

PERILS AND PLEASURES

OF

A HUNTER'S LIFE;

OR THE

ROMANCE OF HUNTING

BY PEREGRINE HERNE.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### EXCITING CHASE OF THE GEMSBOK. BEAUTY OF ORANGE RIVER. CHASE OF THE RHINOCEROS. CHASE OF AN ELEPHANT.

OUR Hottentots gave us promise of glorious sport in hunting a species of antelope, called the oryx, or gemsbok. We soon emerged upon a broad, arid plain, where these animals were known to abound, and after travelling about five miles over this most desolate tract, we encamped not far from a vley, or pool, where the game drank. This pool was about two hundred yards in breadth. One side presented patches of grass, the bright green of which was very refreshing to the eye, which had been gazing for miles upon the desert plains. Flocks of wild geese, ducks, and cranes, enlivened the spot with their fluttering and cackling. The other side was bare, and trampled hard by the feet of wild animals which resorted to the pool to quench their thirst.



lations of the plain. We were disappointed in not finding game, and, descending the ridge, we remounted and rode back to camp, with the purpose of advancing farther into the country.

The next day we resumed our march. The plain was covered with a luxurious carpet of grass. Mountain ranges bounded the view on every side, and strips of mimosa forest stretched along their bases. After a very pleasant journey, during which we killed several beautiful antelopes, we reached what is called the salt-pan, an oval basin, the bottom of which is usually covered with salt, to the depth of two or three inches. In the vicinity of this curious place we enjoyed good shooting, among herds of antelopes, for several days. We had yet seen none of the great game of South Africa, however, and we therefore marched steadily forward to the region in which it was said to abound. We crossed the Vaal river, and soon afterwards reached the Riet, beyond which we might expect to find the monsters of the plains. The people we met, who were called Griquas, were friendly, but the miserable Bushmen kept clear of our rifles. The country was diversified, and we passed through many scenes which words would be inadequate to describe.

After passing the Riet river we found ourselves in the land where we might expect our sleep to be startled by the roar of the lion. Three days afterwards we encamped



near a fountain, where the wild animals were accustomed to drink, and then prepared for the anticipated sport.

The next morning we mounted our horses, Carollus being in company for after rider, and left the camp. We had not advanced more than two miles, when turning abruptly around the base of a low hill, we found ourselves front to front with a monstrous black animal, having two horns upon its long snout.

“A black rhinoceros!” shouted Mr. Barrill, checking his horse, and, I thought, turning pale. My nerves were unshaken, and as the huge beast had fairly discovered us, I aimed at its shoulder and fired. Mr. Barrill then followed suit. The rhinoceros was struck by both balls; but it made a tremendous rush towards us, and we fled rapidly. Suddenly the monster halted, and, as we checked our steeds and prepared our rifles for another shot, it fled and was pursued in turn. Mr. Barrill knew more of the nature and habits of the animal than I, for he had conversed with intelligent hunters upon the subject. I kept in the rear, fearing to trust my horse upon the side; but Mr. Barrill dashed up, and gave him a mortal shot behind the shoulder. I repeated the dose, and, after snorting and blowing dreadfully, the rhinoceros turned on us a look of intense ferocity, and fell dead upon the plain.

Here was a triumph! Three cheers broke from us, as the animal thundered down. We quickly dismounted,



and with feelings of indescribable exaltation surveyed our prize. It proved to be a full grown specimen of the black rhinoceros—the largest and fiercest of its kind—called by the natives—the borele. The horns were about eighteen inches in length, and finely polished by continual rubbing against trees. We found that these terrible weapons were not connected with the skull, but merely attached with the skin, and we separated them with our knives. Mr. Barrill considered them very valuable. The eyes of the huge beast were small, and so set, that, it was plain to me, it could not see except directly in front. But the most curious portion of the animal was the skin. This covering was extremely thick, and laid in folds as if much too large for the body. Each rhinoceros appears to have entered the skin of one a great deal more bulky than it self. Ordinary bullets will not penetrate this clumsy armor. Mr. Barrill had taken the precaution before leaving Cape Town to provide himself with bullets hardened with solder, and these were easily driven into the vitals of the animal.

Elated with our unexpected success, we took the polished horns and a large piece of the skin of the rhinoceros, and returned to camp. In the afternoon, when the heat of the sun had somewhat declined, we rode out in the hope of shooting game, to furnish fresh meat for our evening meal. Not far from camp, we started a herd of ante-



• lopes, of the kind called blesbok, and away we went in chase at full speed. The fleet animals led us for about three miles over the plain, and then took shelter on one side of a rocky ridge, where we found it impossible to cross. Thus were we completely defeated; but with commendable resignation we immediately turned our attention to waking up other game.

Night was gradually approaching, flinging long shadows on the ground. We saw no antelope, and were about to take the return track, when a crashing noise, far to our right, caused us to check our horses. What a sight for our bloods! Beating and slashing among a grove of mimosa were two elephants. The next moment revealed three, and the next four of these lords of the plains, evidently full grown. I need not attempt to say with what thrill of excitement we concerted a plan of attack. We knew it was a venture more critical than any we had ever yet dared. Encountering the ferocious grizzly bear of the Rocky Mountains was comparatively safe. But we were determined to conquer or perish in the effort. Briefly, Mr. Barrill, who had gained much information in regard to the nature and habits of the elephant, gave me instructions, thus:—

“The elephant entertains an extraordinary dread of man, and is therefore difficult to approach. Happily we have the wind in our favor, and so may get close enough



for a shot by caution and good riding. Fire the balls into them just behind the shoulder, for they will be effective nowhere else. They will not charge unless enraged by wounds, and then you must spur hard and dodge skilfully from the right track."

Enough said. Our rifles were examined. Both were double-barrelled, and we now increased the weight of their loads. Then, we skirted the base of a ridge till we came within about four hundred yards of them, when they discovered us, and dashed away, with a thrilling trumpeting, and crashing tramp. We had nothing then to do but to spur away in pursuit. The huge beasts ran faster than I had imagined they could. But our steeds were fleet, and, after a race of a mile, I succeeded in getting within a hundred yards of the hindmost elephant. A few furious strokes of the spur then threw me within rifle-shot; and, as I dashed a little upon one side of the animal, I aimed and fired. I missed the shoulder but broke one of the elephant's fore legs. This wound caused him to lag behind, and Mr. Barrill and I were soon alongside, firing into him at our leisure. Suddenly he stopped; turning his sharp tusks first to one side then to the other, as if uncertain which way to charge, when, receiving the brace of bullets in his vitals, he uttered long and mournful moans, and, fell dead on his side, the shock making the ground tremble under our feet.



Exultant from this great victory, we quickly dismounted to examine our prize. Mr. Barrill pronounced it a full grown bull elephant. The tusks were about five feet in length, and beautiful specimens of ivory. I stood in amazement at the tremendous proportions of the animal, and could not but wonder at the gift of puny man, who was enabled to effect so easy a triumph over such a monster of strength. The skin was nearly as thick as that of the rhinoceros, but not so tough; a dozen of our bullets had penetrated it; and of these, at least three had entered the vitals of the elephant. We had but little time for an examination. The twilight was deepening into night, and we had a long ride before us. With considerable hacking, we secured the tusks, and a large slice of the rump, and with these trophies of the greatest hunting triumph we had yet achieved, we started for our camp. We arrived safely, but not until the night had spread her full serenity over the teeming world.



## CHAPTER XX.

**THE ELAND. A BECHUANA KRAAL. HERDS OF WILD ELEPHANTS. LIONS ATTACKED BY BECHUANAS. ABUNDANCE OF GAME. THE RETURN TRIP. SPLENDID SPORT. FALL SICK. ARRIVAL AT GRAHAMSTOWN.**

THE next day after our encounter with the giraffe, we came to the base of another mountain range, along which we followed through woody dells and open glades till we came to a forest of a venerable aspect. The traces of game were abundant, and here we slew a noble animal which we had frequently seen during our expedition, but never had an opportunity of bringing to the ground. This was the largest of the antelope tribe, known as the eland. I saw an old bull, about six feet high, standing under a tree. A short race, and two well-aimed shots, both from my own rifle, and the eland was stretched in the agonies of death, his soft black eye melting into tears.



But our rifles scared them away to an agreeable distance, for, be it known, that the perfume of a Bechuana female sometimes causes one to hold the organ of smell. These people were extremely anxious to obtain snuff from us—that being esteemed by them an earthly heaven of luxury; but we concluded to reserve our stock for a propitiatory offering, if we should encounter natives whose friendship was uncertain or whose enmity was to be feared. A few miles further on, among some extensive forests of mimosa and acacia, I shot an eland, and, after a severe conflict with a whole herd of buffaloes, I aided Mr. Barrill in killing a savage cow. We had a narrow escape from a white rhinoceros, which charged at the moment our attention was absorbed by the buffaloes, and but for a quick dodge, both of us would have been tumbled beneath the feet of the herd. A shot in the shoulder, sent the rhinoceros limping away, and we concluded the battle with a victory.

The next day, having seen fresh traces of herds of elephants, Mr. Barrill and I, with Carollus as after rider proceeded ahead of the wagons, through a country presenting every variety of feature. At one time, we crossed bare stony ridges, at another threaded the mazes of shady, but scattered forests; now struggled through fields of high grass, which the wind moved to a sea of green waves, and again emerged into open lawns. At length we arrived among groups of grassy hills, covered with loose stones,



interspersed with streams and occasional patches of forest, in which the destructive labors of the elephant were manifest. Here we descried a large herd of these stately animals leisurely browsing at the head of a distant valley. Carollus was dispatched, to drive the herd back into the valley, up which we rode slowly, and without noise against the wind.

Arriving within one hundred and fifty yards unperceived, we made our horses fast, and took up a position in an old kraal. Carollus now appeared above them, and by his shouting and firing, drove them towards us. The herd, consisted of ten, all females with large tusks. We selected the finest, and when she came within ten yards, each fired two balls into her, behind the shoulder. She stumbled, but recovered and uttered a shrill trump of lamentation, at the sound of which the rest of the herd clambered up the adjacent heights. Seeing us, the wounded and enraged cow turned upon us with uplifted trunk, and we had to put spurs to our horses. But the elephant soon stopped, and as I checked my horse I fired a bullet into her brain, and she tumbled forward dead, striking the earth with a crashing sound.

Turning around to survey the surrounding scenery we found that a second valley had opened before us, surrounded by bare, stony hills, and traversed by a thinly wooded ravine. Here a picture burst upon us, from which



glowed among the emerald grass, or bent lovingly to kiss the ripples away from the surface of the water; and birds danced and thrilled the music from their pretty throats, among the the swaying limbs. In this fairy-land we encamped, and Mr. Barrill decided to make it the limit of his journey. Here we determined to spend a week of sporting luxury, and complete our stock of trophies.

Evening came on in quiet majesty, wearing one sweet star upon her brow. Then the crescent moon appeared, and in a pure sea of light the timid stars were dimmed. Around our little camp, the light and shadow danced in fairy revelry and the birds sung their lullaby in harmony with the chirp and twitter of the insect world. But the grand roar of the king of beasts, swelling along the stream, shook the delicious feeling from our souls, and filled us with a purpose of death; and our rifles were prepared for service. The bellowing of the buffalo and the cry of the hyena increased the fever which had seized us. That night we resolved to hunt in a novel way. We went about two hundred yards from camp, near the edge of the stream, and selected two commanding mimosas, each of us mounted into the branches of one, and quietly awaited the approach of game to drink.

Our positions were decidedly uncomfortable. We were beyond the reach of lions, but an elephant or a rhinoceros might have made sad work of the trees, and we would



have had to be extremely agile to effect an escape. But we resolved to be careful not to provoke the anger of such enemies. In about an hour after we had taken our perch, a single giraffe approached the stream, within twenty yards of us. Its advance was slow and cautious, and, by the moonlight, it looked like a stately tree moving to the stream. The noble animal at length emerged from the trees, and stood on the bank. Our rifles were raised, and we were about to pull the trigger, when a tremendous sprig brushed away the branches, and an enormous lion was upon the back of the struggling giraffe, tearing the flesh with its teeth and claws. In the struggle the head of the giraffe came near knocking me out of the tree. I told Mr. Barrill to aim at the head of the giraffe, and I would strive to bring down the lion, and we fired nearly at the same moment—the animals being within ten feet of us. The lion got his terrible hold, and uttering an awful groan, fell to the ground. The giraffe tottered, and fell crashing among the trees, which upheld the animal's weight, although it was still struggling, and I had an opportunity of firing a mortal shot into its breast. This early triumph was all we could expect to achieve that night, as the report of the rifles would alarm the rest of the game, so we called out for Carollus to come to our aid, and descended from the tree.

The Hottentots brought two lanterns. By the light



we were enabled to make a closer inspection of the animals we had slain. The giraffe was a bull at least, eighteen feet in height. His back was torn and gashed by the teeth and claws of the lion, and the beautiful skin was greatly damaged; but Mr. Barrill, nevertheless, set to work to secure it. The lion was a black-maned individual, of rather forbidding aspect, even as he lay dead upon the ground. I could not lift the heavy paw without experiencing a degree of nervousness, which a hunter of my practice should be somewhat ashamed to acknowledge. The skinning operation lasted about half an hour, during which we were somewhat apprehensive of the attack of other lions whose awful voices resounded through the forest. But we were not disturbed, and soon afterwards, we returned to camp, to repose upon our laurels.

The next morning, bright and early, we were abroad in the forest, not hunting, but selecting our game; for we killed on all sides, with a rapidity of slaughter I had only seen paralleled in the midst of a herd of buffaloes, on the plains of my native land. Several beautiful varieties of antelopes that I had not yet beheld, fell before our murderous rifles; an ostrich was killed not far from the edge of the forest; the elephant and the rhinoceros were sent crashing through the forest, maddened by severe wounds; our camp was abundantly supplied with eland and buffalo tongues—and on these we lived for a week—the happiest week of



## CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CITY OF BAROCHE. THE JUNGLES AGAIN.  
RHINOCEROS. ANTELOPE. CAMP IN THE JUN-  
GLE. ALARM. A LION.

THE city of Baroche has greatly declined of late years. We found it poor and mean, with narrow, dirty streets, and low houses built of sun-burned bricks. The surrounding country appeared fertile and well-cultivated, but there was an absence of trees, and the villages had a dingy aspect. The Nerbudda is there about two miles wide, and very shallow. There were a large number of small vessels in front of the city, but we were informed that the trade was not of much importance. As the climate was hot and unhealthy, and our Parsees did not seem contented, we only remained a single day in Baroche, and then resumed our route.



For many miles we rode between cotton-fields, and beneath a blazing sun. Scarcely a tree of any size was to be seen. But after we had entered the province of Baroda, there was a most agreeable change. The roads were lined with trees of various kinds. The villages gave every evidence of prosperity, and generally presented a strangely beautiful appearance, being surrounded with mango-topes and verdant tamarind trees. We observed that cotton, sugar-cane, tobacco, corn, opium, hemp, and flax were grown, the fields being divided by high green hedges. The inhabitants were called Coolies. They wore a singular costume, made up of a petticoat, a quilted kirtle, which in time of war was covered with armor, and a cotton cloth over the head and shoulders. Mr. Barrill informed me that the English government considered these people very turbulent; but we found them quiet, friendly, and hospitable. Perhaps, they have the spirit to resist the extortions of their conquerors, and this is the reason of their ill-esteem with the government. Such a spirit is a noble quality in the eyes of an American citizen, who from his cradle, is taught, "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." After journeying till noon in delightful scenery, we halted at a neat-looking farm-house, and obtained an excellent meal of venison, hare, and quail—the best by far we had eaten since leaving Bombay. Quitting this farm-house, we rode on, the country assuming a wilder appearance as



we proceeded, and about the middle of the afternoon, we found ourselves once more amidst the jungles, and in the vicinity of all kinds of Indian game. The few inhabitants we met, belonged to the rude tribe called Bheels. They were known to be warlike, and fond of nocturnal marauding expeditions; but we were well-armed, and did not care for their favor or hostility.

As we were riding watchfully through the luxuriant and fragrant forest, an almost naked Bheel suddenly appeared in front, and, in much alarm, informed us that he had seen a huge rhinoceros in a thicket a quarter of a mile ahead. He spoke in a language which one of our Parsees interpreted to us. The fellow was armed only with a short spear. We directed him to guide us to the spot; but prepared for treachery. Cautiously, and with sight and nerves at the utmost strain, we followed the Bheel, from grove to grove, till, as we neared a thicket which seemed to put an effectual check to our further progress, a quick rustle was heard among the leaves, and before we had time to check the horses, a monstrous rhinoceros charged out upon us. With a fear-spurred agility, the Bheel turned back, and sprang upon a horse behind one of the Parsees. Experience had given Mr. Barrill and I a high degree of presence of mind, and, while our servants instantly turned and fled, we took the best aim possible under the circumstances, fired, and then dodged aside,



and went crashing through the thick underwood. The rhinoceros did not turn, but pushed forward in determined pursuit of the Parsees. Of course, we quickly returned upon his rear, and gave him the full benefit of two more balls. This checked the monster, and as we again dodged aside from the path, he came charging back. This time, he discovered my whereabouts, and turned off after me. I led him circuitously back to the path, feeling certain that my friend would reload and hit him again in the rear. I was not disappointed in my calculation. As the rhinoceros, with that mad-dog obstinacy for which it is so famous, rushed after my flying steed, a ball from Mr. Barrill's rifle brought him to a seat on his haunches. Seeing this, one of the Parsees came back, and gave me his gun, with which I gave the grunting monster a ball in the throat, and he tumbled over on his side. Yet we did not venture to approach, till another shot had been fired by Mr. Barrill.

On seeing the rhinoceros fall, the Bheel who had been so extremely ready to remove all obstructions from the path of the charging animal, gave a yell of delight, jumped from the horse on which he had perched himself, and ran before us to our prostrate foe. In spite of all our balls, we found that the monster still breathed. A thrust from the Bheel's spear, however, completely extinguished the spark of life, which was a new subject for clamorous rejoicing on the part of our half-savage friend. We dismounted,



tied our horses, and began a survey of this mighty game. The Asiatic rhinoceros differs from the African animal of the same name, in many respects. It is about the same size, but, in general, more ferocious and formidable. But there are differences that strike the beholder instantly. The Asiatic animal has but one horn, while, as it is well known, the African rhinoceros has two. The skin of the former lies over the body in immense folds, as if the animal wore robes, and this covering is so thick that some of our bullets, although prepared with solder, had flattened against it. Three had penetrated, one in the throat, and two behind the shoulder.

A half hour was spent in examining the huge bulk of the rhinoceros. The horn was about two feet in length. Mr. Barrill gave it to one of the Parsees, much to the disappointment of the Bheel, who had earnestly requested it several times. For himself, my friend reserved some of the teeth, while I secured a large piece of the skin to dry for my private stock of trophies. The remainder of the animal was given to the Bheel, with orders to save it from the tigers and lions if he thought himself able. While we were discussing the disposal of the vanquished monster, one of the Parsees caught sight of some four-horned antelopes bounding along in the distance, and away went Mr. Barrill and myself, with the hope of getting a shot. Vain! vain! the ride through such underwood in chase of animals



almost as fleet as the wind. After a ride of half a mile, we found ourselves beginning to lose ground, and, therefore, returned.

Getting into marching order, we bade our Bheel friend adieu, and resumed our march in better spirits than we had been since our arrival in India. Night overtook us before we had advanced more than three or four miles, and as the lions began to make the forests quake around us, we thought proper to encamp on the banks of a small stream. No camp was ever prepared by hunters with more anxious care. We knew that we were surrounded with perils, only to be met with at night in the jungles of India. Hungry animals of the most daring and ferocious species were roaring and howling on all sides of us. Perhaps, enormous serpents were lurking in the thickets, waiting till we were wrapped in slumber to dart upon their prey. The security of our horses was the most difficult matter to achieve. The stream was about twenty feet broad, and two or three deep, where we had encamped. This afforded us a kind of defence upon that side. Between the creek and the nearest trees was a space of about twenty feet, thickly covered with bushes. These we cut down, and ranged some of them as a slight breastwork, while the others, we used for fuel. The night was starry, but moonless, and the red glare shone with a strange light upon wood and stream. We cut log seats and placed them



around the cheerful blaze; then tied our horses as near to it as we conveniently could; and having directed the Parsees to keep a strict watch around, sat down to eat a hasty supper, with our trusty rifles laid across our knees. This being concluded, the Parsees were permitted to eat, while we kept guard. Occasionally, a lion's awful roar, sounding as if the animal was within a few hundred yards of our camp, startled us to keener vigilance, and we could see that our horses were very uneasy at the proximity of such ferocious foes. Once I thought that a shout and the report of a rifle might serve the purpose of keeping the animals at a greater distance, and, accordingly, both rang on the air. But the roars continued, and we began to feel the pressing necessity of keeping our eyes open all night. I mentioned this to Mr. Barrill, and after some deliberation, he decided that waking alone, we could be secure.

Accordingly, we placed the Parsees upon guard, with orders to fire at even the suspicion of an approaching animal of any size, and sat down to talk away the night. Mr. Barrill, I have said, excelled in conversation. He could wander "from gay to grave, from lively to severe," in a winning way, to which I could have listened day or night. Under such an influence I was forgetting the lapse of moments; and even the awful concert of the woods. I was in the midst of my third pipe, when a hist from one