

Lizzie Lyon
Dec 25th 1868

THE HISTORY

OF

SANDFORD AND MERTON.

BY THOMAS DAY.

Six Coloured Engravings on Steel.

Philadelphia:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

MDCCCLXVIII.

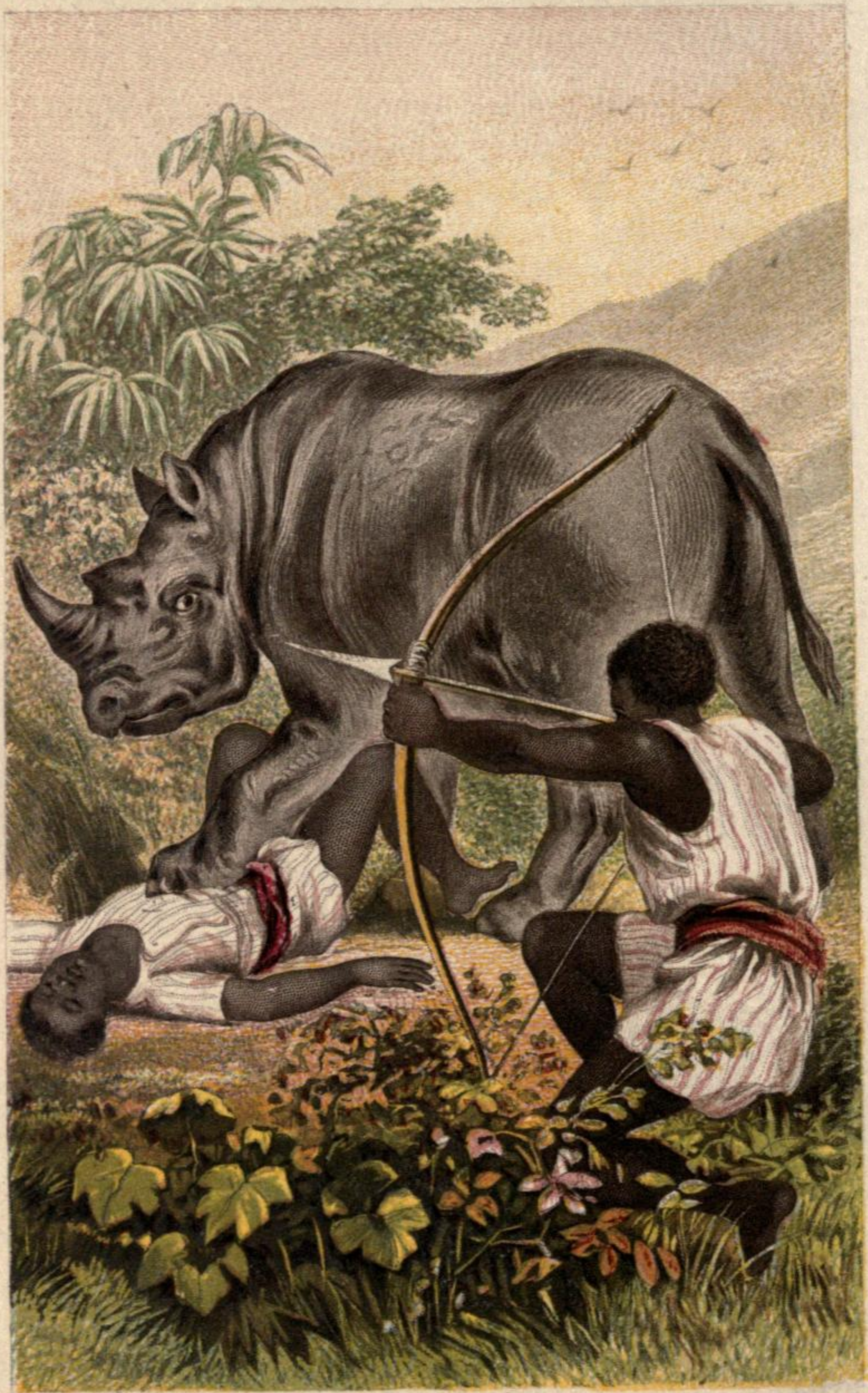
turned his back upon any beast of the forest, drew from his side a kind of knife or dagger, which he constantly wore, and, placing one knee and one hand upon the ground, waited the approach of his terrible foe. The lion instantly rushed upon him with a fury not to be described; but my father received him upon the point of his weapon with so steady and so composed an aim, that he buried it several inches in his belly. The beast attacked him a second time, and a second time received a dreadful wound, not, however without laying bare one of my father's sides with a sudden stroke of his claws. The rest of the village then rushed in, and had soon despatched the lion with innumerable wounds.

“This exploit appeared so extraordinary that it spread my father's fame throughout the whole country, and gave him the name of *the undaunted hunter*, as an honourable distinction from the neighbourhood. Under such a parent it was not long before I was taught every species of the chase. At first my father only suffered me to pursue stags and other feeble animals, or took me in his canoe to fish. Soon, however, I was intrusted with a bow and arrows, and placed with many other children and young men to defend our rice-fields from the depredations of the *river-horse*. Rice (it is necessary to observe) is a plant that requires great moisture in the soil; all our plantations, therefore, are made by the side of rivers, in the soft fertile soil which is overflowed in the rainy season. But when the grain is almost ripe, we are forced to defend it from a variety of hurtful animals, that would otherwise deprive us of the fruits of our labours; among these one of the

principal is the animal I have mentioned. His size and bulk are immense, being twice the bigness of the largest ox which I have seen in this country: he has four legs, which are short and thick; a head of a monstrous magnitude, and jaws that are armed with teeth of a prodigious size and strength; besides two prominent tusks, which threaten destruction to all assailants.

“But this animal, though so large and strong, is chiefly an inhabitant of the river, where he lives upon fish and water-roots. It is sometimes a curious but a dreadful sight, when a boat is gliding over a smooth part of the stream of unusual depth and clearness, to look down and behold this monstrous creature travelling along the bottom several yards below the surface. Whenever this happens, the boatman instantly paddles another way; for such is the strength of the creature, that he is able to upset a bark of moderate size by rising under it, or to tear out a plank with his fangs, and expose those who are in it to the dangers of an unexpected shipwreck. All the day he chiefly hides himself in the water, and preys upon fish; but during the gloom of night he issues from the river, and invades the fields of standing corn, which he would soon lay desolate, were he not driven back by the shouts and cries of those who are stationed to defend them.

“At this work I had assisted several successive nights, till we were almost wearied with watching. At length one of the most enterprising of our young men proposed that we should no longer content ourselves with driving back the enemy, but boldly attack him, and punish him for his temerity. With this



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purpose we concealed ourselves in a convenient spot, till we had seen one of the river-horses issue from the water, and advance a considerable way into our plantations; then we rushed from our hiding-place with furious shouts and cries, and endeavoured to intercept his return; but the beast, confiding in his superior strength, advanced slowly on, snarling horribly, and gnashing his dreadful tusks; and in this manner he opened his way through the thickest of our battalions. In vain we poured upon him on every side our darts and arrows, and every missive weapon; so well defended was he in an impenetrable hide, that every weapon either rebounded as from a wall, or glanced aside without in the least annoying. At length one of the boldest of our youth advanced unguardedly upon him, and endeavoured to wound him from a shorter distance; but the furious beast rushed upon him with an unexpected degree of swiftness, ripped up his body with a single stroke of his enormous tusk, and then, seizing him in his furious jaws, lifted up his mangled body as if in triumph, and crushed him into a bleeding and promiscuous mass.

“Fear instantly seized upon our company; all involuntarily retreated, and seemed inclined to quit the unequal combat; all but myself, who, inflamed with grief and rage for the loss of my companion, determined either to revenge his death or perish in the attempt. Seeing, therefore, that it was in vain to attack the animal in the usual manner, I chose the sharpest arrow, and fitted it to the bowstring; then, with a cool unterrified aim, observing him moving nimbly into the river, I discharged it full at his broad and glaring eye-ball with such success, that the

barbed point penetrated even to his brain, and the monster fell expiring to the ground.

“This action, magnified beyond its deserts, gained me universal applause throughout the hamlet; I was from that time looked upon as one of the most valiant and fortunate of our youth. The immense body of the monster which I had slain was cut to pieces, and borne in triumph to the village. All the young women received me with songs of joy and congratulations; the young men adopted me as their leader in every hazardous expedition; and the elders applauded me with such expressions of esteem as filled my ignorant heart with vanity and exultation.

“But what was more agreeable to me than all the rest, my father received me with transport, and, pressing me to his bosom with tears of joy, told me that now he could die with pleasure, since I had exceeded his most sanguine expectations. ‘I,’ said he, ‘have not lived inactive or inglorious; I have transfixed the tiger with my shafts; I have, though alone, attacked the lion in his rage, the terror of the woods, the fiercest of animals; even the elephant has been compelled to turn his back and fly before my javelin; but never, in the pride of my youth and strength, did I achieve such an exploit as this.’ He then went into his cabin and brought forth the bow and fatal arrows which he was accustomed to use in the chase. ‘Take them, take them,’ said he, ‘my son, and rescue my weaker arm from a burthen which it is no longer destined to sustain. Age is now creeping on; my blood begins to cool, my sinews slacken, and I am no longer equal to the task of supporting the glories of our race. That care shall now be