

FORTY YEARS OF A SPORTSMAN'S LIFE

BY

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BART.

ILLUSTRATED

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his pony, which fell into a deep cutting with a heavy rush of water that nearly drowned it. The Ascaris buzzed round it like blue-bottle flies, but, though brave men, they are ignorant of handling horses. Rescue came in the form of a Gordon Highlander, a stalwart Ross-shire man, great at tug-of-war at the Strathpeffer meeting, limbs like Donald Dinnie, the great caber-tosser and shot-putter in the 'sixties and 'seventies. With a mighty heave, out came poor little 'Hatrack,' as he was called, like a cork.

"My mount swerving badly two or three times in the straight run in, I got beaten by a nose. However, a match was promptly arranged on the spot, which I won by a length."

The next entry in my diary is dated August 5, and runs as follows:—

August 5, 1905.

"A wire has just been received from Voi, 220 miles from here, saying that two man-eating lions have created a panic in that neighbourhood, so my son and I are just off to see if we cannot add their jackets to our collection.

"The Sotik affair is practically ancient history. The Masai levies have received their share of the cattle, and the remainder are to be sold in Naivasha towards the end of the month. The war indemnity takes the form of the enemy making a road from the Sotik post to Molo Station. The success of the expedition seems to have established a panic among the Nandi chiefs, and what at one time looked rather like a heavy job is likely now to fizzle out.

"Our trip to Voi was a failure, the lions not being



RHINO SHOT BY SIR CLAUDE CHAMPION DE CRESPIGNY NEAR MELANA RIVER.

properly located, and all the surrounding country was thick bush. Even in the comparatively thin portions of the bush, the knives of the savages had, at times, to be called into requisition. There was a considerable amount of various spoors, but as we saw but little game, it obviously harboured in the daytime in bush, which is impenetrable to an unarmoured pedestrian. My son got a long double snap-shot at two half-grown cubs, and killed a spitting snake. This reptile makes remarkably accurate shots up to five or six yards, going for the eyes. Those hit are blinded for a week—olive oil being about the best antidote. We saw a lioness half a mile from Simba (Swahili for lion) Station, just emerging from a bed of rushes for her evening prowl. At Voi I remained up all night on a chair. About half an hour before daylight a lion roared a quarter of a mile off, my son making almost as much row at my elbow snoring; and a leopard took a crow, which I had shot on the previous afternoon, out of the compound. There was no moon.

“ We saw several rhinoceroses from the train. A few stations from here we were warned that one was viewed close to the railway on the south side, which is preserved, so we arranged for the train to be stopped for us and our gun-bearers, should he have crossed to the north and still be in sight. Unhappily he was grazing opposite mile 319, on the wrong side, and we had no horses. If we had had, we could have got him easily, as one of us could have hidden in the long grass on the north side while the other tickled him up with a Derringer or Mauser pistol, when he would have charged for a certainty.

“ This afternoon there is a cricket match on the Gymkhana ground, and a meeting of the Tent Club at the race stand, when those who prefer the pig-skin to leather-hunting will forgather. The meet may be a fairly big one, but most will only be on-lookers, and only four or five of us carry spears.

“ An Ascari in the Sotik expedition had a unique experience. He was a boy in Hicks Pasha's army when it was annihilated, became a Dervish, and fought against us at Omdurman, was recaptured by us, and is now a loyal soldier in the 3rd King's African Rifles.”

The following account of the Tent Club Meeting appeared in the *Times of East Africa* :—

“ The inaugural meet of the above was at the Grand Stand on the racecourse, adjoining which to the E.N.E. is what is locally known as the Pig-Ground.

“ There were present at the meet Lady Champion de Crespigny, Mrs. Stordy, and Mr. and Mrs. Russell Bowker on wheels and mounted, Sir Claude and Captain V. Champion de Crespigny, A.D.C., Messrs. Percival and Griess, with spears, and Mr. and Miss Allen, Mrs. Sanderson, Messrs. Kenyon Slaney, Allen Watson, Buckland (an old Master of the Bombay hounds and veteran pig-sticker) and Goldfinch, without spears. We were not far clear of the racecourse, when several pigs were on foot, unfortunately one grand tusker slipping away across the open near Lady de Crespigny's carriage, unviewed, or from the line he took, he would have led us over the best of galloping ground in the neighbourhood with short grass, so we had to content ourselves with less noble

quarry, each selecting his own pig. Our bursts were short, but though we succeeded in turning several pigs, the long grass towards the papyrus fairly beat us.

“ ‘ After a short dart after a cheetah, who was again favoured by the tussocks and high grass, we formed line for a fresh draw—a big boar plunging through the barbed wire and gaining on us by crossing a watercourse, got unsighted after leading us about a mile; but a fresh pig almost immediately springing up we raced after it, the A.D.C. on the ‘Whale,’ who was none the worse for his gallant victory on Saturday, getting first spear within yard of an earth.

“ ‘ After scratching away for a quarter of an hour a hind leg was espied, when the A.D.C. promptly took a header into the bowels of the earth, his boots just protruding—these were immediately seized by the Game Ranger, and after a desperate tug for dear life out came ten feet of trooper and wartling. The brindle hound Jack and two other dogs settling some little difference, hurricane fighting over the soldier’s body, as he was being extracted, as if they hadn’t got the whole of the Athi plains adjoining for an arena.

“ ‘ So ended a pleasant afternoon’s ride; but in a week’s time when more grass has been burnt, we may anticipate some ripping gallops.’

“ On August 17, the Commissioner’s party of five left for a ‘Safari’ which had been anticipated for some little time, with no little pleasure, though for Sir Donald himself a considerable amount of duty was blended with it—inspecting stations, their accounts, police, etc., settling boundaries, receiving chiefs with their followers, and numerous and various presents,