

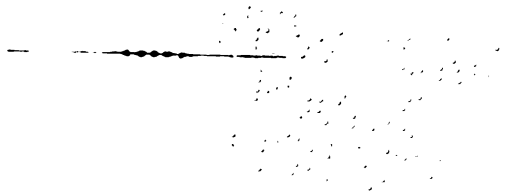
THRILLING STORIES

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OF THE

FOREST AND FRONTIER

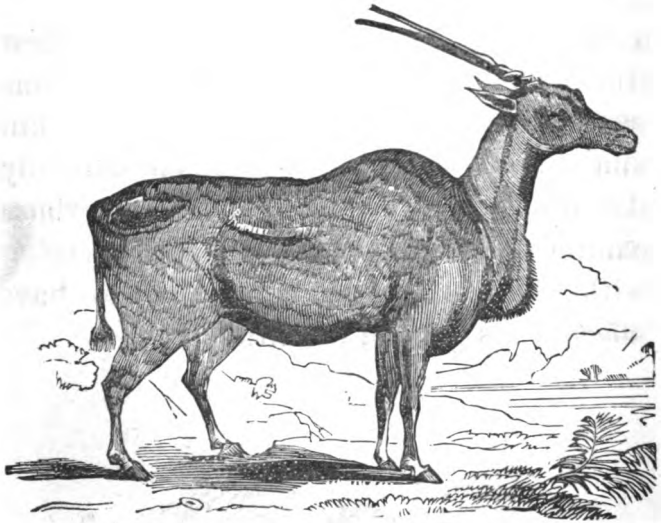
BY AN OLD HUNTER.



PHILADELPHIA:
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1869.

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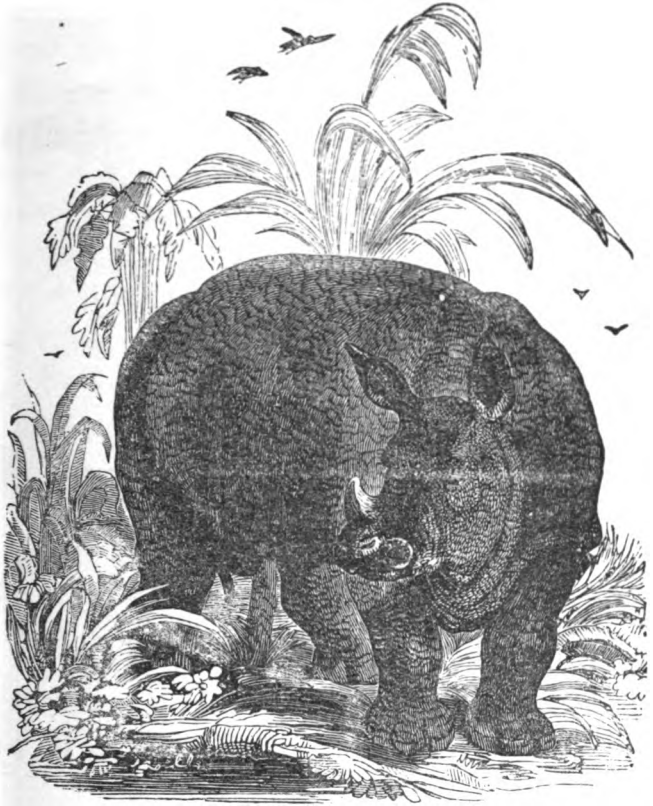


AN ELAND.

Mr. Cumming Hunting Rhinoceroses.

MR. CUMMING thus describes his encounter with some rhinoceroses and an eland, in the country of the Bechuanas.

It was on the 4th of June, 1844, that I beheld for the first time the rhinoceros. Having taken some coffee, I rode out unattended, with my rifle, and before proceed-



THE RHINOCEROS.

ing 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, 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 the 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 every thing that obstructed his progress.

Shortly after this I found myself on the banks of the stream, beside which my wagons were outspanned. Following along its margin, I presently beheld a bull of the borele, 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. Borele, hearing me advance, came on to see what it was, and suddenly protruded his horny nose within a few 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. Of the rhinoceros there are four varieties in South Africa, distinguished by the Bechuanas by the names of the borele or black rhinoceros, the keitloa or two-horned 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.

Finding that rhinoceros 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 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. 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. The 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.

The eland is a magnificent animal, by far the largest of all the antelope tribe, exceeding a large ox in size. It also attains an extraordinary condition, being often burdened 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 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.

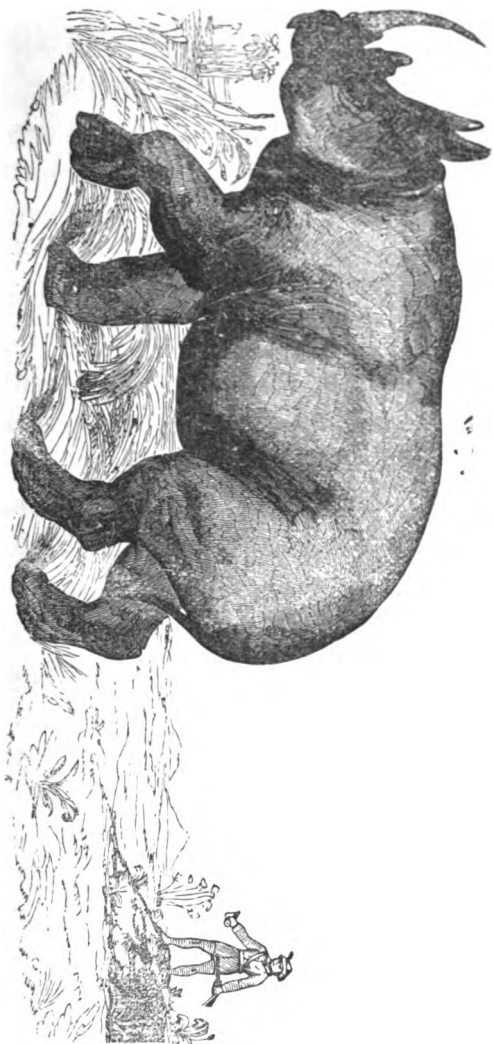
The eland has less speed than any other variety of antelope; and, by judicious riding, they may be driven to camp from a great distance. In this manner I have often ridden the best bull out of the herd, and brought him within gunshot of my wagons, where I could more conveniently cut up and preserve the 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.

Having eaten my steak, I rode to my wagon, where I partook of coffee, and hav-

ing 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 some thorny bushes as best I might, and emerging on an open glade, I beheld two huge white rhinoceroses trotting along before me. The dogs attacked them with fury, and a scene of intense excitement ensued. The Old Gray, 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.

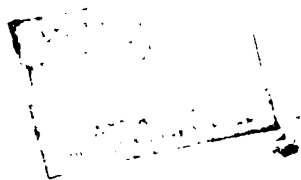
Presently, galloping up on one side, I gave her a bad wound in the shoulder, soon after which she came to bay in the dry bed of a river. Dismounting from my horse, I commenced loading, but before this was accomplished she was off once more. I followed her, putting on my caps as I rode, and coming up 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 flowed 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. The 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 pre-



ENCOUNTER WITH A RHINOCEROS

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sentry 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.



A ZEBRA.

Adventure with a Black Rhinoceros.

One of Mr. Cumming's most perilous adventures was with a black Rhinoceros, which gave chase to him, and nearly run him down. He thus describes this affair.

On the 22d, ordering my men to move on to the fountain of Bootlonamy, I rode forth with Ruyter,* and held east through a grove

* This is the name of a favorite servant of Mr. Cumming.

of lofty and wide-spreading mimosas, most of which were more or less damaged by the gigantic strength of a troop of elephants, which had passed there about twelve months before.

Having proceeded about two miles with large herds of game on every side, I observed a crusty looking old bull borele, or black rhinoceros, cocking his ears one hundred yards in advance. He had not observed us; and soon after he walked slowly toward us, and stood broadside to, eating some wait-a-bit thorns within fifty yards of me. I fired from my saddle, and sent a bullet in behind his shoulder, upon which he rushed forward about one hundred yards in tremendous consternation, blowing like a grampus, and then stood looking about him. Presently he made off. I followed, but found it hard to come up with him. When I overtook him I found the blood running freely from his wound.

The chase led through a large herd of blue wildebeests, zebras, and springboks, which gazed at us in utter amazement. At

length I fired my second barrel, but my horse was fidgety, and I missed. I continued riding alongside of him, expecting in my ignorance that at length he would come to bay, which rhinoceroses never do; when suddenly he fell flat on his broadside on the ground, but, recovering his feet, resumed his course as if nothing had happened. Becoming at last annoyed at the length of the chase, as I wished to keep my horses fresh for the elephants, and being indifferent whether I got the rhinoceros or not, as I observed that his horn was completely worn down by age, and the violence of his 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

A RHINOCEROS

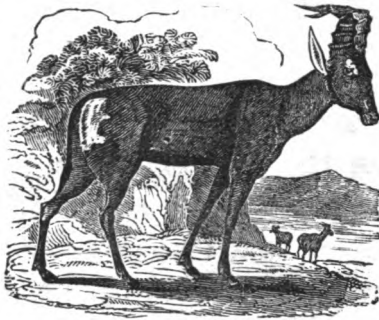


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was looking on in great alarm, thought his master's destruction inevitable. It was certainly a very near thing; my horse was extremely afraid, and exerted his utmost energies on the occasion. The rhinoceros, however, wheeled about and continued his 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 Bootlonamy 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 23d we inspanned by moonlight, and continued our march through a thinly wooded level country. It was a lovely morning; the sun rose in great splendor, and the sky was beautifully overcast with clouds. Having proceeded about ten miles, the country became thickly covered with



A HARTEBEEST.

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



LEOPARDS ON THE WATCH.

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 colored animals. On this occasion I was very unfortunate; I might have killed any quantity



A PALLAH.

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.