

Wm D. Anderson
THE

WILD SPORTS

1853.

OF

SOUTHERN AFRICA;

BEING

THE NARRATIVE OF A HUNTING EXPEDITION FROM THE

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE,

THROUGH

THE TERRITORIES OF THE CHIEF MOSELEKATSE,

TO THE

TROPIC OF CAPRICORN.

BY

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CORNWALLIS HARRIS,

OF THE H. E. I. COMPANY'S ENGINEERS ON THE BOMBAY ESTABLISHMENT.

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handling, and the presentation of two bunches of beads to himself, and a brass-wire collar to his little son, whilst it firmly cemented our friendship, terminated our acquaintance for ever, under a parting assurance, that he had made a favourable report of us to his royal master, who was, he said, "*Monanti, Monanti, Monanti,*" or in plain English, the most gracious of sovereigns.

As the waggons proceeded, we turned off the road in search of a rhinoceros, and speedily became so entangled in a labyrinth of thorn fences, newly constructed to entrap game, that we had great difficulty in extricating ourselves. Stiff thorn branches, too high to be surmounted, were firmly fixed in the ground, and so entwined amidst a dense grove of mimosas, that after fruitless endeavours to force a passage in various places, we found that we had ridden completely round the enclosure, to the point at which we had first entered.

In the course of two hours the waggons had reached the termination of the plain, and were beginning to ascend the ridge which bounds the valley of Mosega. We shortly afterwards entered a pass, or gap, which conducted us between two ranges of the Kurrichane hills; the slopes on either side were covered with stately trees, from which depended clusters of moss and festoons of various parasitic plants. The ground was broken and stony, and in parts abounded with deep holes. In the act of killing a sassaybe, my horse put his feet into one of these, and came down with frightful violence, cutting my knees and elbows to the bone, breaking his own nose, and what was a far greater misfortune, and one that I had long anticipated, fracturing the stock of my only and especially favourite rifle. I could have wept, if the doing so would have availed anything. A strip of the sassaybe's hide rectified the damage, for the present at least; and having packed the flesh in the waggon, we continued

winding among the hills, constantly assured by the guides that the kraal at which they had resolved we should pass the night, was close at hand, but still not reaching it until we had travelled full thirty miles from Mosega, by which time it was fairly dark. At last we perceived fires in the valley beneath us, and soon drew up under the fence of a little village, constructed as usual on a slope.

Scarcely were the oxen unyoked, when the clouds, which had been collecting for some hours, burst at once upon our devoted heads. Deafening claps of thunder pealed above us, preceded by forked and vivid lightning, which cast upon the surrounding landscape a lurid and almost incessant glare. The windows of heaven were literally opened, and a pelting pitiless deluge descended, which in an instant extinguished the fire, and put an end to all culinary operations. We, however, succeeded in obtaining a little milk from the village, and in a few minutes Morpheus strewing his poppies over us, we ceased to trouble our heads about the state of the weather, or our soaking supperless condition.

A tranquil morning succeeded the most tempestuous of nights. The inhabitants of the kraal were anxious that we should shoot a rhinoceros, which they pretended to have seen in a thick thorn jungle at no great distance; but although we sacrificed one-half of our raiment in the attempt to oblige them, the animal was no where to be found. The road still wound among the mountains; three hours' travelling brought us to a kraal at no great distance from the ancient town of Kurrichane, in which Mr. Campbell found the Baharootzi about ten years ago. This once populous city was destroyed by Moselekatse, and the inhabitants scattered in various directions. Here the guides declared it was the king's command that we should tarry until the following day, when he expected to see us. But as the royal

lodge was still far distant, we obstinately insisted upon continuing our journey after breakfast, so as to get clear of the hills in the course of the day; and were accordingly preparing to start when a herald, called in the Matabili language, *Imbongo*, a proclaimer of the king's titles, suddenly made his appearance outside the kraal, to give us a little insight into his Majesty's biography. Advancing slowly towards the waggons, he opened the exhibition by roaring and charging, in frantic imitation of the king of beasts—then placing his arm before his mouth, and swinging it rapidly in pantomimic representation of the elephant, he threw his trunk above his head and shrilly trumpeted. He next ran on tiptoe imitating the ostrich; and lastly, humbling himself into the dust, wept like an infant. At each interval of the scene, he recounted the matchless prowess and mighty conquests of his illustrious monarch, and made the hills re-echo with his praise. He was a brawny athletic savage, upwards of six feet in height, naked as he was born. Frenzied by his energetic gesticulations, the perspiration trickled from his greasy brow, and white foam descended in flakes from his distorted mouth, whilst his eye glared with excitement.

The road now became almost impassable—large trees overhung the way, and threatened the destruction of the waggon tents; we proceeded very slowly, and narrowly escaped being upset, the jungle becoming more and more intricate as we advanced. Game-traps and pit-falls were to be seen through every avenue, many of the thorn fences extending across the path, and impeding the waggons until cut away with the hatchet. A party of six natives had followed our tracks and volunteered to show a giraffe.* I emerged under their guidance from the forest we were threading, into a wide plain, on which I saw, for the first

* *Camelopardalis Giraffa*. Delineated in the Portraits of Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa.

time, the footsteps of four of these gigantic quadrupeds, but no living objects, save a few sassaybes, one of which I foolishly shot, when four of my savages immediately slunk behind to eat him. I was much struck with the *spoor* or track of the camelopard—it was different from everything I had seen or imagined it would resemble. The largest impression was eleven inches in length, of parallelogramatic form, tapered at the toe, and rounded at the heel. I felt singular satisfaction in finding myself at length treading on ground imprinted with the recent footsteps of that extraordinary animal.

I had by this time ridden far in advance of the waggons, and as night was fast closing around, I began to be apprehensive that I should have to bivouac in the bush. The savages appeared to contemplate the same contingency, and evinced a vast longing to join their companions, who had wisely remained with the flesh-pots. I gave them by signs to understand that I disapproved of such a measure, and we all pushed on as briskly as possible. A contumacious rhinoceros* was standing directly in our path, and, although hailed repeatedly, refused to make way. There was just light sufficient to admit of my discharging both barrels of my rifle into his unwieldy sides. Sneezing violently, and wheezing, he ran off in the direction we were taking, and presently subsided in the path. We approached him with caution, but he was dead. At the same moment a discharge of musketry, and a bright beacon fire bursting forth, directed our benighted steps to the encampment. It was at the termination of the forest, and not more than two hours' journey from the residence of the king.

* *Rhinoceros Africanus*. Delineated in the Portraits of Game and Wild Animals of South Africa.

of the refreshing sward, across which troops of querulous pintadoes and herds of graceful pallahs* were to be seen hurrying from our approach.

As we threaded the mazes of the parasol-topped acacias, which completely excluded the sun's rays, a peep of the river itself was unexpectedly obtained. A deep and shaded channel, about twenty yards in breadth, with precipitous banks overgrown with reeds, was lined with an unbroken tier of willows. These extended their drooping branches so as nearly to entwine, had they not been forbidden by the force of the crystal current, which swayed them with it as it foamed and bubbled over the pebbly bottom. A plain on the opposite side, bounded by a low range of blue hills, was dotted over with mokaala trees, beneath which troops of gnoos, sassaybes, and hartebeests, were reposing, imparted to the sylvan scene quite a pastoral effect.

We drew up the waggons on a verdant spot on the river bank, at a convenient distance from an extensive kraal constructed on the slope. Although the sun shone, the cold occasioned by a dry cutting wind was scarcely to be endured, even with the assistance of a great coat; and the inhabitants being clamorous for food, I readily placed myself under the guidance of their chief with ten of his men, and diving into the heart of the extensive groves, soon furnished them with the carcass of a black rhinoceros upon which to whet their appetites. This huge beast crossed the river twice after being mortally wounded at duelling distance; and I was compelled, cold as it was, to wade after him through water reaching to my middle—following his trail by the blood, until from single drops, the traces became splashes of frothy crimson. Struggling

* *Antelope Melampus*. Delineated in the Portraits of Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa.

end,) the eggs were securely packed, and placed on the saddle. Although each of these enormous eggs weighs about three pounds, and is equivalent to twenty-four of the domestic fowl's, many of our followers could devour two at a single meal, first mixing the contents, and then broiling them in the shell. When dressed in more orthodox manner, we found them a highly palatable omelette.

Richardson shortly returned, having been engaged in deadly conflict with a rhinoceros. Aroused from a siesta by the smarting of a gun-shot wound, the infuriated animal had pursued his assailant so closely that it became necessary to discharge the second barrel into his mouth, an operation in the performing which the stock was much disfigured by the animal's horn. I employed the rest of the day in repairing my own weapon with the iron clamp of a box, binding it with a strap of green hide from the carcase of an eland.

There being no practical road across the Mariqua within several miles of our position, we were compelled, on the 28th, to make one by paring down the steep banks; and even then, experienced great difficulty in towing our heavy vans to the opposite side by the united strength of the teams. The descent was almost perpendicular, requiring both wheels to be locked: the bed of the river, covered with loose stones, was too confined to admit of the oxen acting in concert:—and the current, straitened by the narrowness of the channel, was rapid, and rose to the floors of the waggons.

Shortly after we had crossed, a large mixed herd of sassaybes and quaggas, alarmed by the sudden appearance of our cavalcade, charged past me so close, that one of the latter fell at my feet at each discharge of the rifle. Several savages had followed us to obtain a supply of dried meat and assist in hunting; but although they were

greatly delighted at this performance, it was not until an unwieldy white rhinoceros* had bit the dust, that they were perfectly satisfied. Smacking their thick lips, patting their stomachs, and repeatedly exclaiming “*Chikore, Chikore,*” they pointed out this huge beast standing stupidly under the shade of a spreading acacia. I crept within thirty yards before firing, but it was not until he had received six two-ounce bullets behind the shoulder that he yielded up the ghost—charging repeatedly, with his snout almost touching the ground, in so clumsy a manner, that it was only necessary to step on one side to be perfectly safe.

This grotesque-looking animal, which in many points bears a ridiculous resemblance to, or rather is a gross caricature upon, the “half reasoning elephant,” is upwards of six feet high at the shoulder, its shapeless head exceeding four feet in length. It is the larger, but less ferocious, of the two species of African rhinoceros, neither of which is clad in a panoply of plate armour like their Asiatic brethren; they have in lieu, tough hides an inch and a half in thickness, of which the whips known at the Cape under the denomination of *Sjamboks*, are usually manufactured. Both have double horns: those of the black species are short, and sometimes nearly of equal length—whilst the anterior horn of the white rhinoceros is upwards of three feet in length, the second being a mere excrescence. These animals may be readily approached within a few yards, against the wind, and being heavy and inert, their attacks are easily avoided.

Rejoining the waggons to breakfast, we found many savages assembled from neighbouring kraals, clamorous for snuff. One old lady inhaled it in large quantities, and

* *Rhinoceros Simus*. Delineated in the Portraits of Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa.

without wasting a single grain, by means of a long tube of wood, the ends of which were respectively applied to her nose and to the back of her hand on which the powder was placed.

The country through which we passed this day was more thickly wooded than any we had seen since leaving Kurichane: and I for the first time observed several pit-falls constructed for the purpose of taking the rhinoceros. They differed from others in being dug singly instead of in groups—very deep and large—at the extremity of a narrow path cut through the bushes, and fenced outside with thorns—a sharp turn leading directly upon the trap, so that an unwieldy animal, being driven furiously down the avenue, could have no chance of avoiding the snare. Many skulls and bones of these huge beasts were lying at the bottom of the sepulchres that had swallowed them up alive.

After travelling upwards of fifteen miles, and passing three or four very large kraals, we arrived at the Tolaan River, a deep, narrow, and rocky channel, containing several extensive pools—the hollowed banks bearing testimony to the depth and rapidity of the current at certain seasons. The bed was perfectly dry where we crossed, but covered with huge fragments of granite, which threw the waggons from side to side with frightful violence—and, added to the almost perpendicular character of the banks, rendered the passage extremely perilous. We halted on an isthmus, formed by a double bend of the river; a grove of large acacia trees proving an agreeable shelter, and rendering the spot delightful. Here we were visited by Moselekatse's son, an aristocratic and intelligent lad, fourteen or fifteen years of age. His dress consisted of the usual girdle with long fur streamers, and a chaplet of white beads bound about his forehead, to which were attached three tufts of clipped quills, resembling in size and shape the flower of

the African marigold. A lad of his own age attended him. The blood of the despotic sire flowing in the veins of the heir apparent to the throne of the Matabili, his first step was to deprive Mohanycom of a clasp-knife that we had given him, which he immediately hung about his own neck, with a look of absolute superiority hardly to be expected from such a youth.

CHAPTER XX.

THE MATABILI DESCRIBED—ARRIVAL AT THE RIVER
SIMALAKATE.

THE history of the assassination of one of the Hottentot followers of Captains Sutton and Moultry, to which allusion was made in a former part of this narrative, is brief. Like most of his tribe, being unable to keep his hands from picking and stealing, he purloined a musket from the king's kraal; and, presuming also to aspire to the affections of Truëy, Moselekatse's favourite concubine, his body was one morning picked up pierced with assagais. A boy belonging also to one of those gentlemen disappeared about the same time, but his fate and his crime remained equally veiled in obscurity.

The death of the trader Gibson, which formed one of the reasons adduced by the worthy Missionaries at Mosega to dissuade us from prosecuting our journey, was caused by the insalubrious climate of the country bordering on the sea-coast. It is the invariable policy of all African chiefs, to deter travellers from visiting tribes residing beyond them, by exaggerated representations of peril, hoping by these means to effect a monopoly of traffic. Gibson had long been engaged in trading speculations, and in hunting elephants, amongst the tribes in the interior; and tempted by the prospect of gain, penetrated, in opposition to the advice of Moselekatse, amongst the Babariri considerably to the north-west of Delagoa Bay. There, the whole party, one Hottentot only excepted, was cut off by fever. The

report of this event reaching Moselekatse, who, whatever his vices may be, is yet extremely anxious to produce impressions favourable to himself amongst the white people, he immediately despatched a commando with directions to bring the survivor, who had taken refuge with a hostile tribe, alive—in order that by his testimony he might clear himself from all suspicion of murder. Ignorant of the intentions of the commando, and alarmed for his own safety, the Hot-tentot resisted, and being slain in the attack, his head was laid at the feet of the king. The despot, however, far from being pleased with the zeal shown by his warriors, ordered four of the principal of them to be put to death, on the ground that they had merely brought a lifeless head instead of the living person, as he had commanded.

Notwithstanding such acts of cruelty on the part of the tyrant, the devotion of the Matabili warriors to his commands almost exceeds belief. No soldier dares present himself to Moselekatse who has been wounded in an ignoble part, or has failed to execute his duty to the very letter. If a lion attacks his herds, either his death, or that of their guardians invariably ensues. Armed only with assagais and shields, they rush in upon the marauder, and generally at the expense of one or two of their lives, which are held of no account, retire from the conflict, bearing with them his head and feet to their royal master. These are left to decompose within the fence of the imperial kraal, which, as I have already explained, is strewed with the bones of wild animals. War is the prevailing passion of the Matabili; they burn with an insatiate thirst for the blood of their enemies, of whom they cannot even speak without assuming an aspect of vengeance and fury. They are doubtless the stoutest soldiers in Southern Africa, not excepting the most disciplined troops of the Zooloo tyrant, from whom they deserted, and whose invading armies they

have thrice routed in pitched battles with terrible slaughter.

To be fat is the greatest of all crimes, no person being allowed that privilege but his Majesty. Speaking evil of the king, or alluding to the heir apparent, are considered equivalent to treason, or compassing the death of the Sovereign in Britain. Neglecting his cattle is reckoned a capital crime, the execution following upon the sentence, from which there is no appeal, "quick as the thunderbolt pursues the flash."

It is not permitted to a subject to allude to the elephant in the presence of the despot; "the noble elephant" being one of his titles. When speaking of hunting that animal, Moselekatse frequently urged us to instruct some of his warriors in our method; but, as his people can neither ride nor be persuaded to fire a gun, it was impossible to comply with his request. Accustomed from childhood to the use of the assagai, or javelin, without which the Matabili never quits his home, they are expert in the destruction of the elephant; hemming him into a defile, they attack him with great intrepidity, and not unfrequently incur the utmost effects of his rage and fury. Occasionally, also, they assail the rhinoceros, but this inert animal is more usually ensnared in the pitfalls already described, which are generally provided with a sharp stake at the bottom, upon which he is impaled.

The Matabili possess no horses; all those that have been from time to time taken from the Griquas and other tribes, with whom they have been engaged in war, having been carried off by the *distemper*, as it is called, a fatal murrain, which sometimes extends itself to the oxen, over every part of Southern Africa during the early months of the year. The ravages of this disease, which is said to be an affection of the lungs, are supposed to be occasioned by the young

grass which springs up after the first rain; and at these seasons, the colonists who can send their horses into the more elevated districts, are able generally to preserve them.

The attempts of our friends at equitation drill, and horsemanship, were ludicrous and awkward in the extreme. Although active, muscular, and agile in a wonderful degree, they tumbled off the horse as fast as they ascended, notwithstanding that the saddle, bridle, mane, and even tail were unceremoniously pressed into the service.

Although a soldier of fortune who has gained all his glory and power in the field, Moselekatse has now ceased to lead his armies to battle; but he still honours with his presence the great hunting expeditions which frequently take place. On these occasions he is attended by a retinue of several thousand men, who extend themselves in a circle, enclosing many miles of country, and gradually converging so as to bring incredible numbers of wild animals within a small focus. Still advancing, the ring at length becomes a thick and continuous line of men, hemming in the game on all sides, which, in desperate efforts to escape, display the most daring and dangerous exhibition of sport that can be conceived. As the scene closes, the spears of the warriors deal death around them, affording a picture thrilling to the sportsman, and striking in the extreme.

The dexterity of the Matabili in the use of the knobstick is also wonderful: they rarely miss a partridge or a guinea-fowl on the wing, and knock over hares, cats, and other ground game with equal precision. In a nation such as I have described, it will be readily conceived that agriculture is not in high repute, and accordingly, excepting for the grain used in making beer, I saw little attempt at cultivation. A few melons, rather deserving the name of vegetables, were the only fruit we met with, and these I presume are nurtured chiefly for the gourd, which becomes

their calabash, or water flagon. We could hear of no funeral ceremonies amongst them. High and low, their bodies are thrown forth upon the plain, soon after life departs, a prey to wild beasts; the flap of the eagle's wing and the howl of the hyæna being their only death-note. In the Zooloo tribe, however, from which Moselekatse has sprung, some respect is shown to the memory of royalty and persons of high distinction; the defunct dignitary being interred with his head above the ground, within the hut where he has expired or been assassinated. The marriage ceremonies of the Matabili were exceedingly difficult to understand. Acceptance or non-acceptance of a snuff-box on the part of a lady, indicates the success of her suitor, or the contrary: and it would seem that marriage has sometimes altogether been prohibited amongst the Zooloos, or confined to men in advanced life. We were informed that the *issigoko*, or ring, so often alluded to, indicated a married warrior; but to this rule there must be exceptions. Of the population of Moselekatse's empire, I can form no correct estimate. The constant wars in which he is engaged diminished the number of the males, but the women are exceedingly prolific. His standing army of warriors of his own tribe exceeds five thousand men, but numbers of the conquered nations swell his followers to a large amount, and are chiefly employed as guardians of his cattle during the intervals of peace.

On the 29th we took the field, accompanied by the whole of the male inhabitants of three kraals, in addition to those that had accompanied us from the Mariqua River. The country here is generally undulating, extensive mimosa groves occupying all the valley, as well as the banks of the Tolaan River, which winds amongst them on its way to join the Mariqua. We had not proceeded many hundred yards before our progress was opposed by a rhinoceros

who looked defiance, but took the hints we gave him to get out of the way. Two fat elands had been pointed out at the edge of the grove the moment before, one of which Richardson disposed of with little difficulty, but the other led me through all the intricacies of the grove to a wide plain on the opposite side, immediately on emerging upon which, the fugitive was prostrate at my feet in the middle of a troop of giraffes, who stooped their long necks, astounded at the intrusion, and in another moment were sailing away at their utmost speed. To have followed them upon my jaded horse would have been absurd, and I was afterwards unable to find them. Returning to the camp after killing several elands and rhinoceroses, besides other game, which the savages quickly took charge of, I was furiously charged by a herd of horned cattle, and my horse being much exhausted, I had no small difficulty in escaping their persecution. Objecting, I presume, to my garb or complexion, they pertinaciously pursued me through thickets and over ravines, regardless of the loud whistle of the herdsman, to which they are usually very obedient. During the night, our camp was thrown into disorder by the intrusion of a rhinoceros, which actually stood some time between the waggons.

Several hours' diligent search the next day brought us upon a herd of twelve camelopards. We pursued them a considerable distance, and repeatedly wounded the largest, a gigantic male, probably eighteen feet in height; but our famished horses falling repeatedly into the numerous holes with which the ground was covered, we at length became convinced of the impossibility of humbling the lofty head of the giraffe, until our steeds should have improved in condition upon the fine pasturage which now abounded. The day was sultry and the glare distressing. To the north-eastward, the distant prospect was bounded by a

range of blue mountains which we visited some weeks afterwards; the whole of the extensive plain being sprinkled with huge mokaala trees, mat rushes, and thistles. Large herds of elands were grazing amongst these, the host of savages by which we were attended quickly clearing away the carcasses of those we slew, and then quarrelling for the entrails. I hope my reader has understood that these barbarians generally devour the meat raw, although when at leisure they do not object to its being cooked. They usually seize a piece of the flesh by the teeth, cutting a large mouthful of it with the assagai close to the lips, before masticating it, which they do with a loud sputter and noise. The meal being finished, they never failed to wipe their hands on their bodies, and then being generally gorged, they lay themselves down to repose—previously relaxing their leathern girdles, which are so contrived as to be readily expanded according to their girth.

How truly has it been remarked by Captain Owen, that the state of those countries which have had little or no intercourse with civilized nations, is a direct refutation of the theories of poets and philosophers, who would represent the ignorance of the savage as virtuous simplicity—his miserable poverty as frugality and temperance—and his stupid indolence as laudable contempt for wealth; widely differing indeed were the facts which came under our observation; and doubtless it will ever be found, that uncultivated man is a compound of treachery, cunning, debauchery, gluttony, and idleness.

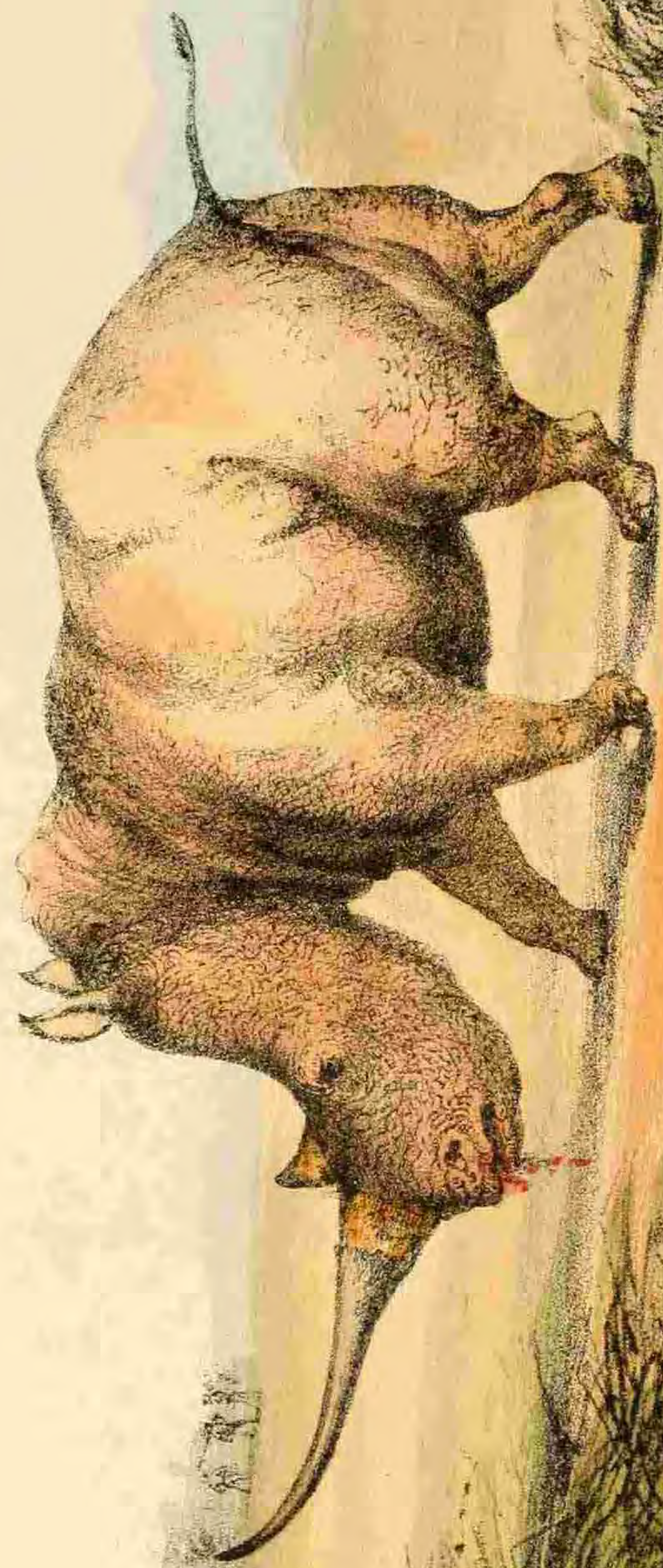
As the sun was setting, our friend the rhinoceros imprudently appeared upon the bank of the river within pistol shot. Five balls were immediately lodged in his body, with which he retreated, and was picked up the following morning.

Leaving the Tolaan River, we passed between two ranges

of hills, and travelled nearly south-east, over a rugged country, strewn with huge loose masses of stone, and thickly covered with low bush. To the right, extensive stone walls marked the site of a once flourishing Bamaliti town, now destroyed. At noon we unyoked in a well-watered valley, covered with turf and abundantly cultivated. Here 'Unchobe, the captain of an adjacent Matabili kraal paid us the compliment of climbing into the waggon, and of squatting himself without ceremony upon my bed, inviting his greasy consort to do the same. The stench of this worthy couple was quite overpowering, but he was evidently considered by his countrymen as a person of consequence, being loaded with a profusion of beads and ornaments, amongst which we remarked a necklace composed of Spanish dollars, and a medal which had been struck in England in honour of the abolition of slavery. His hair, contrary to the custom of the Matabili, was matted with grease and *sibilo*, and his consort also was decorated with beads of various colours, to the amount of at least thirty pounds weight. In her own person this lady possessed a concentration of ugliness, which would have more than satisfied a score of ordinary females; and it might almost be asserted without fear of contradiction, that a being of more repulsive exterior never disgraced the fair form of humanity. A crowd of women and girls assembled round the waggon, clamorous for snuff and tobacco, and afforded us much amusement by their insatiable curiosity and good humour. The looking-glass, that never-failing source of surprise and delight to uncivilized beings, produced more than its usual effect upon them. Forming a group of merry faces at the end of the waggon, and chattering to each other, they gazed incessantly at their reflected images, trying, by pressing their hands behind the mirror, to discover the cause of such a magical effect;

covering their eyes, and peeping askance to see if their double selves imitated the action. Scarcely a less powerful impression was produced by some of my drawings of wild animals, which I exhibited to them. In India, even educated natives are exceedingly slow in recognizing representations of objects, but these unsophisticated damsels instantly acknowledged the likenesses, by pronouncing the name of the quadruped in an animated manner, drawing the attention of their neighbours to the sight. The Matabili females are neither prepossessing nor engaging; they shave their heads in the manner already described, and wear a short leathern petticoat, which in most cases is their only covering, although they occasionally have a flap of leather suspended from the neck. Their skin, from being constantly lubricated with grease and fat, acquires a shining appearance, and is of a dark brown colour, approaching to copper. Both sexes occasionally employ themselves in sewing skins, an operation which is performed by means of a skewer or awl, by which they pierce a hole, and afterwards introduce a thread composed of an animal's dorsal sinew, resembling our fiddle-strings. Of this substance, which is also used to string beads upon, they are generally provided with a large supply suspended from the waist. So far as we remarked, the women appeared little oppressed with sensibility, although affectionate to their children; the latter wander almost in a state of perfect nudity until the age of puberty. All classes are equally devoted to tobacco, taken as snuff; and the plant is so precious that it is never used alone, but invariably adulterated with a due admixture of earth or sand.

Late in the afternoon we halted on the banks of the Simalakate, a deep and tranquil stream, margined by reeds and rushes, affording a ready covert for lions, whose fresh marks were everywhere visible in the neighbourhood. The



THE WHITE RHINOCEROS

W. C. Harris.

day had been very sultry, and our two dogs, nearly blind from thirst, ran down the steep bank to the water's edge, into the jaws of an enormous alligator. One of them returned immediately in a state of great alarm. Suddenly a splash was heard, and bubbles of blood rising a minute after, too truly told what had been the fate of his unfortunate comrade. Not content with depriving us of our valued four-footed companion, the alligators quitted their watery homes during the night, and ate up a portion of the leather of the waggon furniture, besides the shoes of our followers. These scaly monsters are very common in many of the African rivers, and this was not the only occasion on which we suffered from their ravages. We frequently killed some of an immense size.

About sunset an unwieldy white rhinoceros approached the waggons, evidently with hostile intentions. There being neither bush nor hollow to conceal my advance, I crawled towards him amongst the grass, and within forty yards fired two balls into him. He started, looked around for some object on which to wreak his vengeance, and actually charged up, with his eye flashing fire, and gore streaming from his mouth, to within an arm's length of me. Crouching low, however, I fortunately eluded his vengeance, and he soon afterwards dropped down dead.

Thus far on our journey we had pursued a partially beaten track, dignified by the Hottentots in colonial phraseology with the name of a road, though since leaving Kurrichane, it had consisted merely of the faint vestiges of the traders' waggons, which "few and far between" had traversed it—and even these could only be discovered by a practised eye. But from our entrance into the hills this morning, all traces had disappeared, nor did we again see the tracks of a waggon for several months, until we had crossed the river Vaal on our return to the colony. Thus