

A NATURALIST'S TREASURES.

J. PAUL HAZEL, F.R.S., F.Z.S., F.C.S.

The generally accepted notion is that Mr. F. C. Selous, who has recently returned to these shores, is the African hunter on whom Haggard created "Allan Quatermain."

I asked Mr. Selous when I was in the office day (continues an interview of the *Illustrated London News*)



ELAND SKULL, MARCHALLALE, 1886.

to recall with this notion one way or the other. No, he could not. He and Mr. Haggard had never met. Perhaps Mr. Haggard could tell me how much "Allan's Wanderings in Africa" helped him to realize the always delightful and ever-checked Quatermain.

In some ten years since Mr. Selous wrote his "Hunter's Wanderings in Africa," and now he has another volume or two of experience to report. Apart from anything else, a whole week might be written upon his collection of trophies of the chase—lion skins, hippopotamus skulls almost entirely white in their white skeletons, colored powdered heads of the deer which roam the African valleys. Of course, everything in Mr. Selous's collection—he is putting it all together at his country house at Wargrave—is the product of his own gun-shots.

"And in your collection," I remarked, "we who don't



KNOWES BEAST (ANTHUS GRASSINA), MARCHALLALE.

know much of the English calling have some reliance upon the extent of your experience?"

"I went to South Africa," said Mr. Selous, "in 1871, and, shooting several lions here, I have spent my time there ever since. Always I have been right up to the

interior of the country, never being in Cape Colony or in any-day South Africa."

"When did you actually open your career as a hunter, and in what particular district of the continent?"

"Actually in 1878, when I got to Mashoboland and Mashoboland, which countries were then half of present-day Bechuanaland and big game. I was there years on end in Mashoboland, and my health was excellent all the time. I was an elephant-hunter only—that is to say, I hunted for elephants, not for anything else. There was no return for the slaying of any other game, and besides there was the danger of disturbing the elephants."

"Did not doubt you would shoot now and then other kinds of animals coming in your way?"

"Oh, yes; my collection speaks to that, only, as I say, it was elephant-hunting. I had ten or a dozen Kaffirs with me to carry the ivory, and above was my sole dog was elephant-said. This was accounted for generally by the desire to obtain from my shooting, as I have already said, which would disturb the elephants. Elephant-hunting—particularly when you cannot see horns—is very hard work. Where the bush-ly is prevalent the horns is out of the question—a horse simply would not live. Practically all these three years in Mashoboland I hunted on foot. Substantially the same is when the game is; when the game is driven from a district by advancing civilization the hunter goes with it."

"You said you as often as not had elephant meat only to eat. Would not the average man in quite a city phrase 'meat'—'very unpalatable'?"

"No, he might, but if he did he would be quite wrong. Some parts of an elephant make capital eating; first I can assure you from personal experience. The heart and the feet make the best broths. And I tell you how an elephant's feet is cooked!"

"By all means; it may mean a new delusion for our gastronomy."

"You cut off the foot at the lower joint, and place it, this and all in a hole in the ground where a good fire has been burning. In other words, the foot, just as it leaves the head, is laid on the sides of the fire in the hole. Then you cover over the hole with earth and light a good smoking fire on top. It takes a considerable time to cook the meat, but when properly done it really makes acceptable eating."

"I see. When did you, for the first time being got out of reach of a trained elephant's foot?"

"I came to England in 1870, and was here, I think, eight months. I returned to Africa in 1876, and remained hunting in the same districts until 1881. By that time, you see, the elephants had gone further north, so I followed them; but did not get nearly so many as in my first expeditions. They had grown scarcer and were more difficult to get at. This expedition was far from being so good as the previous one. My visit to England in 1881 was of short duration. I was back in Africa in the same year, shooting specimens of large mammals—the large antelope, for instance. Since 1881 I have been twice longer during the African rainy season, and for the past three years I have been working in connection with the Chartered Company. By-and-by, but not for a year or least, I shall feel myself once more in South Africa."

"I suppose I have now extracted your biography to a length?"

"Well, you have done so in the



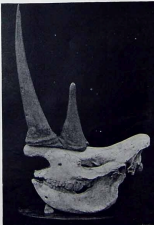
RHINOCEROS SKULL, MARCHALLALE, SOUTH-EAST AFRICA.



WILD DOG, VENTA RIVER, 1886.

briefest form, but I'm afraid there's nothing specially interesting in what I have been able to tell you."

"There I disagree, and, with your consent, I'm to ask a number of things coming out of what you have told me."



SKULL OF WHITE RHINOCEROS, MARCHALLALE, 1886.