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- ART. I. — 1. *An Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa.* By JAMES EDWARD ALEXANDER.
2. *Wanderings and Adventures in the Interior of Southern Africa.* By ANDREW STEEDMAN.
3. *Narrative of an Expedition into Southern Africa.* By Capt. W. C. HARRIS.
4. *Missionary Labors and Scenes in Southern Africa.* By ROBERT MOFFAT.

WHAT a wonderful continent it is, this rounded, smooth-shored Africa; known from the earliest dawn of time, yet so unknown; the granary of nations, yet sterile and fruitless as the sea; swarming with life, yet dazzling the eyes of the Moon-men with its vast tracts of glittering sand. North America, first seen but the other day, has been probed from end to end; its gallant and restive Philips, Pontiacs, Tecumthes, and Montezumas have been bridled and broken by the white man; but Africa has seen no Cortez, nor even a De Soto or La Salle, "wringing favors from Fate," as Santa Anna has it. Some solitary Mungo Park, or faithful Lander, or persevering Burckhardt, alone has tried to read the secret of the mother of civilization, the gray-haired Africa.

If we seek a land of romance and mystery, what quarter of the globe can compare with that which holds the pyramids; the giant Theban temples, on one roof of which clusters a modern village; the solemn, hewn mountain-cliff of a Sphinx; the ruins of Carthage; the Nile, with its hidden

startled camelopard convulsively turned, the murderer missed his aim, and fell on his back into the thickly spread bed of thorns. The boy fled in unutterable terror, looking behind him at every step for the pursuer; but when the villagers to whom he told the tale visited the spot, the vultures were sailing round the solitary tree, and — following their noses — they beheld the mighty murderer skewered on the thorns of the shrub, the leaves of which had nourished the giraffe.

Nor is it always the case that the lion succeeds in securing his meal, even when he mounts the helpless acacia eater. On two occasions, Moffat says, he saw giraffes whose shoulders were seamed with the scars of the lion's claws and teeth.

How wonderful it is, that an animal which can bear away the lion on its back, and shake off its iron grasp, — the lion, which carries a bullock as a cat does a mouse, — should yet be so gentle in its nature that the wild bullock, the horse, the deer, are barbarians, red-republicans, compared with it! Is there not some lesson for us in this kindness of the two monsters of physical power on dry land, the elephant and the giraffe? Nor does the great mammalian of the sea seem to differ from them in the absence of an aggressive, Anglo-Saxon disposition. In closing what we have to say especially of this apocryphal creature of twenty-five years since, — a creature whose existence then ranged about with that of the locomotive steam-engine, — we would remind our readers that its name, Giraffe, is the Arabic Xiraffa, or Zerapha, or Seraph; — meaning, whether applied to brute or angel, “the graceful.”

And as the seraph of brighter worlds has his horned antagonist and opposite with the cloven hoof, so has his namesake of the African wilds. For as the giraffe is elegant in form, intelligent, affectionate, playful, and bears no malice even to his captor or his deadly assailant, so his corresponding demon of the desert, the rhinoceros, is ugly to look upon, stupid, devoid of feeling, with a heart as impenetrable as his hide, gloomy, dirty, and bearing malice to all alike.

Four species of this brute range through the south of Africa, attacking lions, elephants, and men. They are not, though, all equally savage, the smallest being the fiercest. A good marksman, however, fears the rhinoceros as little as a

good Christian does his two-footed relative;—a few two-ounce bullets handsomely put in behind the shoulder soon bring the mighty quadruped to the ground. His flesh is greedily devoured by the natives, cooked or raw, as may be most convenient. They do not even stay at all times till the animal is dead; Moffat mentions a case, in which his wild attendants thrust their spears so prematurely into the prostrate body of one which he had shot, that the huge beast heaved himself up again, and tearing the ground with his horn, put the whole bevy, white and black, to ignominious flight.

Nearly related to the rhinoceros in size and unwieldy proportions is that monstrosity of popular works on natural history, the hippopotamus. He is even more difficult to kill than the kindred monster of the plains, plunged as he usually is in mud and water, and vulnerable only behind the ear or in the protuberant eye. His hide is more than an inch and a half in thickness, and stiff as a plank, but it covers a carcase which the epicure of the deserts ranks among his greatest dainties; fat and porklike in its texture and flavor, the native plunges head and arms into the greasy mountain of flesh, and having gorged himself nearly to suffocation, rubs his skin from crown to toe with what he cannot devour, and carries off upon his shoulder all he can stagger under, for a future feast.

But though so vast in bulk, the mighty head of the *beheemoth*, “nine feet in circumference,”* exists not in living nature, but in the stuffed specimens that have been sent home to Europe, and the portraits drawn therefrom; and Capt. Harris says he looked in vain for those ponderous feet with which this “formidable and ferocious quadruped,”—now known to be most helpless and inoffensive,—tramples down whole fields of corn and rice. This great Nimrod, indeed, was quite disgusted with the hippopotamus, looking upon the beast as a complete failure and monstrous hoax.

We have mentioned the refined mode in which the starved two-legged brute of South Africa rushes into the bowels of the great river-hog; with no more ceremony does he treat the more elegant of his fellow-wanderers. The following sketch

* Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*.