

FIVE YEARS
OF
A HUNTER'S LIFE
IN THE
FAR INTERIOR OF SOUTH AFRICA.

WITH NOTICES OF THE NATIVE TRIBES, AND ANECDOTES OF THE
CHASE OF THE LION, ELEPHANT, HIPPOPOTAMUS,
GIRAFFE, RHINOCEROS, &c.

By ROUALEYN GORDON CUMMING, Esq.,
OF ALTYRE.

With Illustrations.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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out the forests and jungles of Albany and Caffraria, is utterly unserviceable to man, as its pithy branches, even when dead, are unavailable for fuel. It is, however, interesting, as constituting a favourite food of the elephants which, about twenty-five years ago, frequented the whole of this country in large herds. The footpaths formed through successive ages, by the feet of these mighty animals, are still discernible on the sides and in the necks of some of the forest-clad hills; and the skulls and larger bones of many are at this moment bleaching in some of the forest-kloofs or ravines adjacent to the sea in Lower Albany.

From time immemorial, these interesting and stupendous quadrupeds had maintained their ground throughout these their paternal domains, although they were constantly hunted, and numbers of them were slain, by the neighbouring active and athletic warriors of the Amaponda tribes, on account of their flesh—the ivory so much prized amongst civilized nations being by them esteemed of no value, the only purpose to which they adapt it being the manufacture of rings and ornaments for their fingers and arms. These gallant fellows, armed only with their assegais or light javelins of their own manufacture, were in the constant habit of attacking the gigantic animals, and overpowering them with the accumulated showers of their weapons. At length, however, when the white lords of the creation pitched their camps on the shores of Southern Africa, a more determined and

good humour : they are well formed, if not starved in infancy. They possess pleasing features and very fine eyes and teeth ; their hair is short and woolly ; the colour of their complexion is of a light copper. The various tribes live in kraals, or villages, of various sizes, along with their respective chiefs. Their wigwams are built in a circular form, and thatched with long grass ; the floor and wall, inside and out, are plastered with a compound of clay and cow-dung. The entrances are about three feet high and two feet broad. Each wigwam is surrounded with a hedge of wickerwork, while one grand hedge of wait-a-bit thorns surrounds the entire kraal, protecting the inmates from lions and other animals.

The dress of the men consists of a kaross, or skin cloak, which hangs gracefully from their shoulders ; and another garment, termed tsecha, which encircles their loins, and is likewise made of skin. On their feet they wear a simple sandal formed of the skin of the buffalo or camelopard. On their legs and arms they carry ornaments of brass and copper of different patterns, which are manufactured by themselves. The men also wear a few ornaments of beads round their necks and on their arms. Around their necks, besides beads, they carry a variety of other appendages, the majority of which are believed to possess a powerful charm to preserve them from evil. One of these is a small hollow bone, through which they blow when in peril ;

another is a set of dice formed of ivory, which they rattle in their hands and cast on the ground to ascertain if they are to be lucky in any enterprise in which they may be about to engage; also a host of bits of root and bark which are medicinal. From their necks also depend gourd snuff-boxes made of an extremely diminutive species of pumpkin, trained to grow in a bottle-like shape. They never move without their arms, which consist of a shield, a bundle of assagais, a battle-axe, and a knobkerry. The shields are formed of the hide of the buffalo or camelopard; their shape among some tribes is oval, among others round. The assagai is a sort of light spear or javelin, having a wooden shaft about six feet in length attached to it. Some of these are formed solely for throwing, and a skilful warrior will send one through a man's body at one hundred yards. Another variety of assagai is formed solely for stabbing. The blades of these are stouter, and the shafts shorter and thicker, than the other variety. They are found mostly among the tribes very far in the interior. Their battle-axes are elegantly formed, consisting of a triangular-shaped blade, fastened in a handle formed of the horn of the rhinoceros. The men employ their time in war and hunting, and in dressing the skins of wild animals. The dress of the women consists of a kaross depending from the shoulders, and a short kilt formed of the skin of the pallah, or some other antelope. Around their necks, arms, waists, and

ankles they wear large and cumbrous coils of beads of a variety of colours, tastefully arranged in different patterns. The women chiefly employ their time in cultivating their fields and gardens, in which they rear corn, pumpkins, and water-melons; and likewise in harvesting their crops and grinding their corn. Both men and women go bareheaded: they anoint their heads with "sibelo," a shining composition, being a mixture of fat and a grey sparkling ore, having the appearance of mica. Some of the tribes besmear their bodies with a mixture of fat and red clay, imparting to them the appearance of Red Indians. Most of the tribes possess cattle; these are attended to and milked solely by the men, a woman being never allowed to set foot within the cattle-kraal. Polygamy is allowed, and any man may keep as many wives as he pleases: the wife, however, has in the first instance to be purchased. Among tribes possessed of cattle the price of a wife is ten head of cattle; but among the poorer tribes a wife may be obtained for a few spades with which they cultivate their fields. These spades, which are manufactured by themselves, are fastened in the end of a long shaft, and are used as our labourers use the hoe. Rows of women may be seen digging together in the fields singing songs, to which they keep time with their spades.

The name of the chief at Motito was Motchuara, a subordinate of the great chief Mahura. He was very

anxious that I should remain a day with him, for the purpose of trading in ostrich-feathers and karosses ; but being anxious to push forward, I resumed my march in the afternoon, and trekked on till near midnight, when I encamped in an extensive forest of grey and ancient-looking camel-dorn trees. These were the finest I had yet seen in Africa, each tree assuming a wide-spreading and picturesque appearance. They were detached and in groups, like oaks in an English deer-park. Many of them were inhabited by whole colonies of the social grosbeak, a bird with whose wonderful habitations the branches were loaded. These remarkable birds, which are about the size and appearance of the British greenfinch, construct their nests and live socially together under one common roof, the whole fabric being formed of dry grass, and exhibiting at a short distance the appearance of a haycock stuck up in the tree. The entrances to the nests are from beneath. They are built side by side, and when seen from below resemble a honeycomb.

At dawn of day on the following morning we continued our march through the venerable camel-dorn forest. The road was extremely heavy, consisting of soft loose sand. Having proceeded about six miles, emerging from the forest, we entered once more on a wide-spreading open country, covered in some parts with bushes, and in others only with grass. Another hour brought us to Little Chooi, a large saltpan, where we obtained water for ourselves and

cattle from a deep pit made by men. In sight were a few zebras, ostriches, and springboks. In the forenoon a number of cattle, belonging to Mahura, came to drink at the pit. Some of these carried enormous wide-spreading horns. Mahura and his tribe possess immense herds of cattle, the majority of which they "lifted" or obtained in war from other Bechuana tribes. Some years before this, Mahura, assisted by another tribe, had attacked Sobiqua, king of the Bawangketse, a tribe inhabiting the borders of the great Kalahari desert, whom they routed, and succeeded in driving off the majority of their vast herds. Upon this, Sobiqua and his tribe fled with the remainder of the cattle across a portion of the desert to the westward, and for some years located themselves on the borders of a vast inland lake. This mysterious lake the natives in the vale of Bakatla state to be situated due west from their position; while the natives of Bamangwato, situated two hundred and fifty miles to the northward, always pointed out to me the north-west as its position. They represented to me that the natives on its banks were possessed of canoes; that its waters were salt; and that every day the waters retired to feed, and again returned, by which I understood that this lake, whatever it may be, is affected by some tide.

At three P.M. we inspanned, and held on till midnight with fine moonlight, crossing a desert and sandy country. In the vicinity of Chooi we passed an extensive range of

old pitfalls, formed by the natives for entrapping game. They were dug in the form of a crescent, and occupied an extent of nearly a quarter of a mile. On the march I observed some enormous trunks of trees that had been destroyed by fire in bygone years. On the following day we reached Loharon, an uninteresting and desolate spot, where we encamped for the day beside a pool of rain-water. Here I observed a few hartebeests, sassaybys, and zebras. On the 20th, having breakfasted, we in-spanned, and continued our march till sunset. We passed through a very level country, covered with detached bushes. The dulness of the scene, however, was enlivened by a wondrous flight of locusts, the largest I had ever beheld. The prospect was obscured by them as far as we could see, resembling the smoke arising from a thousand giant bonfires ; while those above our heads darkened our path with a double flight—the one next the ground flying north, while the upper clouds of them held a southerly course. The dogs, as usual, made a hearty meal on them.

We continued our march by moonlight, halting at midnight in a vast open plain beside a small pool of rain-water. After breakfast I rode forth in quest of spring-boks, of which I bagged a couple. I fell in with blue and black wildebeests, zebras, ostriches, and blesboks. The plains here were bare and open, resembling the country frequented by the blesboks to the southward of

the Vaal, with which country I subsequently ascertained it to be connected, in a due southerly course, by an endless succession of similar bare plains, throughout the entire extent of which the blesbok and black wildebeest are abundant. While galloping after a herd of zebras, "The Immense Brute" put his foot into a hole, and came down with great violence on his head, pitching me over his bows. I saved my rifle at the risk of sacrificing my collar-bone; and would have escaped without further injury than the loss of a portion of the bark of my cheek, had not my horse described a somersault, coming down with the broad of his back on the calf of my right leg, and bruising it so severely as to incapacitate me from walking for several days. About midday we resumed our march, and in the evening we reached Great Chooi, a very large saltpan at present full of water. Here I found, for the first time, the bones and skull of a rhinoceros long killed. My interpreter informed me that the rhinoceros had long left that country; to his surprise, however, we discovered fresh spoor by the fountain. Continuing our march, on the 22nd we entered on a new description of country; boundless open plains being succeeded by endless forests of dwarfish trees and bushes, the ground slightly undulating, and covered with a variety of rich grasses and aromatic herbs. The old and seldom-trodden waggon-track which we followed seemed a favourite footpath for a troop of lions, their large and

out the interior of South Africa, but it is rare and very seldom seen.

It was on the 4th of June that I beheld for the first time the rhinoceros. Having taken some coffee, I rode out unattended, with my rifle, and before proceeding far I fell in with a huge white rhinoceros with a large calf, standing in a thorny grove. Getting my wind, she set off at top speed through thick thorny bushes, the calf, as is invariably the case, taking the lead, and the mother guiding its course by placing her horn, generally about three feet in length, against its ribs. My horse shied very much at first, alarmed at the strange appearance of "Chukuroo," but by a sharp application of spur and jambok I prevailed upon him to follow, and presently, the ground improving, I got alongside, and, firing at the gallop, sent a bullet through her shoulder. She continued her pace with blood streaming from the wound, and very soon reached an impracticable thorny jungle, where I could not follow, and instantly lost her. In half an hour I fell in with a second rhinoceros, being an old bull of the white variety. Dismounting, I crept within twenty yards, and saluted him with both barrels in the shoulder, upon which he made off, uttering a loud blowing noise, and upsetting everything that obstructed his progress.

Shortly after this I found myself on the banks of the stream beside which my waggons were outspanned.

Following along its margin, I presently beheld a bull of the borèlé, or black rhinoceros, standing within a hundred yards of me. Dismounting from my horse I secured him to a tree, and then stalked within twenty yards of the huge beast under cover of a large strong bush. Borèlé, hearing me advance, came on to see what it was, and suddenly protruded his horny nose within twenty yards of me. Knowing well that a front shot would not prove deadly, I sprang to my feet and ran behind the bush. Upon this the villain charged, blowing loudly, and chased me round the bush. Had his activity been equal to his ugliness, my wanderings would have terminated here, but by my superior agility I had the advantage in the turn. After standing a short time eyeing me through the bush, he got a whiff of my wind, which at once alarmed him. Uttering a blowing noise, and erecting his insignificant yet saucy-looking tail, he wheeled about, leaving me master of the field, when I sent a bullet through his ribs to teach him manners.¹

¹ Of the rhinoceros there are four varieties in South Africa, distinguished by the Bechuanas by the names of the borèlé or black rhinoceros, the keitloa or two-horned black rhinoceros, the muchocho or common white rhinoceros, and the kobaoba or long-horned white rhinoceros. Both varieties of the black rhinoceros are extremely fierce and dangerous, and rush headlong and unprovoked at any object which attracts their attention. They never attain much fat, and their flesh is tough, and not much esteemed by the Bechuanas. Their food consists almost entirely of the thorny branches of the wait-a-bit thorns. Their horns are much shorter than those of the

Finding that rhinoceroses were abundant in the vicinity, I resolved to halt a day for the purpose of hunting, and after an early breakfast on the 6th I rode south-east

other varieties, seldom exceeding eighteen inches in length. They are finely polished with constant rubbing against the trees. The skull is remarkably formed, its most striking feature being the tremendous thick ossification in which it ends above the nostrils. It is on this mass that the horn is supported. The horns are not connected with the skull, being attached merely by the skin, and they may thus be separated from the head by means of a sharp knife. They are hard and perfectly solid throughout, and are a fine material for various articles, such as drinking cups, mallets for rifles, handles for turner's tools, &c. &c. The horn is capable of a very high polish. The eyes of the rhinoceros are small and sparkling, and do not readily observe the hunter, provided he keep to leeward of them. The skin is extremely thick, and only to be penetrated by bullets hardened with solder. During the day the rhinoceros will be found lying asleep or standing indolently in some retired part of the forest, or under the base of the mountains, sheltered from the power of the sun by some friendly grove of umbrella-topped mimosas. In the evening they commence their nightly ramble, and wander over a great extent of country. They usually visit the fountains between the hours of nine and twelve o'clock at night, and it is on these occasions that they may be most successfully hunted, and with the least danger. The black rhinoceros is subject to paroxysms of unprovoked fury, often ploughing up the ground for several yards with its horn, and assaulting large bushes in the most violent manner. On these bushes they work for hours with their horns, at the same time snorting and blowing loudly, nor do they leave them in general until they have broken them into pieces. The rhinoceros is supposed by many, and by myself among the rest, to be the animal alluded to by Job, chap. xxxix. verses 10 and 11, where it is written, "Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great? or wilt thou

with the two Baquaines. They led me along the bases of the mountains, through woody dells and open glades, and we eventually reached a grand forest grey with age.

leave thy labour to him?" evidently alluding to an animal possessed of great strength and of untamable disposition, for both of which the rhinoceros is remarkable. All the four varieties delight to roll and wallow in mud, with which their rugged hides are generally encrusted. Both varieties of the black rhinoceros are much smaller and more active than the white, and are so swift that a horse with a rider on his back can rarely overtake them. The two varieties of the white rhinoceros are so similar in habits, that the description of one will serve for both; the principal difference consisting in the length and set of the anterior horn; that of the *muchocho* averaging from two to three feet in length, and pointing backwards; while the horn of the *kobaoba* often exceeds four feet in length, and inclines forward from the nose at an angle of 45° . The posterior horn of either species seldom exceeds six or seven inches in length. The *kobaoba* is the rarer of the two, and it is found very far in the interior, chiefly to the eastward of the Limpopo. Its horns are very valuable for loading rods, supplying a substance at once suitable for a sporting implement and excellent for the purpose. Both these varieties of rhinoceros attain an enormous size, being the animals next in magnitude to the elephant. They feed solely on grass, carry much fat, and their flesh is excellent, being preferable to beef. They are of a much milder and more inoffensive disposition than the black rhinoceros, rarely charging their pursuer. Their speed is very inferior to that of the other varieties, and a person well mounted can overtake and shoot them. The head of these is a foot longer than that of the *borèlé*. They generally carry their heads low, whereas the *borèlé*, when disturbed, carries his very high, which imparts to him a saucy and independent air. Unlike the elephants, they never associate in herds, but are met with singly or in pairs. In districts where they are abundant, from three to six may be found in company, and I once saw upwards of a dozen congregated together on some young grass, but such an occurrence is rare.

Here we found abundance of spoor of a variety of game, and started several herds of the more common varieties. At length I observed an old bull eland standing under a tree. He was the first that I had seen, and was a noble specimen, standing about six feet high at the shoulder. Observing us, he made off at a gallop, springing over the trunks of decayed trees which lay across his path; but very soon he reduced his pace to a trot. Spurring my horse, another moment saw me riding hard behind him. Twice in the thickets I lost sight of him, and he very nearly escaped me; but at length, the ground improving, I came up with him, and rode within a few yards behind him. Long streaks of foam now streamed from his mouth, and a profuse perspiration had changed his sleek grey coat to an ashy blue. Tears trickled from his large dark eye, and it was plain that the eland's hours were numbered. Pitching my rifle to my shoulder, I let fly at the gallop, and mortally wounded him behind; then spurring my horse, I shot past him on his right side, and discharged my other barrel behind his shoulder, when the eland staggered for a moment and subsided in the dust.¹ The

¹ This magnificent animal is by far the largest of all the antelope tribe, exceeding a large ox in size. It also attains an extraordinary condition, being often burthened with a very large amount of fat. Its flesh is most excellent, and is justly esteemed above all others. It has a peculiar sweetness, and is tender and fit for use the moment the animal is killed. Like the gemsbok, the eland is independent of water, and frequents the borders of the great

two Baquaines soon made their appearance, and seemed delighted at my success. Having kindled a fire, they cut out steaks, which they roasted on the embers: I also cooked a steak for myself, spitting it upon a forked branch, the other end of which I sharpened with my knife and stuck into the ground.

Having eaten my steak, I rode to my waggons, where I partook of coffee, and having mounted a fresh horse I again set forth, accompanied by Carollus leading a pack-horse, to bring home the head of the eland and a supply of the flesh: I took all my dogs along with me to share in the banquet. We had not proceeded far when the dogs went ahead on some scent. Spurring my horse, I followed through the thorny bushes as best I might, and, emerging on an open glade, I beheld two huge white

Kalahari desert in herds varying from ten to a hundred. It is also generally diffused throughout all the wooded districts of the interior where I have hunted. Like other varieties of deer and antelope, the old males may often be found consorting together apart from the females, and a troop of these, when in full condition, may be likened to a herd of stall-fed oxen. The eland has less speed than any other variety of antelope; and, by judicious riding, they may be driven to camp from a great distance. In this manner I have often ridden the best bull out of the herd, and brought him within gunshot of my waggons, where I could more conveniently cut up and preserve the flesh, without the trouble of sending men and pack-oxen to fetch it. I have repeatedly seen an eland drop down dead at the end of a severe chase, owing to his plethoric habit. The skin of the eland I had just shot emitted, like most other antelopes, the most delicious perfume of trees and grass.

rhinoceroses trotting along before me. The dogs attacked them with fury, and a scene of intense excitement ensued. The Old Grey, on observing them, pricked up his ears and seemed only half inclined to follow, but a sharp application of the spur reminded him of his duty, and I was presently riding within ten yards of the stern of the largest, and sent a bullet through her back. The Old Grey shied considerably and became very unmanageable, and on one occasion, in consequence, the rhinoceros, finding herself hemmed in by a bend in a watercourse, turned round to charge: I had a very narrow escape. Presently, galloping up on one side, I gave her a bad wound in the shoulder, soon after which she came to bay in the dry bed of a river. Dismounting from my horse, I commenced loading, but before this was accomplished she was off once more. I followed her putting on my caps as I rode, and coming up alongside I made a fine shot from the saddle, firing at the gallop. The ball entered somewhere near her heart. On receiving this shot she reeled about, while torrents of blood streamed from her mouth and wounds, and presently she rolled over and expired, uttering a shrill screaming sound as she died, which rhinoceroses invariably do while in the agonies of death.

The chase had led me close in along the northern base of a lofty detached mountain, the highest in all that country. This mountain is called by the Bechuanas the

Mountain of the Eagles. The eland which I had shot in the morning lay somewhere to the southward of this mountain, but far in the level forest. Having rounded the mountain, I began to recognise the ground, and presently I had the satisfaction to behold a few vultures soaring over the forest in advance, and, on proceeding a short distance farther, large groups of these birds were seated on the grey and weather-beaten branches of the loftiest old trees of the forest. This was a certain sign that the eland was not far distant ; and on raising my voice and loudly calling on the name of Carollus, I was instantly answered by that individual, who, heedless of his master's fate, was actively employed in cooking for himself a choice steak from the dainty rump of the eland. That night I slept beneath the blue and starry canopy of heaven. My sleep was light and sweet, and no rude dreams or hankering cares disturbed the equanimity of my repose.

CHAPTER XII.

My Hottentots object to advance farther into the Interior—A Boar Hunt — We march through a charming Country — The Mountain Pass of Sesetabie — A Lion and Lioness inspect my Cattle, and the Lion pays for peeping — Hungry Hyænas sup upon the Cattle Furniture — The Camelopard — Description of its Habits — Booby, a Bechuana Kraal — Gun Medicine — Disastrous Finale to an Incantation — Native Conspiracy to prevent my farther Progress.

At an early hour on the 7th we arose, and, having loaded the pack-horse with a burden of flesh and fat, I despatched one of the Baquaines with him to camp. Carollus and I then rode for the rhinoceros to secure the horn. On nearing the carcass, a noble bull-buffalo stood within thirty yards of me, but I had omitted to put on my caps. Lions had consumed a large part of the rhinoceros, and had sneaked off on hearing us approach, leaving, as is usual, matted locks from their shaggy grey manes sticking on the broken points of the projecting ribs. My dogs on scenting them ran barking angrily in the direction which the lions had held, springing up into the air with their hair bristling along their backs. With considerable difficulty we separated the horn of the muchocho from the skin by means of a long sharp knife. It was nearly

three feet in length, and measured almost a foot in diameter at the base. This being accomplished, we returned to camp. Here I found that Isaac had not been idle in forwarding his own views. I at once saw that my followers had something unusual on their minds; blackness and dismay were plainly written on every countenance. I had scarcely seated myself beside the fire, when Isaac approached me with a slow funereal step, and horror depicted in his face, and asked me if I had heard the news. I replied, What news? He went on to state that on the preceding evening two men of the Bamangwato tribe had passed my waggons on their way to Bakatla, to warn that tribe of the on-coming of the cruel and warlike Matabili (whose powerful chief, Moselekatse, has been so ably described in the pages of my fellow-sportsman Captain Harris). These they represented as having a few days previously attacked and plundered various Bechuana tribes to the northward, and that they were now advancing by rapid marches to devastate the country and murder the inhabitants of these parts.

This I at once knew to be a fabrication to prevent my penetrating farther, and I laughed at Isaac and told him he had dreamed it; to which he replied, "Yes, you will not listen to my advice, when you are warned of danger, but both you and your men will one day acknowledge the truth of my forebodings." I had considerable diffi-



The Black Rhinoceros Goring Chase

disposition, I determined to bring matters to a crisis ; so, spurring my horse, I dashed ahead, and rode right in his path. Upon this the hideous monster instantly charged me in the most resolute manner, blowing loudly through his nostrils ; and although I quickly wheeled about to my left, he followed me at such a furious pace for several hundred yards, with his horrid horny snout within a few yards of my horse's tail, that my little Bushman, who was looking on in great alarm, thought his master's destruction inevitable. It was certainly a very near thing ; my horse was extremely afraid, and exerted his utmost energies on the occasion. The rhinoceros, however, wheeled about and continued his former course ; and I, being perfectly satisfied with the interview which I had already enjoyed with him, had no desire to cultivate his acquaintance any further, and accordingly made for camp. We left the fountain of Boötlonamy the same day, and marched about six miles through an old grey forest of mimosas, when we halted for the night. Large flocks of guinea-fowls roosted in the trees around our encampment, several of which I shot for my supper.

On the 23rd we inspanned by moonlight, and continued our march through a thinly-wooded level country. It was a lovely morning ; the sun rose in great splendour, and the sky was beautifully overcast with clouds. Having proceeded about ten miles, the country became thickly covered with detached forest-trees and groves of wait-a-bit

thorns. The guides now informed us that the water, which is called by the Bechuanas "Lepeby," was only a short distance in advance ; upon which I saddled steeds, and rode ahead with the Bushman, intending to hunt for an hour before breakfast. Presently we reached an open glade in the forest, where I observed a herd of zebras in advance ; and on my left stood a troop of springboks, with two leopards watching them from behind a bush. I rode on, and soon fell in with a troop of hartebeests, and, a little after, with a large herd of blue wildebeests and pallahs. I followed these for some distance, when they were reinforced by two other herds of pallahs and wildebeests. Three black rhinoceroses now trotted across my path. Presently I sprang from my horse, and fired right and left at a princely bull blue wildebeest. He got both balls, but did not fall ; and I immediately lost sight of him in the dense ranks of his shaggy companions. The game increased as we proceeded, until the whole forest seemed alive with a variety of beautifully coloured animals. On this occasion I was very unfortunate ; I might have killed any quantity of game if venison had been my object ; but I was trying to get a few very superior heads of some of the master bucks of the pallahs. Of these I wounded four select old bucks, but in the dust and confusion caused by the innumerable quantity of the game I managed to lose them all.

We had now ridden many miles from the waggons ;

and feeling faint from want of food, I dropped the chase in disgust, and, without looking at my compass, ordered the Bushman to go ahead. My attention had been so engrossed with the excitement of the pursuit, that I had not the remotest idea of the course I had taken, and the whole country exhibited such an aspect of sameness, that there was no landmark nor eminence of any description by which to steer. Having ridden many miles through the forest, I at length asked the Bushman, in whom on such occasions I generally placed great confidence, if he was sure he was riding in the right direction, and, as he appeared quite confident, I allowed him to proceed. At length he said that we had gone a little too far to the left, and led me away several miles to the right, which was westerly; whereas the waggons eventually proved to be a long way to the east. I felt convinced that we were wrong, and, reining up, a discussion arose between us, the Bushman still maintaining that we must ride west, whilst I was certain that our course should be east. I now adopted my own opinion, and, having ridden many miles in an easterly direction, we were at one time close upon the waggons, when the thick-headed Bushman declared that if I persevered we should never see the waggons again, and I with equal stupidity yielded to his advice, and a south-westerly course was once more adopted. Having ridden for many miles, I again reined up, and again told the Bushman we were wrong; upon which he

for the first time acknowledged that he knew nothing at all about the matter, but stated it to be his impression that we ought to ride farther to the west. My head was so confused that I lost all recollection of how we had ridden; and while I was deliberating what I should do, I observed a volume of smoke a long way to the north, which I at once imagined had been kindled by my followers to guide their lost master to the waggons.

With revived spirits, I stirred my jaded steed, and made for the smoke; but, alas! this only served to lead me farther astray. After riding many miles in that direction, I discovered that the fire was at an amazing distance, and could not have been kindled by my men; it was the wild Bakalahari of the desert burning the old dry grass. I was now like a seaman in a hurricane—at my wit's end—I knew not how to ride nor what to do. The sun, which had just risen when I left the waggons, was about to set. There was no landmark whatever by which to steer; I might wander for days, and not discover water.

To find the waggons was comparatively a trifle. I thought little of them; it was the thought of water that harrowed my mind. Already the pangs of thirst began to seize me. I had ridden all day, under the hot sun, and had neither eaten nor drunk since early the preceding evening. I felt faint and weary; and my heart sank as horrible visions of a lingering death by mad-

dening thirst arose before me. Dismounting from my horse, I sat down to think what I should do. I knew exactly by my compass the course we had been steering since we left Booby. I accordingly resolved to ride south-west for many miles, the course of the waggons having been north-east, and then to send Ruyter across the country a little to the north of west, while I should hold a corresponding course in an easterly direction. By this means one of us could not fail to find the spoor, and I arranged that at nightfall we should meet at some conspicuous tree. Having thus resolved, I mounted my horse, which was half dead with thirst and fatigue, and, having ridden south-west for several miles, I and Ruyter separated at a conspicuous tree, and rode in opposite directions. Before riding far I recognised the country as being the spot where I had seen the leopards in the morning. I at once followed Ruyter, and fired several signal shots, which he fortunately heard, and soon joined me. We then rode due east, and eventually, to my inexpressible gratification, we discovered the spoor of the waggons, which we reached after following it for about four miles in a north-easterly direction.

Our poor horses were completely exhausted, and could barely walk to the camp. I found my waggons drawn up beside the strong fountain of Lepeby, which, issuing from beneath a stratum of white tufous rock, formed an extensive deep pool of pure water, adorned on one side

with lofty green reeds. This fountain was situated at the northern extremity of a level bare vley, surrounded by dense covers of the wait-a-bit thorns. Such a peculiar sameness characterized the country, that a person wandering only a few hundred yards from the fountain, would have considerable difficulty in regaining it. It was night when I reached the waggons, and two or three cups of coffee soon restored me to my wonted vigour.

On the following morning, from earliest dawn until we trekked, which we did about ten A.M., large herds of game kept pouring in to drink from every side, completely covering the open space, and imparting to it the appearance of a cattle-fair; blue wildebeests, zebras, sassaybys, pallahs, springboks, &c., capered fearlessly up to the water, troop after troop, within two hundred yards of us. In former years a tribe of Bechuanas had frequented this fountain, and I beheld the skeletons of many rhinoceroses and of one elephant bleaching in the sun; but the powerful and cruel Matabili had attacked the tribe, and driven them to seek a home elsewhere. I shot a pallah and a wildebeest, which we secured behind the waggons. About ten A.M. we inspanned, and within a mile of Lepeby we passed through another similar open vley, containing a strong fountain of delicious water. We continued our march till sundown through an undulating open country, thinly covered with detached trees and thorny bushes, and encamped in a sandy desert without water.

always frequenting the freshest and most verdant districts of the forest ; and when one district is parched and barren, he will forsake it for years and wander to great distances in quest of better pasture.

The elephant entertains an extraordinary horror of man, and a child can put a hundred of them to flight by passing at a quarter of a mile to windward ; and when thus disturbed, they go a long way before they halt. It is surprising how soon these sagacious animals are aware of the presence of a hunter in their domains. When one troop has been attacked, all the other elephants frequenting the district are aware of the fact within two or three days, when they all forsake it, and migrate to distant parts, leaving the hunter no alternative but to inspan his waggons, and remove to fresh ground. This constitutes one of the greatest difficulties which a skilful elephant-hunter encounters. Even in the most remote parts, which may be reckoned the head-quarters of the elephant, it is only occasionally, and with inconceivable toil and hardship, that the eye of the hunter is cheered by the sight of one. Owing to habits peculiar to himself, the elephant is more inaccessible, and much more rarely seen, than any other game quadruped, excepting certain rare antelopes. They choose for their resort the most lonely and secluded depths of the forest, generally at a very great distance from the rivers and fountains at which they drink. In dry and warm weather they visit these waters

nightly ; but in cool and cloudy weather they drink only once every third or fourth day. About sundown the elephant leaves his distant midday haunt, and commences his march towards the fountain, which is probably from twelve to twenty miles distant. This he generally reaches between the hours of nine and midnight ; when, having slaked his thirst and cooled his body by spouting large volumes of water over his back with his trunk, he resumes the path to his forest solitudes. Having reached a secluded spot, I have remarked that full-grown bulls lie down on their broadsides, about the hour of midnight, and sleep for a few hours. The spot which they usually select is an anthill, and they lie around it with their backs resting against it ; these hills, formed by the white ants, are from thirty to forty feet in diameter at their base. The mark of the under tusk is always deeply imprinted in the ground, proving that they lie upon their sides. I never remarked that females had thus lain down, and it is only in the more secluded districts that the bulls adopt this practice ; for I observed that, in districts where the elephants were liable to frequent disturbance, they took repose standing on their legs beneath some shady tree. Having slept, they then proceed to feed extensively. Spreading out from one another, and proceeding in a zigzag course, they smash and destroy all the finest trees in the forest which happen to lie in their course. The number of goodly trees which a herd of

bull elephants will thus destroy is utterly incredible. They are extremely capricious, and on coming to a group of five or six trees they break down not unfrequently the whole of them, when, having perhaps only tasted one or two small branches, they pass on and continue their wanton work of destruction. I have repeatedly ridden through forests where the trees thus broken lay so thick across one another that it was almost impossible to ride through the district; and it is in situations such as these that attacking the elephant is attended with most danger. During the night they will feed in open plains and thinly wooded districts; but as day dawns, they retire to the densest covers within reach, which nine times in ten are composed of the impracticable wait-a-bit thorns; and here they remain drawn up in a compact herd during the heat of the day. In remote districts, however, and in cool weather, I have known herds to continue pasturing throughout the whole day.

The appearance of the wild elephant is inconceivably majestic and imposing. His gigantic height and colossal bulk, so greatly surpassing all other quadrupeds, combined with his sagacious disposition and peculiar habits, impart to him an interest in the eyes of the hunter which no other animal can call forth. The pace of the elephant when undisturbed is a bold, free, sweeping step; and from the peculiar spongy formation of his foot, his tread is extremely light and inaudible, and all his movements

In the evening one of the parties sent out to seek for the spoor of elephants returned to camp, stating that a small tribe of Bakalahari, who resided in a range of mountains to the east, reported these beasts to frequent the forests in the vicinity of their abode, and Mutchuisho, Sicomy's uncle, who attended me whilst hunting his country, accordingly requested me to hold myself in readiness to accompany him in quest of the elephants at an early hour next day. It was customary with me to console myself, when hope had almost died under a long-continued run of bad luck, by saying to myself that "Patience will have her perfect work," thus making up my mind that a man who is a good stalker and a fair rifle-shot must eventually obtain by perseverance whatever game he seeks

which he invariably makes off. I have often hunted a rhinoceros on horseback, which led me a chase of many miles, and required a number of shots before he fell, during which chase several of these birds remained by the rhinoceros to the last. They reminded me of mariners on the deck of some bark sailing on the ocean, for they perched along his back and sides; and as each of my bullets told on the shoulder of the rhinoceros, they ascended about six feet into the air, uttering their harsh cry of alarm, and then resumed their position. It sometimes happened that the lower branches of trees, under which the rhinoceros passed, swept them from their living deck, but they always recovered their former station; they also adhere to the rhinoceros during the night. I have often shot these animals at midnight when drinking at the fountains, and the birds, imagining they were asleep, remained with them till morning, and on my approaching, before taking flight, they exerted themselves to their utmost to awaken Chukuroo from his deep sleep.

to kill. But in the present instance things looked so bad that I had begun to think it not improbable that I might be compelled to leave the Bamangwato country without again even seeing what my heart so ardently desired, viz. an old bull elephant free in his native forests; and day and night I mourned my folly in losing the opportunity which I had neglected on the 27th day of June.

But Patience *will* have her perfect work, and the day had at last arrived which was to repay my steady perseverance with complete success. At an early hour on the 24th, upon the strength of the report brought to us on the preceding evening, I took the field with Isaac and Kleinboy as after-riders, accompanied by Mutchuisho and a hundred and fifty of his tribe. We held a north-easterly course, and, having proceeded about five miles through the forest, we reached a fountain, where I observed the spoor of a herd of cow elephants, two days old. Here we made a short halt, and snuff was briskly circulated, while the leading men debated on the course we were to follow, and it was agreed that we should hold for the Bakalahari kraal. Having continued our course for several miles, we rounded the northern extremity of a range of rocky mountains which rose abruptly in the forest and stretched away to the south of east in a long-continued chain. Here we were met by men whom Mutchuisho had despatched before daybreak, who said that the Bakalahari women had that morning seen ele-

phants. This was joyous news. My hopes were high, and I at once felt certain that the hour of triumph was at hand. But disappointment was still in store for me. We all sat down on the grass, while men were despatched to bring the Bakalahari, and when these came we ascertained that it was only spoor and not elephants they had seen. We held on for an inspection of it; and here I was further to be disappointed, the spoor proving to be two days old.

The country now before me was a vast level forest, extending to the north and east for about twenty miles without a break. At that distance, however, the landscape was shut in by blue mountain ranges of considerable height, and two bold conical mountains standing close together rose conspicuous above the rest. These mountains the Bamangwato men informed me were their ancient habitation, and that of their forefathers, but the cruel Matabili had driven them from thence to the rocky mountains which they now occupy. We continued our course in an easterly direction, and twice crossed the gravelly bed of a periodical river, in which were several small springs of excellent water. These springs had been exposed by elephants, which had cleared away the gravel with their trunks. Around these springs the spoor of rhinoceros was abundant. After proceeding several miles through a dry and barren tract, where wait-a-bit thorns prevailed, we entered upon more interesting ground.