shoulder, bringing blood from his mouth ; he, however, made off with his comrades, and, the ground being very rough we failed to overtake him. They held for the Ngotwani. After following the spoor for a couple of miles, we dropped it, as it led right away from camp.

Returning from this chase, we had an adventure with another old bull buffalo, which shows the extreme danger of hunting buffaloes without dogs. We started him in a green hollow among the hills, and his course inclining for camp, I gave him chase. He crossed the level broad strath and made for the opposite densely-wooded range of mountains. Along the base of these we followed him, sometimes in view, sometimes on the spoor, keeping the old fellow at a pace which made him pant. At length, finding himself much distressed, he had recourse to a singular stratagem. Doubling round some thick bushes which obscured him from our view, he found himself beside a small pool of rain water, just deep enough to cover his body ; into this he walked, and, facing about, lay gently down and awaited our on-coming, with nothing but his old grey face and massive horns above the water, and these concealed from view by rank overhanging herbage.

Our attention was entirely engrossed with the spoor, and thus we rode boldly on until within a few feet of him, when springing to his feet, he made a desperate charge after Ruyter, uttering a

low, stifled roar peculiar to buffaloes (somewhat similar to the growl of a lion), and hurled horse and rider to the earth with fearful violence. His horn laid the poor horse's haunch open to the bone, making the most fearful rugged wound. In an instant Ruyter regained his feet and ran for his life, which the buffalo observing, gave chase, but most fortunately came down with a tremendous somersault in the mud, his feet slipping from under him; thus the Bushman escaped certain destruction. The buffalo rose much discomfited, and, the wounded horse first catching his eye, he went a second time after him, but he got out of the way. At this moment I managed to send one of my patent pacificating pills into his shoulder, when he instantly quitted the field of action, and sought shelter in a dense cover on the mountain side, whither I deemed it imprudent to follow him.

