

moment they were dismissed and became their own masters, they allowed their wild passions free course, and a more riotous set it is difficult to imagine. Bill Spaniard, the half-breed, who had been accused of murder, was one of the best behaved of the party. He came up to his former superiors, looking very serious and steady, thanked them for the good treatment he had met with, shook various hands that were extended to him, and then turned and went on his way through rain and storm.

There was another curious fellow—an old man, who had been engaged as waggoner, and who, when I afterwards saw him again on the journey from Pueblo de los Angeles to San Francisco, was wonderfully metamorphosed. He was a Methodist, and said to be a preacher, and he had, according to his own account, taken the opportunity of accompanying the expedition to California, in order to visit some of his children, who were settled there. During the journey, he never went by any other name in the expedition, than "the Old Man" (though every day he made a formal declaration that his name was Charrot), and a more modest, unpretending, and humble individual than he appeared then, could hardly be imagined. The more brutal part of his associates often took advantage of these humble ways of his, to put him upon tasks that did not fairly fall to his lot; but nothing could put him out of temper, expect, perhaps, the not paying sufficient attention when he began to hold forth concerning the religious views of his sect, and of this offence his rough companions were often enough guilty. He would wish "Good morning" with the most elaborate politeness to every person he met, and his salutation was of course responded to by the decent part of the company with equal civility, but from the rougher sort he frequently got a rude answer.

"Good morning, Mr. Murphy," I heard him say once to one of the rudest of them. "Damn your good morning," was the reply; "what do you mean by good morning in such weather as this?" "Oh!" said the Old Man, "I only just took the liberty to wish you

good morning, and ask how you found yourself. Don't be angry with me!"

Afterwards, on the steamer "Frémont," I met again this wonderfully patient old gentleman, and I hardly knew him. He was no longer "the Old Man," but decidedly Mr. Charrot, handsomely dressed in a suit of black, and with no trace at all of the extraordinary humility of deportment that had formerly characterised him.

"Times are changed with me," he said; "I am not now 'the Old Man,' the waggoner, ordered about by everybody; but I show myself, what I am, a gentleman. I think I played my part pretty well on the journey; but I am now ready to converse with you on any subject you may please to select—geology, botany, theology, astronomy, history, or mineralogy! You will not find an ignorant man in me."

It was impossible to resist a smile at the order in which Mr. Charrot narrated his scientific acquirements, and it certainly awakened some doubt of the depth of his learning; but it was now my turn to be humble. "I am sorry," said I, "that my knowledge is not sufficiently extensive to enable me to discuss with you any of the numerous scientific subjects you are so much at home in."

"Oh, you are young yet," replied Mr. Charrot, patronisingly; "but you should not neglect opportunities of instructive conversation—always take advantage of them when you can." and thereupon Mr. Charrot turned from me with much majesty, and walked to the other end of the boat. Whatever might have been his motive, he certainly had been, as he said, playing a part, and had played it very cleverly.

And so it appears the French naturalist travelled in the disguise of a waggoner with the American expedition from the Mississippi to the Pacific! It is a most remarkable instance of zeal for knowledge united to the love of adventure, if there was not also, at the bottom of it, some latent intention of reaching the gold diggings of California in safety, and with as little expense as possible.

TRAVEL AND SPORTING ADVENTURES IN TROPICAL SOUTH AFRICA.

I.

WALFISCH BAY—MISSIONARY STATION—A LION HUNT—ADVENTURE WITH A RHINOCEROS—A HORSE AND MULE KILLED BY LIONS—UNSUCCESSFUL CHASE—DEATH OF THE FIRST GIRAFFE—EXTEMPORISED OMELET OF OSTRICH EGGS.

THE discovery of Lakes Victoria, Nyanza, Tanganyika, Nyassa and Shirwa in Eastern Tropical Africa, do not exceed the importance of the discovery in 1849, by Messrs. Oswell, Livingstone and Murray, of a fine fresh water lake—Lake Ngami in Central West Tropical Africa, with the corn-growing land of Damara to the west, the long valley of the Zambesi to the east, and the ultimate determination of the great fact that the whole of Central Tropical

Africa, instead of being, as supposed, a land of deserts or mountains, is in reality a watery upland—more or less marshy or lacustrine according to seasons, and whose overflow pours by gaps in the great upland through different great outlets, among which, those of the Nile, the Zambesi, the Zaire, and the Binue, may be said to hold first rank. These great facts determine that a vast extent of territory, deemed for so great a length of time to be an uninhabited wilderness, is in reality in great part inhabited, and more than that, available to the great purposes of industry and improvement.

Lake Ngami and the Upper Zambesi, with its magnificent falls, said to rival in grandeur those of Niagara, occupy a pre-eminently important position to the missionary and the colonist, as well as to the geographer

and the naturalist, inasmuch as they supply him with these watering and grass places, without which, travel or settlement in such countries would alike be out of the question. The only drawback is the fatal tsetse fly, from whose bite all domestic animals—save the goat—perish; but as this little winged pest is called by the old Portuguese colonists significantly enough—the elephant fly—it is to be hoped that it will disappear, as those great colossal creations retire also before the advance of the hunter, the herdsman, and the agriculturist.

In consequence of the presence of this fly, the spare cultivation and population of the country, and other circumstances, as the luxuriance of vegetation, large and small ruminating and pachydermatous animals—antelopes, giraffes, buffaloes, wild-boars, elephants, rhinoceroses, and hippopotami—abound in every direction; while, by the all-wise provisions of nature, the excess of numbers is kept down by a corresponding proportion of feline animals, whose existence depends upon the destruction of more innocent creatures. We shudder, and with propriety, at the tales of slaughter recorded by some of our great African hunters and sportsmen, and the wholesale destruction of game, for the mere sake of destruction, is so repugnant, that no African Nimrod will plead guilty to such a practice in the present day. But in Africa, man must live mainly by the proceeds of the chase; and in Ceylon, we are told, by Sir J. G. Tennant, of a gallant officer who purchased his promotion by the proceeds of his shooting exploits; and even granting occasionally some wastefulness of animal life on the part of an excited hunter, such must be as the veriest trifle, the most insignificant item possible compared with the great operations of nature. How many gnus, gemsboks, elands, and koodoos, fall victims nightly to their prowling antagonists, lions and leopards. And how many beautiful and delicate nakong and leche, that tenant the rush-bound shores of Lake Ngami, are dragged into its deep waters by crocodiles, or hunted down by their unsparing and natural enemies—the larger carnivora?

Discountenancing then, as all persons of correct feeling and taste would do, all useless destruction of animal life, we should deem the same feeling to be carried to a false and morbid development, if we refused to grant to the bold and dexterous hunter, to the enterprising and adventurous naturalist, full sympathies and interest with the narrative of his exploits.

Take, for example, Messrs. Galton and Andersson, the one an Englishman, the other a Swede by birth, both alike naturalists, travellers, and sportsmen by the force of an irrepressible instinct. Mr. Andersson first visited this country with a considerable collection of living birds and quadrupeds, together with numerous preserved specimens of natural history, the produce of many a long hunting excursion amidst the mountains, lakes, and forests of his native country. In England he was fortunate enough to be introduced to Mr. Galton, at that time preparing for his well-known journey to Damara land, and Mr. Galton engaged him to join him on that expedition, which he afterwards extended as far as Lake Ngami alone, and altogether dependent on his own very scanty resources.¹

¹ *The Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa.* Francis Galton, Esq.

Lake Ngami; or Explorations and Discoveries during Four Years' Wanderings in the Wilds of Western Africa. By Charles John Andersson.

We shall not enter upon this occasion into a detail of the *impedimenta*, from oxen-teams and waggons down to rat-traps and beads, that travellers deem essential to proceed with from the Cape into the interior. Messrs. Galton and Andersson did not, however, start from the Cape inland, but they proceeded thence by sea to Walfisch Bay, whence they could at once penetrate into the Western Continent. Here they first made acquaintance with the *naras*, a prickly gourd of a most cooling, refreshing, and inviting appearance, that grows wild, as also with the bush tick, which complacently buried itself in their feet.

There was a missionary station, designated Scheppmansdorf, at no great distance from the coast, and some idea of the character of the country may be formed from the fact that Mr. Galton, who preceded Mr. Andersson into the interior, met, on his arrival, with an immediate opportunity of forming an acquaintanceship with the monarch of the wilds.

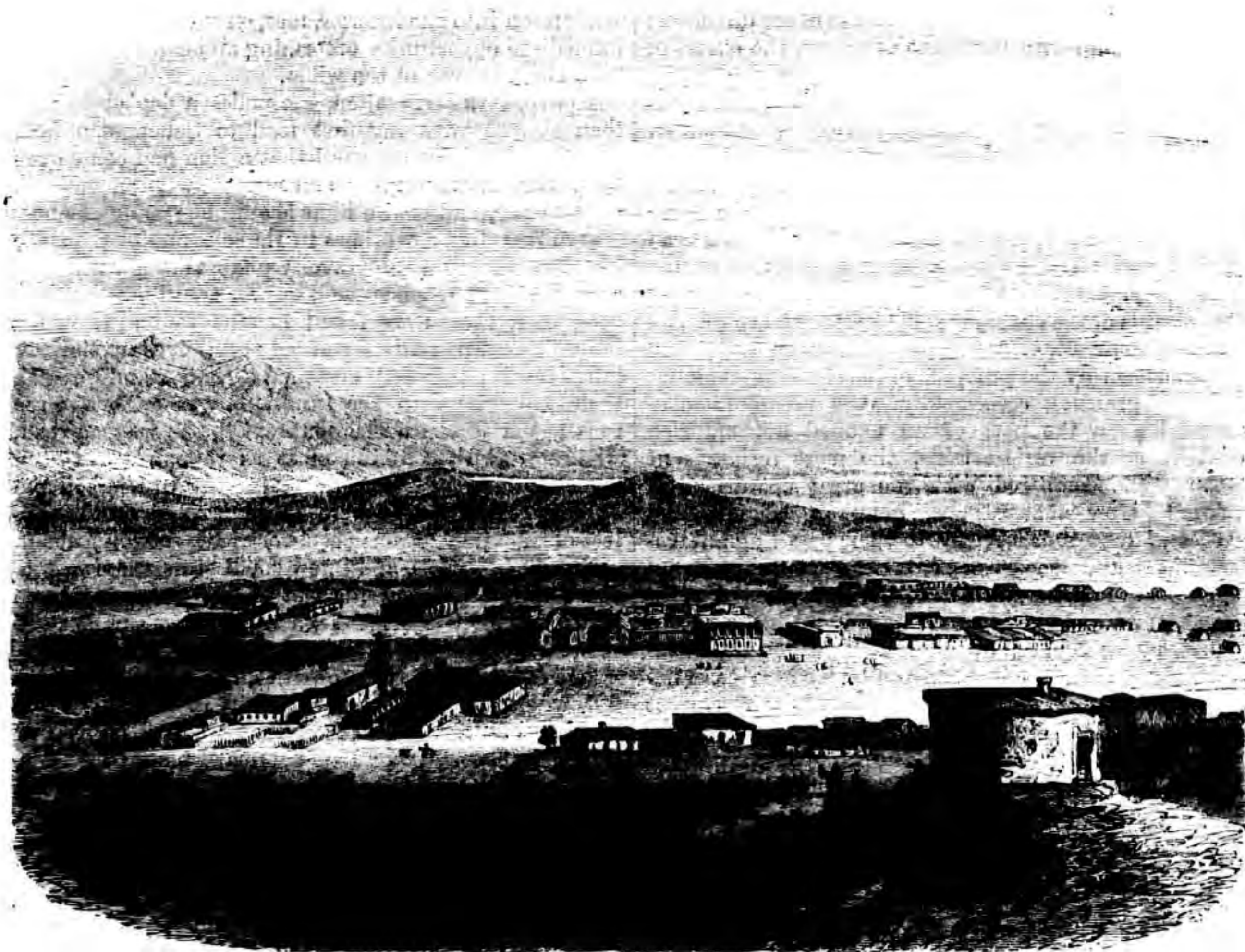
I gave, says Mr. Galton, the mules a day's rest, and then started with my first load to Scheppmansdorf. Mr. Bam had sent me word that a lion had come over from the Swakop river, and was prowling about and very daring, and that a hunt should be got up at once. As we travelled sometimes in the soft sand of the river bed, sometimes on the gravelly plain, through which it runs, we kept a sharp look out for the track that had been seen there: we found it after we had travelled ten miles. The natives amused themselves by cleverly imitating it; they half clenched their fist and pressed their knuckles into the sand. It was curious to see to what a distance the lion kept to the waggon-road, walking down the middle of it as though it had been made for him. I listened deferentially to Timboo and John St. Helena, who were quite learned on the subject of tracking. Except some ostriches scudding about, some crows, lizards, and a few small birds, there was no other sign of animal life, but we saw spoors now and then of the little steinbok, a very pretty gazelle some sixteen inches high.

We followed the waggon-path till an hour after night-fall, when the damp feel of the air, distant lights and barking of dogs, announced that we had arrived at Scheppmansdorf. Mr. Bam welcomed me most kindly, introduced me to his wife, gave me an out-house for my boxes and myself, and we formed a very pleasant party that evening, more especially as I heard that my horses were quite well and fat. We talked over the lion, and it seemed that he had been prowling about the station continually; that he was a well-known beast, who usually hunted the lower part of the Swakop, and had killed an immense number of cattle; many a time have I heard them reckon over—fifty oxen, three horses, one donkey, and innumerable calves and dogs. He had often been chased, but was too wary to be shot, and so forth. We talked over the lion at Mr. Bam's till a late hour: he assured me that the animal would prowl about that night, as he had done so every day for week, and that, if I wanted to try my rifle, I could track him in the morning. He and Stewartson had taken horses the day before to hunt him, and they found him and gave chase; at last he came to bay, when they rode to the top of a sand-hill immediately above him, where the beast, not waiting to be fired at, charged them. Mr. Bam galloped off, but Stewartson's horse being thoroughly blown, would not stir a step, until the lion's head appeared over the sand-hill just above the astonished animal, who probably had no idea of what was

taking place, for Stewartson seems to have been "craning" over the ridge of the bank. I was glad to learn, not only on account of Stewartson's safety, but also as a proof of the discretion and speed of my horse, that the next second of time left the lion behind at a safer distance.

Mr. Bam's household, which I may as well describe, as it gives a good idea of a missionary establishment, was as follows:—himself, Mrs. Bam, a numerous family, and an interpreter, who helped at the schools, could drive a waggon, and was the factotum, made the party that took their meals together, the interpreter being very deferential, and only speaking when spoken to. Besides these were a few hangers on, more or less trustworthy, and always ready for a job. The house

is a tolerably sized cottage or bothy, all on one floor, built of course by the missionary himself, as well as he was able to build it; the workmanship was naturally very rough, but as it takes far less labour to use trees for the uprights and rafters than planks, it is also very strong. Chairs, a table, and a bureau, were imported from Cape Town; the beds, bookshelves, and so forth, made here. The wife does the whole house work—cleaning the rooms, managing the children, cooking the dinner, and, what I never liked, waiting at table. These ladies have the hardest and rudest of occupations, but, I must candidly say, they seem to like this life extremely, and I am sure that missionaries must find great favour in the eyes of the fairer sex, judging from



PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES.

the charming partners that they have the good fortune to obtain. As to the natives, they make their huts as they like, and where they like; they plant sticks in a circle of six feet across, then bend the tops together and tie them with strips of bark; lastly, they wattle the sides and plaster them up.

Scheppmansdorf is prettily situated on a kind of island, in the middle of the Kuisip river bed, near a clump of fine trees, somewhat resembling elms. At one side stands the Missionary's and Stewartson's houses, in the middle is the white-washed chapel, and round the other sides lie the huts, twenty or thirty in number. All round is sand, to the south there is a perfect sea of sand-dunes, from 100 to 150 feet high, to the north the Naanip plain. A small stream-

let rises from the ground, and runs through the place, watering about three acres of garden and field, and losing itself half a mile off in a reedy pond full of wild fowl.

The natives crowd the church and sing the hymns, which, being about three-quarters articulate and one-quarter clicks, produce a very funny effect. The missionary is, to all intents and purposes, lord paramount of the place, though he is modest, and refers matters as much as possible to the captain of the tribe. Savage countries are parcelled out by a tacit understanding between different missionary societies, priority of occupation affording the ground of claim, it not being customary for one sect to establish its stations in a land where another sect is already settled.

l on one floor,
f, as well as he
was naturally
our to use trees
s, it is also very
were imported
s, and so forth,
e house work—
ren, cooking the
aiting at table.
t of occupations,
to like this life
naries must find
ex, judging from

through the place,
len and field, and
pond full of wild
d sing the hymns,
articulate and one-
effect. The mis-
s, lord paramount
d refers matters as
he tribe. Savage
cit understanding
s, priority of occu-
it not being cus-
tations in a land
l.



No. 40.

GIRAFFE AND LIONS.

Mr. Bam and the other gentlemen I was thrown amongst belonged to a German mission, and were all of them Germans or Dutch. Further to the interior, and communicating with the Cape, not by the sea, but overland, are some English Wesleyan stations. Subsequently, I passed through these, but at the time of my visit they were unoccupied.

To return to the lion. When I turned into bed I listened long for a roar, or some token of his presence, but in vain; and at last I dropped asleep. In the morning we found his tracks all about us, he had paid particular attention to a hut that was lying rather apart from the others, and had been prowling all round it. Stewartson volunteered to accompany me, he disapproved of horseback, and mounted his trusty ox. Mr. Stewartson's profession in early life was that of a tailor, though subsequently a dissenting minister, and afterwards a cattle trader. I confess that I felt, as I rode by his side, I had rather have been introduced to the genus "lion" by a person of almost any other calling, and carried by any other kind of animal than my bucolic friend's. I took two of my men with me, and off we set with a few natives. The lion had walked backwards and forwards so much in the night, that it was long before we found the last tracks he had made. We followed them very quickly, as his broad foot-print was unmistakeable on the sand; there was a growing interest as we found how he had stopped and looked down, and considered whether a bush by one side would suit him or not, but had decided in the negative and gone slowly on. We peered about and marched very silently; the bushes got thicker, and the pace slower, when we stopped short at a well-trodden part whence the lion had evidently just risen, for the sand was still warm from his touch. Had he gone away, or was he close by? was the question. We were all mixed up together. Of a sudden the lion stood up, twelve paces in front, looked over his shoulders at us, made an easy noiseless bound, and was gone. His action was so steady, so smooth, so entirely devoid of hurry, that I could perfectly understand how a person might be seized through miscalculating the speed of his advance. As it was, he disappeared before one of our guns was well up to our shoulders. I am sure, if he had come at us, he could have done what mischief he liked. My horse would have shied on to the horns of Stewartson's ox, and in the narrow pass we should all have tumbled about and rolled one on another. The cover into which he went, and on the border of which he had been lying, was far too thick to be practicable for our further pursuit, though we did make several good attempts at dislodging him. I returned very crest-fallen at our want of success, but I had now seen the animal and better understood the elements of hunting them.

As we rode back across the plain we saw vast numbers of old gemsbok tracks, although there are but few of these fine antelopes in the neighbourhood; but impressions made on this crisp gravelly soil take years to efface; they seem to be almost stereotyped; and a very few animals and waggons have produced an extraordinary number of spoor.

I mentioned that Sheppmansdorf was built in a rude circle. To the middle of this the oxen of the place come of their own accord every night as the evening sets in, and lie there till the early morning; they find shelter from the wind, and are certainly sensible of protection. Besides this the ox is a sociable domestic

animal, and loves fires and the neighbourhood of men. The oxen, therefore, lay close up to the doorway of the outhouse in which I slept, and the night was pitch dark. Now, after we had all gone to bed and were fast asleep, there was a rush and an outcry, and people hallooing and dogs barking, for the lion had got into the midst of the oxen. I confess I was glad there was a door to my outhouse, for fear the lion should walk in; however, all became quiet, and I soon went to sleep.

A grand hunt was determined on in the morning; every available native was pressed into the service. Mr. Bam rode one horse, I the other, and Stewartson his ox. Johannis, Captain Frederick, and some other Hottentots, came mounted on their oxen, and we went off after breakfast with as many cur dogs as would follow us. The proceedings were much the same as before. After eight miles his spoor went into a bush; we threw stones in and shouted, and up he got about one hundred yards off. I purposely did not fire, as my horse was in a bad position for me to take as good an aim as I wished, and nobody else fired either; but we galloped after him in full view, the object being to bring him to bay, or to get a nearer shot as he ran. This last I hardly expected whilst he was moving, for my horses were not accustomed to be shot from, and it took so much time to pull them up, that the lion had gained a long start again before I could do so. The bushes were in his favour, and we nearly lost him; but by most skilful tracking the Hottentots came up and often helped us out when we were at fault. Some hours elapsed when, as Mr. Bam and myself were cantering on, we turned the corner of a sand-hill and saw the lion about sixty yards ahead, trotting on, looking over his shoulder. I got my long rifle up, and, sincerely praying that my horse would not kick me off when I fired, I pulled the trigger; the horse was too blown to start, and I placed my two-ounce bullet well into the lion's quarter. He growled and snarled, and bit the wound, but evidently had not heart to chase me, but turned to bay under a bush. There was a sand-hill opposite. We waited till the stragglers came up, and then went behind the sand-hill and dismounted; and Stewartson and ourselves crawled up to the top of it, right above the lion. He was in a tearing passion, and fifty paces from us, yet I could not see him as clearly as I could wish—wild beasts have such a readiness of availing themselves of the smallest bush or tuft of grass as a screen, which he did on this occasion; his head was between his paws, and his tail whirling up the sand. One single shot at the head struck him stone dead. He was a huge gaunt beast, miserably thin, and had a dog of Stewartson's in his inside, which he had snapped up on the werft the night before. The dog was in only five pieces, not at all chewed or even digested; it had been bolted in a hurry, and had probably disagreed with him. The lion was soon skinned. My bullet had passed right alongside the backbone, breaking its way through nearly half its length. Neither the oxen nor the horses showed that dread of his smell which they generally do. I even rolled up his hide like a valisse, and carried it behind my saddle, without my steed showing any objection. I cannot to this day imagine why we dismounted and climbed up the sand-hill; but I put myself under the orders of my more experienced friends. It would have been much easier and much safer to have given the animal his finishing wound from horseback.

Scheppmansdorf was first occupied as a missionary station in the year 1846, by the Rev. Mr. Scheppman, from whom it takes its name. It is situated on the Kuisip, which is a mere periodical stream. The success of the missionaries with the native Namaquas is described as being anything but encouraging. These people, who are partially civilised Hottentots, possess every vice of savages, but none of their noble qualities. Their ignorance is excessive, and when waggons were first introduced into this country, they caused many conjectures and much astonishment among the natives, who conceived them to be some gigantic animal possessed of vitality. A conveyance of this kind, belonging to the Rev. Mr. Schmelen, once broke down, and was left sticking in the sand. One day a Bushman came to the owner, and said he had seen his 'pack-ox' standing in the desert for a long time, with a broken leg; and, as he did not observe it had any grass, he was afraid that it would soon die of hunger unless taken away!

Leaving the waggons and the bulk of their effects at Scheppmansdorf, the party started for the interior with horses, mules, and pack-oxen. Their way lay over the Naarip, a sterile plain embellished, however, by a most beautiful air plant of a bright scarlet colour tinged with lemon. So lovely a flower, in such dreary and desolate wastes, has struck all African travellers with admiration. Even the mighty Nimrod, Gordon Cumming, whose whole soul one would imagine to be engrossed with lions and elephants, seems to have been struck with delight at the sight of this charming flower: "In the heat of the chase," said he, "I paused, spell-bound, to contemplate, with admiration, its fascinating beauty!"

On reaching the banks of the Swakop, Mr. Bam related an incident that had occurred there in connection with a rhinoceros.

"As we entered the Swakop river one day," said he, "we observed the tracks of a rhinoceros; and, soon after unyoking our oxen, the men requested to be allowed to go in search of the beast. This I readily granted, only reserving a native to assist me in kindling the fire and preparing our meal. While we were thus engaged, we heard shouting and firing; and, on looking in the direction whence the noise proceeded, discovered, to our horror, a rhinoceros, rushing furiously at us at the top of his speed. Our only chance of escape was the waggon, into which we hurriedly flung ourselves. And it was high time that we should seek refuge; for the next instant the enraged brute struck his powerful horn into the 'buik-plank' (the bottom board), with such force as to push the waggon several paces forward, although it was standing in very heavy sand. Most providentially, he attacked the vehicle from behind; for, if he had struck it on the side, he could hardly have failed to upset it, ponderous as it was. From the waggon, he made a dash at the fire, overturning the pot we had placed alongside it, and scattering the burning brands in every direction. Then, without doing any further damage, he proceeded on his wild career. Unfortunately, the men had taken with them all the guns; otherwise, I might easily have shot him dead on the spot. The Damara, however, threw his assegai at him; but the soft iron bent like a reed against his thick and almost impenetrable hide."

Nor were our travellers destined to travel scathless along this reed-bound scanty stream, in whose valley they suffered as much from thirst as if there had been no water

at all, and one of the mules dropped from sheer exhaustion quite breathless. Having arrived at a spot called Daviep, as there were no indications of lions, and the mules and horses sadly wanted rest and food, they deemed it advisable to leave them to themselves during the night, merely taking the precaution to kneehalter them. They paid dearly, however, for their too easy confidence.

Early on the following morning, one of the waggon-drivers was dispatched to the river to look after our animals, whilst Mr. Galton and myself followed at our ease; but what was our horror, on entering the bed of the stream, to find that several lions had recently passed and re-passed it in every direction. This, together with the absence of the mules and horses, at once foreboded evil. We were not long left to conjectures; for almost immediately our servant joined us, and said that a mule and a horse had been killed by the lions, and partly devoured. He added, that on his approaching the scene of the catastrophe, he saw five of those beasts feasting on the carcases; but on perceiving him they had retreated with terrible growlings! Instead of his presence having scared the lions from their prey, however, as he asserted, we had reason to believe that so soon as he was aware of them, he immediately hid himself amongst the rocks, and that it was not until emboldened by seeing us he had left his hiding-place. Had it been otherwise, he would have had ample time to give us notice of what had occurred, prior to our leaving the encampment.

Singularly enough, the dead mule was the identical one we had been in search of on the preceding night, and it would appear that it had just rejoined its companions, or was on the point of doing so, when it was attacked and killed. Being a remarkably fine and handsome animal, its loss was much regretted: the horse, moreover, was the best of the two we had brought from the Cape.

On examining the ground, we were glad to find that the other horse and remaining mule, had made good their escape down the bed of the river, though evidently pursued by the lions for some distance. How many of these beasts there really had been, we were unable to ascertain; but they could not have been less than seven or eight.

Having thus far ascertained the fate of the poor animals, we despatched our brave waggon-driver for Stewartson, and the remainder of the men: as also for proper guns and ammunition, as we had determined, if possible, to have our revenge.

On leaving Scheppmansdorf we had, unfortunately only brought with us three or four small goats as provision for the journey. This scanty supply was now nearly exhausted, and it being uncertain when we should meet with any native village where we could barter for more, we deemed it advisable, in order to provide against contingencies, to lay in a store of mule-flesh and horse-flesh; and though our people seemed horror-stricken at the idea, there was not a second alternative. Whilst waiting the return of the men, we, accordingly, set about cutting off from the slain animals such pieces as had not been defiled by the lions. This being accomplished, we covered the meat with a heap of stones, and the men having arrived, we proceeded in search of the depredators.

But though we beat both sides of the river for a considerable distance, we were unable to discover the beasts. At one time, and when I was quite alone on

the inner side of the thick reed-bed that lined the bank, I observed some beautiful 'klip-springers,' or mountain gazelles, and fired both barrels, though, unfortunately, without effect. The report of my gun caused a momentary consternation to Mr. Galton and the men, who imagined that I had fallen in with the lions, while, from the nature of the ground, they would have been unable to render me any assistance.

Being at last obliged to give up the search, two or three of the men on whom we could best depend were sent on the tracks of the scared mules and the remaining horse. After many hours' hard walking they were discovered; but the poor beasts had received such a fright, that it was only with great trouble and exertion that they were secured.

Thinking that the lions would in all probability return during the night, to make an end of what was left of the horse and mule, Galton and I determined to watch for them, and selected for our ambush the summit of a steep rock immediately near one of the carcasses.

Shortly after sunset, we proceeded to put our plan into execution; and, having arrived within a short distance of the slain animals, one of the people suddenly exclaimed—"Oh! look at the six bucks!" Imagine our astonishment when, turning our eyes in the direction in which he pointed, we saw, instead of antelopes, six magnificent lions; and this, moreover, on the very rock on which we had purposed ambushing ourselves, and where—as we foolishly imagined—we should have been in perfect security!

On perceiving that they were discovered, the beasts retreated behind the rock; but one or another of them would, nevertheless, steal from its hiding-place occasionally, and take a peep at us.

Contrary to the counsel of Mr. Galton, and others of our party, I now ascended the acclivity where we had last seen the beasts; but, although they were nowhere visible, I had every reason to believe the whole troop was not far distant from the spot where I stood.

To have ambushed ourselves in the rock originally selected was (from the evidence we had just had of its insecurity) not now to be thought of; and we therefore looked out for a safer place. The only one that offered, however, was a large acacia; but it was more than two hundred yards from either of the carcasses, and its stem was so thick and straight, that it was impossible to ascend it. Moreover, total darkness had now succeeded the short twilight; and, however reluctantly, we left the lions in full possession of the field and the remnant of their prey.

As they proceeded in their journey they fell in with giraffes, zebras, gnus, gemsbok, guinea fowls, toucans, and gray-crested parrots. Mr. Galton was lucky, or rather spirited, enough, to follow up, and shoot one of the former. Our seventh day's march, he relates, was an affair of six hours, and up the Tsobis river-bed. For the second time, we had no animal food left; but immediately that we started we saw the fresh spoor of a giraffe. I doubted whether or no to go after it, as my horse was very thin and weak, and I could not tell where the giraffe might have gone to, probably far beyond reach; so we travelled slowly on. However, as I rode some little distance in front of the cart, I found that the track went straight up the river bed, which being now hemmed in with impracticable cliffs, the giraffe's path and our own must necessarily be the

same. This made a great alteration in the case, and I cantered slowly on the spoor. My rifle was a little one (only 36 bore), but loaded with steel-pointed bullets. I was afraid of losing all chance of a shot if I wasted time by returning to the cart and getting a larger gun, and therefore I went on, as much for the pot as the sport. After four hours' travel, during which I had kept a couple of miles in front of the rest of the party, so as to be well away from the sound of the whip and of the men's talking, the tracks turned sharp to the right, up a broad ascent, which there led out of the river, and in the middle of this, among some bushes, and under a camelthorn tree stood my first giraffe. I took immediate advantage of a bush, and galloped under its cover as hard as I could pelt, and was within one hundred yards before the animal was fairly off. I galloped on, but she was almost as fast as I, and the bushes, which she trampled cleverly through, annoyed my horse extremely; I therefore reined up, and gave her a bullet in her quarter, which handicapped her heavily, and took some three miles an hour out of her speed. Again I galloped, loading as I went, but excessively embarrassed by the bushes, and fired again, whilst galloping, at thirty yards' distance, and I believe missed the animal. The riding at that time was really difficult, and my horse shied very much. Again I loaded, but my horse was becoming blown, and I rode parallel to the beast, intending to overtake and confront her. There was a watercourse in the way, quite jumpable, but my poor beast made a mess of it, and chested the opposite side; yet I somehow got him over, and then rode with all the skill I could. At last I steadily gained on the giraffe, then beat her, and passed her. The giraffe obstinately made for her point. I was forty yards in advance, and pulled up full in her path. She came on; my horse was far too blown to fidget, and was standing with his four legs well out. I waited as long as I dare—too long, I think, for her head was almost above me when I fired, and she really seemed coming at me with vice. I put my bullet full in her face; she tossed her head back, and the blood streamed from her nostrils as she turned and staggered, slowly retracing her path. I dare not fire again, lest I should fail in killing her, and only excite her to another run, which my horse was not fit to engage in. I therefore rode slowly after the wounded beast, and I drove her back to near where she came from, and there she stopped under a high tree. My horse was now frightened, and would not let me take my aim for the finishing shot at the brain, as it is but a small mark to shoot at; so I got off, and the unhappy creature looked down at me with her large lustrous eyes, and I felt that I was committing a kind of murder, but for all that, I was hungry, and she must die; so I waited till she turned her head, and then dropped her with a shot.

There was now a fine holiday feast for us. When the party came up, we set to work flaying and cutting large steaks from the meat, and securing the marrow-bones, until as much was heaped on the cart as the mules could possibly struggle on with. Our Ghou Damup guides ran on to Tsobis, where many of their people lay, and who brought us six ostrich eggs, and sweet gum, in return for the meat we had left behind us.

The cook made excellent omelets from the ostrich eggs by a very simple process. A hole was made at one end of the egg, through which is introduced some

salt and pepper. The egg is then well shaken, so as thoroughly to mix the white, the yolk, and the other ingredients. It is then placed in hot ashes, where it is baked to perfection. An egg thus prepared, although supposed to contain as much as twenty-four of the common fowl egg, is not considered too much for a single hungry individual.

II.

A LION HUNT—DEATH OF THE LEOPARD—A DRIED-UP LAKE—REMARKABLE FOUNTAIN—THE OVAMBO AND OVAMBO-LAND, A CORN COUNTRY.

AT Richterfeldt, a missionary station founded by Mr. Rich, in 1848, our travellers entered into the country of the Damaras. They are a fine tall race of people, some of the men being over six feet in height, with good and regular features. The women are also well made, with very small hands and feet. They vary in complexion from red to dark. They do not wear much clothing and are exceedingly filthy in their habits, and the exhalation hovering about them is very repulsive. As there was spring water at Richterfeldt, a great number of wild animals nightly congregated there, and, as usual under such circumstances, the game was followed by troops of lions, who by their horrible roaring, intermingled with the rushing to and fro of the hunted zebras and other animals, created the greatest consternation among the followers.

Our party were joined here by one Hans Larsen, a Dane by birth, who was distinguished in a very remarkable degree for courage, energy, perseverance, and endurance. Thus reinforced, they proceeded to Barmen, another station of the German-Rhenish Missionary Society, whence, after several adventures, they returned to Richterfeldt, which became the scene of a very daring lion hunt, thus related by the chief actor in it, Mr. Andersson.

One day, when eating my humble dinner, I was interrupted by the arrival of several natives, who, in breathless haste, related that an *ongeama*, or lion, had just killed one of their goats close to the mission station (Richterfeldt), and begged of me to lend them a hand in destroying the beast. They had so often cried "Wolf," that I did not give much heed to their statements; but, as they persisted in their story, I at last determined to ascertain its truth. Having strapped to my waist a shooting-belt, containing the several requisites of a hunter—such as bullets, caps, knife, &c., I shouldered my trusty double-barrelled gun (after loading it with steel-pointed balls), and followed the men.

In a short time, we reached the spot where the lion was believed to have taken refuge. This was in a dense tamarisk brake, of some considerable extent, situated partially on, and below, the sloping banks of the Swakop, near to its junction with the Omutenna, one of its tributaries.

On the rising ground, above the brake in question, were drawn up, in battle array, a number of Damaras and Namaquas, some armed with assegais, and a few with guns. Others of the party were in the brake itself, endeavouring to oust the lion.

But as it seemed to me that the "beaters" were timid, and, moreover, somewhat slow in their movements, I called them back; and, accompanied by only one or two persons, as also a few worthless dogs,

entered the brake myself. It was rather a dangerous proceeding; for, in places, the cover was so thick and tangled as to oblige me to creep on my hands and knees; and the lion, in consequence, might easily have pounced upon me without a moment's warning. At that time, however, I had not obtained any experimental knowledge of the old saying—"A burnt child dreads the fire," and therefore felt little or no apprehension.

Thus I had proceeded for some time; when suddenly, and within a few paces of where I stood, I heard a low, angry growl, which caused the dogs, with hair erect in the manner of hogs' bristles, and with their tails between their legs, to slink behind my heels. I immediately afterwards, a tremendous shout of "Ongeama! Ongeama!" was raised by the natives on the bank above, followed by a discharge of fire-arms. Presently, however, all was still again, for the lion, as I subsequently learnt, after showing himself on the outskirts of the brake, had retreated into it.

Once more I attempted to dislodge the beast; but, finding the enemy awaiting him in the more open country, he was very loth to leave his stronghold. Again, however, I succeeded in driving him to the edge of the brake, where, as in the first instance, he was received with a volley; but a broom-stick would have been equally efficacious as a gun in the hands of these people; for, out of a great number of shot that were fired, not one seemed to have taken effect.

Worn out at length by my exertions, and disgusted beyond measure at the way in which the natives bungled the affair, I left the tamarisk brake, and rejoining them on the bank above, offered to change place with them: but my proposal, as I expected, was forthwith declined.

As the day, however, was now fast drawing to a close, I determined to make one other effort to destroy the lion, and, should that prove unsuccessful, to give up the chase. Accordingly, accompanied by only a single native, I again entered the brake in question, which I examined for some time without seeing anything; but on arriving at that part of the cover we had first searched, and when in a spot comparatively free from bushes, up suddenly sprang the beast within a few paces of me. It was a black-maned lion, and one of the largest I ever remember to have encountered in Africa. But his movements were so rapid, so silent and smooth withal, that it was not until he had partially entered the thick cover (at which time he might have been about thirty paces distant) that I could fire. On receiving the ball, he wheeled short about, and with a terrific roar, bounded towards me. When within a few paces, he couched as if about to spring, having his head embedded, so to say, between his fore-paws.

Drawing a large hunting-knife, and slipping it over the wrist of my right hand, I dropped on one knee, and, thus, prepared, awaited his onset. It was an awful moment of suspense; and my situation was critical in the extreme. Still, my presence of mind never for a moment forsook me—indeed, I felt that nothing but the most perfect coolness and absolute self-command would be of any avail.

I would now have become the assailant; but as—owing to the intervening bushes, and clouds of dust raised by the lion's lashing his tail against the ground—I was unable to see his head, while to aim at any other part would have been madness, I refrained from firing. Whilst intently watching his every motion, he

suddenly bounded towards me; but—whether it was owing to his not perceiving me, partially concealed as I was in the long grass—or to my instinctively throwing my body on one side—or to his miscalculating the distance—in making his last spring, he went clear over me, and alighted on the ground three or four paces beyond. Instantly, without rising, I wheeled round on my knee, and discharged my second barrel; and, as his broadside was then towards me, lodged a ball in his shoulder, which it completely smashed. On receiving my second fire, he made another and more determined rush at me; but, owing to his disabled state, I happily avoided him. It was, however, only by a hair's breadth, for he passed me within arm's length. He afterwards scrambled into the thick cover beyond, where, as night was then approaching, I did not deem it prudent to pursue him.

At an early hour on the next morning, however, we followed his "spoor," and soon came to the spot where he had passed the night. The sand here was one patch of blood; and the bushes immediately about were broken, and beaten down by his weight, as he had staggered to and fro in his effort to get on his legs again. Strange to say, however, we here lost all clue to the beast. A large troop of lions that had been feasting on a giraffe in the early morning, had obliterated his tracks; and it was not until some days afterwards, and when the carcass was in a state of decomposition, that his death was ascertained. He breathed his last very near to where we were "at fault": but, in prosecuting the search, we had unfortunately taken exactly the opposite direction.

On our homeward path from the pursuit of the lion, we fell in with a herd of zebras; and, while discharging my gun at them, I accidentally pulled both triggers at once. The piece being very light, and loaded with double charges, the barrel flew out of the stock—the cocks burying themselves deep in the flesh on either side of my nose just under the eyes, and leaving scars visible to this day. Mr. Rath, on seeing me in this plight, was good enough to say, by way of consolation, that it was undoubtedly a just punishment of Heaven, in consequence of my having carried a gun on a Sunday!

During their stay at Schmelen's Hope the travellers not unfrequently received visits from leopards, but erroneously called "tigers" by the Dutch—a denomination under which the panther is also included. It is indeed doubtful if tigers, at least of the species common to the East Indies, exist on the African continent. The Damaras, however, assert that the real tiger is found in the country; and they once pointed out to Mr. Rath the tracks of an animal which he found to be very different to any he had ever before seen in Africa, and which the natives assured him were those of the animal in question.

One night, Mr. Andersson relates, I was suddenly awoken by a furious barking of our dogs, accompanied by cries of distress. Suspecting that some beast of prey had seized upon one of them, I leaped, undressed, out of my bed—and, gun in hand, hurried to the spot whence the cries proceeded. The night was pitchy dark, however, and I could distinguish nothing; yet, in the hope of frightening the intruder away, I shouted at the top of my voice. In a few moments, a torch was lighted, and we then discerned the tracks of a leopard, and also large patches of blood. On counting the dogs, I found that "Summer," the best and fleetest of our kennel, was missing. As it was in vain that I

called and searched for him, I concluded that the tiger had carried him away; and, as nothing further could be done that night, I again retired to rest; but the fate of the poor animal continued to haunt me, and drove sleep away. I had seated myself on the front chest of the waggon, when suddenly the melancholy cries were repeated; and, on reaching the spot, I discovered "Summer" stretched at full length, in the middle of a bush. Though the poor creature had several deep wounds about his throat and chest, he at once recognised me, and, wagging his tail, looked wistfully in my face. The sight sickened me, as I carried him into the house—where, in time, however, he recovered.

The very next day, "Summer" was revenged in a very unexpected manner. Some of the servants had gone into the bed of the river to chase away a jackal, when they suddenly encountered a leopard in the act of springing at our goats, which were grazing, unconscious of danger, on the river's bank. On finding himself discovered, he immediately took refuge in a tree, where he was at once attacked by the men. It was, however, not until he had received upwards of sixteen wounds—some of which were inflicted by poisoned arrows—that life became extinct. I arrived at the scene of conflict only to see him die.

During the whole affair, the men had stationed themselves at the foot of the tree—to the branches of which the leopard was pertinaciously clinging—and, having expended all their ammunition, one of them proposed—and the suggestion was taken into serious consideration—that they should pull him down by the tail!

The poorer of the Damaras, when hard pressed for food, eat the flesh of the leopard, the hyæna, and many other beasts of prey.

The caracal (*Felis Caracal*), or the wild cat, as it is generally called in these parts, was not uncommon in the neighbourhood of Schmelen's Hope. The fur of this animal is warm and handsome, and is much esteemed by the natives, who convert the skins into carosses, &c.

Our party fared well at Schmelen's Hope. Besides the larger game which abounded, the table was plentifully supplied with geese, ducks, guinea-fowls, francolins, and grouse. There were also large bustards, but so shy, as to be killed with great difficulty. The termites, or white ants, build nests twenty feet high and one hundred feet in circumference. Wild bees frequently make their nests in these gigantic dwellings. Mushrooms grow in abundance from their sides in the rainy season.

On the morning of the 3rd of March, Messrs. Galton and Andersson left Schmelen's Hope for Lake Ombondè in the Damara country. On this occasion, being in advance of the waggons, Mr. Andersson says he came suddenly upon an animal, which, though considerably smaller, much resembled a lion in appearance. Under ordinary circumstances, I should certainly have taken it for a young lion; but I had been formerly given to understand that in this part of Africa there exists a quadruped which, in regard to shape and colour, is like the lion, but, in most other respects, is totally distinct from it. The beast in question is said to be nocturnal in its habits, to be timid and harmless, and to prey for the most part on the small species of antelopes. In the native language it is called Onguirira, and would, as far as I could see, have answered the description of

a puma. As it was going straight away from me, I did not think it prudent to fire.

Great was our travellers' disappointment on reaching the long-sought-for lake! About noon, on the 5th of April, Mr. Andersson relates, we were rapidly approaching Omanbondè; but oh, how were we disappointed! My heart beat violently with excitement. The sleepy motion of the oxen, as they toiled through the heavy sand, being far too slow for my eagerness and excited imagination, I proceeded considerably in advance of the waggons, with about half-a-dozen Damaras, when all at once the country became open, and I found myself on some rising ground, gently sloping towards the bed of what I thought to be a dry water-course.

"There!" suddenly exclaimed one of the natives—"there is Omanbondè!"

"Omanbondè!" I echoed, almost in despair; "but where, in the name of heaven, is the water?"

I could say no more, for my heart failed me, and I sat down till the waggons came up; when, pointing to the dry river-bed, I told Galton that he saw the lake before him.

"Nonsense!" he replied; "it is only the end or tail of it which you see there."

After having descended into the bed, we continued to travel, at a rapid pace, about a mile in a westerly direction, when, at a bend, we discovered a large patch of green reeds. At this sight, a momentary ray of hope brightened up every countenance; but the next instant it vanished, for we found that the natives were actually searching for water amongst the rushes!

The truth at last dawned on us. We were indeed at Omanbondè—the lake of hippopotami! We all felt utter prostration of heart. For a long while we were unable to give utterance to our feelings. We first looked at the reeds before us, then at each other in mute dismay and astonishment. A dried-up vley, very little more than a mile in extent, and a patch of reeds, was the only reward for months of toil and anxiety.

Omanbondè was the southern limit of the palm-tree, and a new species designated as the Fan Palm was met with. Mr. Galton presented Kew Gardens with some specimens of the fruit, but every effort to raise plants from it proved abortive. Not far from what is undoubtedly a sheet of water in the rainy season, our travellers came to a remarkable fountain, which did not fail to excite their wonder and admiration. Mr. Andersson thus describes it:—

After a day and a half travel, we suddenly found ourselves on the brink of Otjikoto, the most extraordinary chasm it was ever my fortune to see. It is scooped, so to say, out of the solid limestone rock; and, though on a thousand times larger scale, not unlike the *Elv-gryta*, one so commonly meets in Scandinavia. The form of Otjikoto is cylindrical; its diameter upwards of four hundred feet, and its depth, as we ascertained by the lead-line, two hundred and fifteen—that is at the sides, for we had no means of plumbing the middle, but had reason to believe the depth to be pretty uniform throughout. To about thirty feet of the brink it is filled with water.¹

¹ Shortly before reaching "Baboon Fountain," I should remark, that, at a place called Orujo, we saw a cavity of a similar kind, though on an infinitely smaller scale. It consisted of a circular-shaped basin in the limestone rock, ninety feet in diameter by thirty in depth. As it was dry at the time, we ascer-

ained that the bottom was flat, or nearly so. In various other places we also met with similar basins, but on a still smaller scale than Orujo.

Otjikoto, "one of the most wonderful of Nature's freaks," is situated at the northern extremity of those broken hills which take their rise in the neighbourhood of Okamabuti, and in the midst of a dense coppice. So effectually is it hidden from view, that a person might pass within fifty paces of it without being aware of its existence. Owing to its steep and rugged sides, cattle have not access to the water; and even a man can only approach this enormous well by means of a steep and slippery footpath. No perceptible difference could be observed in the height of the water; and the Ovambo informed us that, as long as they and their fathers remembered, it had always been the same. It is difficult to imagine how or whence Otjikoto receives its supplies. A spacious cavern, only visible and accessible from the water, may possibly be the grand reservoir.

After gratifying our curiosity, Galton and myself, standing in need of a bath, plunged head-foremost into the profound abyss. The natives were utterly astounded. Before reaching Otjikoto, they had told us, that if a man or beast was so unfortunate as to fall into the pool, he would inevitably perish. We attributed this to superstitious notions; but the mystery was now explained. The art of swimming was totally unknown in these regions. The water was very cold, and, from its great depth, the temperature is likely to be the same throughout the year.

We swam into the cavern to which allusion has just been made. The transparency of the water, which was of the deepest sea-green was remarkable; and the effect produced in the watery mirror by the reflection of the crystallized walls and roof of the cavern, appeared very striking and beautiful. In this mysterious spot, two owls, and a great number of bats, had taken up their abode. On approaching some of the latter, which I saw clinging to the rocks, I found, to my surprise, that they were dead, and had probably been so for many years; at least, they had all the appearance of mummies.

Otjikoto contained an abundance of fish, somewhat resembling perch; but those we caught were not much larger than one's finger. One day we had several scores of these little creatures for dinner, and very palatable they proved.

In the morning and evening, Otjikoto was visited by an incredible number of doves, some of which were most delicately and beautifully marked. On such occasions the wood resounded with their cooing; but when disturbed, as they frequently were, by the invasion of a hawk, the noise caused by their precipitate flight was like that of a sudden rush of wind.

Many bushmen resided near Otjikoto; and, as everywhere else in these regions, they lived on excellent terms with the Ovambo, to whom they brought copper-ore for sale, which they obtained from the neighbouring hills. Indeed, as our acquaintance with the Ovambo increased, we were more and more favourably impressed with their character. They treated all men equally well, and even the so much-despised Hottentots ate out of the same dish, and smoked out of the same pipe, as themselves.

The Ovambo, or Ovampo, as Galton has it, here alluded to, are among the most interesting natives of

Western Tropical Africa. They are of a very dark complexion, tall, and robust, but remarkably ugly and scantily attired. But the remarkable point connected with them is, that they inhabit a corn-growing country, and that they are a people of essentially sedentary, peaceable, and agricultural habits; and their country, Ondonga, is like a wadi or oasis in the wilderness.

The second of June, says Andersson, will ever be remembered by us. On the afternoon of that day, we first set eye on the beautiful and fertile plains of Ondonga—the country of the Ovambo. Vain would be any attempt to describe the sensations of delight and pleasure experienced by us, on that memorable occasion, or to give an idea of the enchanting panoramic scene that all at once opened on our view. Suffice it to say, that instead of the eternal jungles, where every moment we were in danger of being dragged out of our saddles by the merciless thorns, the landscape now presented

an apparently boundless field of yellow corn, dotted with numerous peaceful homesteads, and bathed in the soft light of a declining tropical sun. Here and there, moreover, arose gigantic, wide-spreading, and dark-foliaged timber and fruit trees, whilst innumerable fan-like palms, either singly or in groups, completed the picture. To us it was a perfect elysium, and well rewarded us for every former toil and disappointment. My friend, who had travelled far and wide, confessed he had never seen anything that could be compared to it. Often since have I conjured up to my imagination this scene, and have thought it might not inaptly be compared to stepping out of a hot, white, and shadowless road, into a park, fresh with verdure, and cool with the umbrage cast down by groups of reverend trees.

The first dwelling that lay in our path was that of old Naitjo, one of the chief men of our trading cara-



HUNTER AND RHINOCEROS.

van, who, after having feasted us on such fare as the country produced (amongst which was a dish of hot dough, steeped in melted butter), conducted us over his extensive establishment, comprising his harem, his children, his granaries, and so forth. Timbo was in ecstasies with the country and its hospitable inhabitants, and declared that it was as like as two peas to his own native land.

Another hour's travel brought us to the residence of our guide, Chikor'onkombè, where we remained two nights and a day to rest our weary animals. Poor creatures! they had had no water for two entire days, and the consequence was that, during the first night, they broke out of the enclosures and strayed far away in search of it.

On the 4th, we again set forward. The aspect of the country was still characterised by the greatest abundance, and the trees became even more numerous.

Nearly all produced edible fruit, though some were not yet ripe. The trees, moreover, were on a grander scale than heretofore. One kind in particular—that mentioned as bearing a fruit somewhat resembling an apple—attained to a most astonishing size. Indeed, the branches of one that we measured, spread over a space of ground one hundred and forty-four feet in diameter, or four hundred and thirty-two in circumference.

The palms growing hereabout—the stems of which, before they began to branch out, often rose to fifty and sixty feet—were, to all appearance, of the same kind as that we had seen about two hundred miles to the southward; but the fruit proved very good. When slightly soaked in water—which, by the by, is the best way of eating it—it tasted precisely like gingerbread.

There appeared to be no roads of any description.

w corn, dotted
l bathed in the
Here and there,
ing, and dark-
numerable fan-
completed the
m, and well re-
lisappointment.
wide, confessed
be compared to
my imagination
t not inaptly be
te, and shadow-
dure, and cool
ups of reverend

th was that of
ur trading cara-



ough some were
ere on a grander
particular—that
what resembling
shing size. In-
measured, spread
and forty-four
ad thirty-two in

stems of which,
ten rose to fifty
ce, of the same
hundred miles
oved very good.
ch, by the by, is
l precisely like

any description.



A POND IN AFRICA AT NIGHT.

Fortunately, however, the harvest had just been completed, or nearly so; and, without damage to the owners, we were therefore enabled to cross the fields as the crow flies.

Two different kinds of grain we found indigenous to this country—viz., the common Caffre-corn, said to resemble the Egyptian "doura;" and another sort, very small-grained, not unlike canary-seed, and akin, I believe, to the "badjera" of India. This is the more nutritious of the two; and, when well-ground, produces excellent flour.

The stalk of both these kinds of grain is stout—the thickness of a sugar-cane—some eight or nine feet high, and juicy and sweet to the taste, which has no doubt given rise to a belief in the existence of the sugar-cane in many of the interior parts of Africa. When the grain is ripe, the ear is cut off, and the remainder is left to the cattle, which devour it greedily.

Besides grain, the Ovambo cultivate calabashes, water-melons, pumpkins, beans, peas, &c. They also plant tobacco. When ripe, the leaves and stalks are collected, and mashed together in a hollow piece of wood, by means of a heavy pole. The tobacco is, however, of a very inferior quality; so much so, that our Damarus—who had a mania for the weed—refused to smoke it.

There are no towns or villages in Ovambo-land; but the people, like the patriarchs of old, live in separate families. Each homestead is situated in the middle of a corn-field, and surrounded by high and stout palisades. The natives were obliged to take this precaution in order to guard against the sudden attacks of a neighbouring hostile tribe, which kept constantly harassing them. Once or twice the Ovambo attempted to retaliate, but without success. The tribe just mentioned is the only one with whom this naturally-peaceable people are ever at variance. If not previously provoked, they interfere with no one.

We were anxious to form some sort of estimate of the density of the population; but this was no easy matter. However, by counting the houses in a certain extent of country, and taking the average number of individuals to each, we came to the conclusion that there was about a hundred persons to every square mile.

With the exception of a few cows and goats, no cattle were seen about the dwellings of the natives, yet we knew them to be possessed of vast herds. A general scarcity of water and pasturage in Ondonga compelled them to send the oxen away to distant parts. They also breed hogs, which, from their mischievous propensities, are always sent to a distance during the time of harvest. These animals, they assured us, attain to an enormous size. By all accounts, indeed, they must be perfect monsters. And there can be little doubt of the fact; for captains of vessels, who are accustomed to trade with the natives of the west coast, also speak of a gigantic race of swine.

III.

THE KING OF THE OVAMBO—STALKING GNUS IN COMPANY WITH LIONS—UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO REACH LAKE NGAMI—ENORMOUS QUANTITIES OF GAME—A NIGHT ADVENTURE.

OUR traveller's interview with the Nangoro King of the Ovambo was amusing enough. With the exception of a cow and an oxen, he appeared to appreciate few

or none of the presents which Mr. Galton bestowed on him. And as for my friend's brilliant and energetic orations, they had no more effect in the ear of royalty, than if addressed to a stock or a stone. It was in vain that he represented to his majesty the advantages of a more immediate communication with Europeans. Nangoro spoke little or nothing. He could not be eloquent because excessive fat had made him short-winded. Like Falstaff, his 'voice was broken.' Any attempt on his part to utter a sentence of decent length, would have put an end to him; so he merely 'grunted,' whenever he desired to express either approbation or dissatisfaction.

Our travellers wished to proceed from Ovambo to the unexplored river Cunevè, said to be four days' travel to the north, but Nangoro refused to grant assistance, because they had declined to kill elephants for him, and they were obliged, reluctantly, to retrace their steps. On their way back game was abundant, and they managed to kill sufficient for their supply without being obliged to have recourse to their few remaining live stock. They also met, for the first time, that magnificent antelope, the eland. Beasts of prey were likewise numerous. Indeed, they always followed the larger game. During the nights they were constantly annoyed by the dismal howlings of the hyenas, and they had some exciting foot-chases after these animals.

Whilst out hunting one morning, says Mr. Anderson, I espied a small troop of gnus quietly grazing at a bend of the river. Cautiously approaching them under shelter of the intervening ground, they suddenly tossed their heads, switched their tails, scraped the earth impatiently with their hoofs, and sniffed the air. I was puzzled how to account for this unusual agitation, as, from my position, I was certain they could not have discovered me. But I had not much time for conjecture; for the next instant I was startled by the growl of some animal close to me. On looking in the direction whence it proceeded, I discovered, to my utter astonishment, two lions and a lioness on the rising ground just above me; and, as it seemed, they also were on the look-out for the gnus. I instinctively levelled my piece at the head of the nearest of the beasts; but a moment's reflection convinced me that the odds were too great, and I, therefore, though it best to reserve my fire, so as to be in readiness to receive them, should they charge. After having regarded me for a few seconds, however, they growlingly disappeared behind a sandhill. (See p. 256.)

By this time, the gnus had become aware of the lions, and were making off at the top of their speed. Being anxious to obtain a shot at them I followed on their tracks, but soon found to my dismay, that my three royal friends, with jaws distended and uttering furious growls, were following a course parallel to mine. Though I must confess I did not at all like their looks, as only excessive hunger could have induced them, in broad day, to seek for victims, I nevertheless continued to follow the tracks of the antelopes until they led me into the bush, where I presently lost them, as well as myself.

On first seeing the gnus, I left my henchman, "Bill," a Damara lad, who carried my spare gun, at some distance behind, with directions to follow on my track according to circumstances. Now that the gnus were lost to me, I shouted loudly to the youth, and also discharged my gun more than once, but was unable to

elicit a reply. Thinking, however, that he might have returned to our encampment (which was at no great distance), I also repaired there. But "Bill" had not been heard of. The harassing suspicion at once crossed my mind that the lions had eaten him. Without a moment's delay I hurried back to the spot where I had last seen the beasts, but all my endeavours to find the little fellow were unavailing. What with my anxiety on his account, and my exertions under a broiling sun (for if the weather were frosty at night, it calcined one by day), I was unable to proceed farther, and sat myself down on the ground to wait for the arrival of the waggons, which were now moving forward. Just at this moment, the Damara, to my inexpressible delight, emerged from the bush. His story was soon told. He had, like myself, lost his way, and it was long before he was able to recover the right track.

On their return to Barmen, there being several months before the vessel which brought the missionary stores to Walfisch Bay was expected, an excursion was resolved upon to the eastward, partly with the view of penetrating to the Lake Ngami, and partly to become better acquainted with Great Namaqua-land. The first point to which they directed themselves was Eikhams, a very pretty place, once a missionary station, but at that time the residence of Jonker Africaner, a celebrated robber-chief. Beyond this, their way lay through the country of the Hill-Damaras, game abounding and the larder being well supplied. At Elephant Fountain, also an abandoned missionary station, they had to give up their waggons and prosecute their journey with pack-and-ride oxen. The country beyond was represented as sandy and bushy. After no little inconvenience and misery on account of the great heat, the terrible drought, and scarcity of pasturage about the few and widely-separated watering-places, they reached Tunobis some nine or ten days' journey from Lake Ngami, and learning there that the country between that and the lake was impassable at that season (October 3) from want of water, they were forced to retrace their steps. From the absence of water within a distance of two or three days' journey of Tunobis, the number of animals that nightly congregate there to quench their thirst is described as being truly astonishing.

To give the reader, says Mr. Andersson, some idea of the immense quantity of game hereabouts, I may mention, that in the course of the few days that we remained at Tunobis, our party shot, amongst other animals, upwards of thirty rhinoceroses. One night, indeed, when quite alone, I killed in the space of five hours (independently of other game) no less than eight of those beasts, amongst which were three distinct species; and it is my belief that if I had persevered I might have destroyed double the number;¹ but I never took delight in useless slaughter. In our case—and I think I may say in all cases where I have been concerned in killing a great number of wild beasts—not a pound of flesh was wasted; for what we did not require for our own use, was devoured by the natives.

As another evidence of the enormous quantity of game in this region, I may state that the fountain in

¹ When we thus shot at night, we generally ensconced ourselves in a "skärm," that is, a small circular enclosure, six or eight feet in diameter, the walls (usually consisting of loose stones), being about two feet in height.

question, which was a copious one—nay, apparently inexhaustible—was almost nightly drunk dry.

On several occasions, I had narrow escapes from being gored by the horns of these ugly monsters. Thus, one animal, on receiving a mortal wound, charged me with such fury as to carry completely away the fore part of my "skärm," and I only saved my life by throwing myself with great force against the opposite wall, which fortunately gave way.

At another time, I was walking leisurely up to a huge female white rhinoceros, that Mr. Galton had killed during the preceding night, when all at once its calf, about the size of an ox, rushed upon me from behind the carcass. Its movements were so rapid, that I had neither time to get out of its way nor to level my gun, but passing the barrel, like a stick, against its chest, I fired, and, as luck would have it, the ball caused the calf to swerve on one side, and take itself off. A short time afterwards, and at no great distance from our encampment, it was found dead.

At Elephant Fountain Mr. Andersson had another narrow escape from a lion. He had posted himself, he relates, in a dense mimosa brake, commanding the approach to the Zwart Nosop river at a point much frequented by wild animals, and flanked by an immense pit-fall. The darkness was deepened by surrounding thick foliage and high river-banks. Indeed, so black was the night that I could not discern even the muzzle of my gun. The gloominess of my solitude was increased by the occasional "Qua-qua!" of the night-heron, which made the succeeding hush more dreary; during which even the falling of leaves, and rustling of insects among dry grass, was hailed as a relief to the oppressive dumbness. To a man in a savage wilderness, and without a companion, silence, especially when combined with utter privation of light, is inexpressibly solemn. It strikes the mind not merely as a negation, but as a threatening presence. It seems ominous. I shall never forget the loneliness and sense of desolation I felt on this occasion. It was past midnight, and still no game appeared.

Suddenly, I fancied I heard the purr and breathing of an animal close behind me; but, as no other indications of any living thing ensued, I attributed the sounds to a heated imagination. All at once, however, the dismal stillness was disturbed by the quick steps of a troop of pallahs, descending the stony slope leading direct to my ambush. Stooping as low as possible, in order to catch their outline, I waited their arrival with my gun on full cock. Nearer and nearer they came, till at last I fancied the leader was on the verge of the pit-fall; but, just at that moment, there was a low, stifled growl, a rush, and then a faint cry as of some dying animal. All was again silent. Though the impenetrable darkness prevented me from seeing anything, I could no longer doubt that I was in the immediate vicinity of a lion. I freely acknowledge that I felt awed, well knowing that were he to attack me, I should be completely at his mercy. My situation was critical in the extreme. Straining eyes and ears to discover the beast's whereabouts, I held my breath in fearful suspense, whilst every nerve was strung to the highest pitch. Presently I heard, to my astonishment, the report of a gun within fifty paces of my hiding-place; then a second and a third shot. This made matters worse; for I now became apprehensive that the men, not aware of my presence, might direct their fire towards me. I therefore sprang to my feet, and vociferated—"Who's there?" "Sir, the lion—the lion!" replied Eyebrecht,

for it was no other. The next instant he stood trembling before me. He had, it appeared, been sent by Amral, to call me back, but had encountered the beast in his path, and fired in order to frighten him away.

Though I did not exactly comply with the wishes of the chief, I deemed it advisable, after what had passed, to remove to a more open space, where I was less likely to be taken by surprise. Early next morning a number of Hottentots came to examine the ground, when, as I had expected, we found the foot-prints of a lion at the very back of my "skärm," and scarcely distant the length of the gun-barrel from my own person, where he had evidently been crouching previously to leaping on the pallah (whose cry I had heard in the night), but which, though wounded, had effected its escape. How far the beast intended me mischief is hard to say, but in any case my position had not been an enviable one.

IV.

MR. ANDERSSON VISITS CAPE TOWN—RETURNS TO WALFISCH BAY—PIET'S PERFORMANCE WITH LIONS—A LION GOES TO CHURCH—MUTILATED HYENA—A DRAUGHT OF BLOOD.

ARRIVED at Walfisch Bay, Mr. Galton took ship for St. Helena, on his way home, whilst Mr. Andersson remained behind with Hans—himself a host—and two other men, who agreed to stay with him, and share in the dangers of a renewed attempt to reach Lake Ngami. It was now the rainy season, and the barren haarip was richly carpeted with grass and flowers. The presence of herds of the beautiful cryx, the lively quagga, and the grotesque gnu, which looked like—

"Beasts of mixed and monstrous birth,
Creations of some fabled earth,"

served further to enhance the interest of the scene. These were also glorious times for the lions, who were exceedingly numerous.

Finding, on making a survey of his little property, that, notwithstanding Mr. Galton had furnished him with a variety of things, he was deficient in the most important—such as articles for barter, presents for chiefs, instruments for taking observations, and provisions, Mr. Andersson resolved to visit Cape Town before carrying out his intentions. This journey he succeeded in accomplishing by land, but not without many perils and adventures, being tossed by an ox, attacked with ophthalmia, cheated by Jonker, his tent burnt by fire, laid low with malignant fever, and, finally, when he arrived at the Cape, treated as a vagrant and an outlaw. Worse than all, he was abandoned, at the Cape, by Hans and the boy Aller; but Andersson was not the man to shrink before difficulties—a stouter heart, perhaps, seldom existed. He obtained the services of Timbo, who had returned from St. Helena, after having served with the first expedition, as also that of an English lad—George Bonfield—who accompanied him to the Great Lake, and when he became ill, and was crippled by wounds inflicted by wild animals, the presence and tender care of this youth greatly relieved and soothed his sufferings.

Mr. Andersson returned to Walfisch Bay with a Mr. Reid, in the schooner *Flying Fish*, and on his arrival there was grieved to find that the Namaquas and Damaras were at war, and the country, consequently, very unsafe. Jonker had also declared against the missionaries, who were finally compelled to desist from their ill-requited labours. These bad tidings had,

however, no effect upon our traveller, who proceeded by Tincas to Richterfeldt, shooting a full-grown male lion by the way, having split his skull in two at the first shot.

Lions had been unusually numerous and daring during the year. Mr. Rath's waggon-driver, Piet, a mighty Nimrod, and his two foster-sons, had killed upwards of twenty in the course of a few months. And many and wonderful were their escapes from these animals.

One night, the old man was awakened by a peculiar noise outside his door, which was constructed so as to shut in two parts. The lower division was closed, but the upper was left open on account of the oppressive state of the atmosphere. Quietly taking up his gun, Piet stole softly to the door, expecting to meet with a hyena, as he knew that one of these beasts was in the habit of harrassing the goat-kids, which, for better security, he had kraaled against the wall of the house. His amazement, however, was great, when, instead of a hyena, a lion stood before him. Without losing his presence of mind, he poked the muzzle of his piece against the animal's head, and blew out its brains.

Again: Riding along one morning in a very weak state, having just recovered from a severe fever, a lion suddenly rushed at him. The ox became frightened, and threw the old man. One of his feet was caught in the stirrup; but, fortunately, the "veld" shoe slipped off.

"I know," said the veteran hunter, "I was thrown, and that I got on my legs again, but in what manner is quite a mystery to me to this day. I called, as loud as my feeble voice permitted, to my people to bring a gun, the lion always getting nearer and nearer, until he stood within arm's length. I once or twice tried to pull out my pistol or my sword-knife, which, as you know, I usually carry about with me, but in my anxiety I missed them. My jacket was lying just in front of me on the ground, but the brute had one of his paws on it. I felt desperate, however, and, pulling it forcibly away, struck the lion on the head, when he grinned and growled terribly, and I expected every moment he would tear me to pieces. At this juncture, my Damara, who fortunately had heard my cries of distress, came running up with my gun. Taking the piece from the man, I fired at the lion, who had retreated a few paces, where he sat quietly looking at me. I don't know whether I hit him, for what with the sudden fright, and my weak constitution, I felt very unsteady. Be that as it may, it had, at all events, the effect of scaring him away, for, at the report of the gun, he instantly betook himself to cover."

On another occasion, when the missionary waggon was on its road to Walfisch Bay, a lion sprang unexpectedly into the midst of the sleeping party, which was bivouacking, at the time, on the banks of the Kubakop river. One of Piet's sons, who was present, picked up his gun from the ground; but, in order to prevent the dew from injuring it, he had wrapped his waistcoat round the lock, and, in the hurry, he was unable to disengage the garment. Finding, however, that the lion was just about to lay hold of him, he held out the piece and fired at random, but fortunately with deadly effect.

Once a lion found his way into the church at Richterfeldt. The alarm being given, the Damaras, assegai in hand, rushed to the spot, and, seizing him by the tail and ears, dragged him bodily out of the sacred

edifice. The poor brute was actually dying from starvation, and offered but a very feeble resistance. I saw his skin.

From Barmen Mr. Andersson proceeded again to Eikhams, but the relationship with Jonker was, as may be easily imagined, anything but friendly. The journey thence to Tunobis—Mr. Galton's farthest—was by no means so pleasant as on the previous occasion, and although Mr. Andersson shot a giraffe—the only instance in which one was killed outright with a single bullet—still game was so scarce that all the party suffered grievously from hunger. From Tunobis to Ghanzé, a celebrated watering-place, the way lay through an intensely dense thorn jungle, which not only tore their flesh and clothes, but subtracted several articles of value from the pack-saddles. The elephant and the rhinoceros have wandered to this watering-place for ages in undisputed sway. Here and there an "iron" tree, the mythological progenitor of the Damaras, stood majestically forth, shooting its wide-spreading branches high into space.

Almost the first animal, says Mr. Andersson, I saw at this place was a gigantic "tiger-wolf," or spotted hyæna, which to my surprise, instead of seeking safety in flight, remained stationary, grinning in the most ghastly manner. Having approached within twenty paces, I perceived, to my horror, that his fore paws and the skin and flesh of his front legs had been gnawed away, and that he could scarcely move from the spot. To shorten the sufferings of the poor beast I seized my opportunity and knocked him on the head with a stone; and, catching him by the tail, drove my hunting knife deep into his side. But I had to repeat the operation more than once before I could put an end to his existence. I am at a loss how to account for his mangled condition. It certainly could not have been from age, for his teeth were good. Could it be possible that from want of food he had become too weak for further exertions, and that, as a last resource, he had attacked his own body? Or was he an example of that extraordinary species of cruelty said to be practised by the lion on the hyæna, when the latter has the insolence to interfere with the monarch's prey.¹

Fortune once again favoured us; for, in the course of the few days we remained at Ghanzé, several rhinoceroses were shot, affording an abundance of provision. These animals were very numerous, but rather shy. One night I counted twenty defiling past me, though beyond reach. The cause of so unusual a number being seen together was as follows:—In the early part of the night, one or two were approaching the water, but, having winded me, they kept walking restlessly round the place, grunting and snorting most viciously. This had the effect of putting those who arrived later on their guard, and they soon joined company.

Having enjoyed a good deal of shooting at this oasis in the desert, and feasted themselves and bushmen on rhinoceros flesh to their hearts' content, they left Ghanzé on the 23rd of June. The first portion of the country through which their road led was very thorny; but the bush gradually opened, and they journeyed with more ease.

In the early part of the day, after our departure, I

¹ It is asserted by more than one experienced hunter, that when the hyæna proves troublesome, the lion has been known to bite off all its feet, and, thus mutilated, leave the poor animal to its fate!

caused, says Mr. Andersson, my horse to be saddled, and rode off to look for water. About noon I reached a hollow, of a similar nature as Ghanzé, but on a smaller scale. I thought I perceived indications of the existence of water; and, having 'hobbled' the steed, went in search of it. The elephants, however, had so trampled the place that, though I could not doubt of water being there, I soon found that it was only to be had by a vast deal of labour.

Whilst reflecting on what was best to do, whether to remain and clear out the pit, or to push on in hopes of finding another watering-place, I observed several small birds flying in and out at a small crevice in the limestone-rock. Running to the spot, I discovered a narrow, circular aperture, about two feet broad, and perhaps twice as much in depth, with something at the bottom reflecting light. Taking for granted that it was water which thus shone, and being tormented with thirst, I leapt into the hole, and greedily swallowed a large quantity. I was too eager to be able to distinguish its taste; but, having somewhat slaked my burning thirst, my palate resumed its functions, and I thought I had never experienced so abominable a flavour. Imagine my horror, when, taking a small portion in the hollow of my hand and holding it up to the light, I found I had been drinking *blood*, mixed with the refuse of some wild animal! I shall never forget the loathing I felt on making this discovery; and, though my stomach was presently relieved of its nauseous contents, I long retained a qualmish sensation. The mystery was, however, cleared up. On a more close examination of the aperture in question, it was found that a herd of zebras had, like myself, been looking for water, and, in so doing, one of them had fallen in, and been found and killed by the Bushmen. Hence the blood and offal of the unfortunate animal.

V.

THE POOL OF KOBIS—FIRST ELEPHANT SHOT—LIONS AND GIRAFFE—THE POOL AT MIDNIGHT—HAIR-BREADTH ESCAPES—A BLACK RHINOCEROS—A TROOP OF ELEPHANTS.

THE next station was Kobis, where there was a magnificent sheet of water swarming with geese and ducks, and as usual visited at night by abundance of larger game, more especially elephants and rhinoceros. Here, however, Mr. Andersson was seized with a singular malady: a pain in the knee that caused intolerable anguish, and which incapacitated him from moving for some days. This forced detention naturally brought about a want of flesh. Our traveller possessed a few sheep, but he was afraid to kill them, not knowing what the future had in store for him. It was on this occasion that he shot his first elephant. He had dispersed his men over the surrounding country; but though they met with game in abundance, from mismanagement and bad shooting, they were unable to bag a single animal.

One evening I desperately resolved to go to the water myself in the hope of succeeding better. Accordingly I ordered my servants to prepare a "skärm," and to carry me there, taking the chance of being run over or gored by elephants or rhinoceroses; for, in my disabled state, it was impossible, should any animal charge, to get out of its way. Seeing my helpless condition, the men remonstrated, but I was resolved to go, and fortune favoured me.

I had patiently waited till nigh morning without seeing anything but hyenas and jackals. I believe these creatures knew I would not hurt them, for they approached within a very few paces, staring and laughing at me in the most impudent manner. I threw gravel-pebbles at them, but this only served to increase their mockery. I could stand it no longer, but hurled my camp-chair at their heads, when they quickly betook themselves to flight.

Scarcely had they made their exit, than I heard the heavy tramp of elephants. At this sound, my heart beat violently; but it was only momentarily. The next instant, I recovered my self-possession. Pushing my gun gently over the "skärm," I quietly waited (without daring to think of my poor leg) the approach of the giants. Nearer and nearer they came; their steps were more distinct and measured; confused forms were seen advancing amongst the trees. Gradually they assumed shape; and, lo! suddenly a huge elephant stood out in bold relief against the sky line; then another, and another, till the ground became alive with their numbers. There must have been at least fifty. They hesitated for a moment, but then came swiftly on by a broad path, at right angles to, and within a dozen feet of my place of concealment. I scarcely dared to breathe. The leader stood conspicuously forth from the rest, and, as a matter of course, I selected him for a mark. Having allowed the huge creature to pass a few paces beyond me, so as to have an opportunity of a second shot, I gave a low whistle which instantly arrested the attention of the brutes, who, partially raising their huge ears, and describing with their trunks eccentric circles through the air, seemed anxiously to inquire the cause of the strange noise. This was my opportunity; and, in an instant, the forest resounded with the report of the gun. Curling up his trunk, the stricken animal uttered a faint cry, and, turning sharply round, staggered back whence he came. It was clear the wound he had received was mortal; but to make more sure, I gave him the contents of my second barrel, though, apparently, without effect. Having reached the skirts of the wood, he tottered, and plunging violently forward, came heavily to the ground.

I had eagerly watched the scene; and now, strange to relate, that the danger and excitement was over, I was seized with a violent tremor. After a time, however, when my nerves had become somewhat composed, I pushed down part of the enclosure, and, though crippled, crawled on all fours up to the carcass. Having ascertained that life was extinct, I scrambled on to the back of the defunct elephant, where, like a schoolboy, I seated myself in triumph.

Elephants, rhinoceroses, gnus, and zebras were, after this, shot almost nightly. Giraffes were not very numerous in this neighbourhood, but occasionally they made their appearance at the pool when he managed to get a shot.

Late one evening, Mr. Andersson relates, in another part of the country, I had badly wounded a lion, and at an early hour on the succeeding morning was following the bloody tracks of the beast, in the hope of putting an end to his career. Presently, we came upon the "spoor," of a whole troop of lions, as also that of a solitary giraffe. So many tracks confused us; and whilst endeavouring to pick out from the rest those of the wounded lion, I observed my native attendants suddenly rush forward, and the next instant

the jungle re-echoed with shouts of triumph. Thinking they had discovered the lions we were in pursuit of, I also hurried forward; but imagine my surprise, when emerging into an opening in the jungle, I saw, not a dead lion, as I expected, but five living lions (two males and three females), two of whom were in the act of pulling down a splendid giraffe, the other three watching, close at hand, and with devouring looks, the deadly strife. (See p. 241.)

The scene was of so imposing a nature that, for the moment, I forgot I carried a gun. The natives, however, in anticipation of a "glorious gorge," dashed madly forward, and, with the most piercing shrieks and yells, compelled the lions to beat a hasty retreat.

When I reached the giraffe, now stretched at full length on the sand, it made a few ineffectual attempts to raise its neck; its body heaved and quivered for a moment, and the next instant the poor animal was dead. It had received several deep gashes about the flanks and chest, caused by the claws and teeth of its fierce assailants. The strong and tough muscles of the neck were also bitten through.

All thought of pursuing the wounded lion was now out of the question. The natives remained gorging on the carcass of the cameleopard until it was devoured. A day or two afterwards, however, I had the good fortune to fall in with my royal antagonist, and finished him without much difficulty.

Our traveller enjoyed shooting at this remote and remarkably central station of Kobis to perfection. The scene presented by the pool at night is represented in the illustration. (See p. 249.) There is one fact, Mr. Andersson says—a fact that has hitherto escaped the attention of the African sportsmen—connected with this illustration that makes it particularly interesting. If the spring or pool, as the case may be, be of small extent, all the animals present will invariably retire from the water as soon as they are aware of the presence of the elephants, of whom they appear to have an instinctive dread, and will remain at a respectful distance until the giants have quenched their thirst. Thus, long before I have seen, or even heard the elephants, I have been warned of their approach by the symptoms of uneasiness displayed by such animals as happened to be drinking at the time. The giraffe, for instance, begins to sway his long neck to and fro; the zebra utters subdued, plaintive cries; the gnu glides away with a noiseless step; and even the ponderous and quarrelsome black rhinoceros, when he has time for reflection, will pull up short in his walk to listen; then, turning round, he listens again, and, if he feels satisfied that his suspicions are correct, he invariably makes off, usually giving vent to his fear or ire by one of his vicious and peculiar snorts. Once, it is true, I saw a rhinoceros drinking together with a herd of seven male elephants; but then he was of the white species, and, besides, I do not believe that either party knew of each other's proximity.

Our traveller had at the same time and place many hair-breadth escapes from elephants and rhinoceroses. One fine moonlight night, when snugly ensconced in my "skärm," and contemplating the strange but picturesque scene before me, my reverie was interrupted by the inharmonious grunting of a black rhinoceros. He was evidently in bad humour, for, as he emerged from amongst the trees into more open ground, I observed him madly charging anything and

everything that he encountered, such as bushes, stones, &c. Even the whitened skulls and skeletons of his own species, lying scattered about on the ground, were attacked with inconceivable fury. I was much amused at his eccentric pastime; but, owing to the openness of the ground, and the quantity of the limestone thereabouts, which made objects more distinct, he was not easy of approach. However, after divesting myself of my shoes, and all the more conspicuous parts of my dress, I managed to crawl—pushing my gun before me—to within a short distance of the snorting beast. As he was advancing in a direct line towards me, I did not like to fire, because one has little chance of killing the rhinoceros when in that position. Having approached to within a few feet of me, his attention was attracted, and suddenly uttering one of those strange “blowing” noises, so peculiar to the beast when alarmed or enraged, he prepared to treat me in a similar manner to the stones and skulls he had just so unceremoniously tossed about. Not a moment was to be lost; and, in self-defence, I fired at his head. I shall never forget the confusion of the animal on receiving the contents of my gun. Springing nearly perpendicularly into the air, and to the height of many feet, he came down again with a thump that seemed to make the earth tremble—then plunging violently forward (in doing which he all but trampled on me), he ran round and round the spot for fully five minutes, enveloping every object in a cloud of dust. At last he dashed into the wood and was hidden from view. Not finding blood on his tracks, I had no reason to suppose he was much hurt. My notion is the bullet struck his horn, partially stunning him with its jarring violence. Had my gun missed fire when he charged, it is more than probable I should have been impaled.

Again: having on a certain night stalked to within a few paces of a huge white rhinoceros (a female as it proved), I put a ball in her shoulder; but it nearly cost me dear—for, guided by the flash of the gun, she rushed upon me with such fury that I had only time to throw myself on my back, in which position I remained motionless. This saved my life, for not observing me, she came to a sudden halt just as her feet were about to crush my body. She was so near to me, that I felt the saliva from her mouth trickle on my face! I was in an agony of suspense, though, happily, only for a moment; for, having impatiently sniffed the air, she wheeled about, and made off at her utmost speed. I then saw, for the first time, that her calf was in company, and at once recognized the pair as an old acquaintance, and as specially vicious animals.

On another occasion, when the night was very dark, I crept to within a short distance of seven bull-elephants, and was endeavouring to pick out the largest, when I was startled by a peculiar rumbling noise close behind me. Springing to my feet, I perceived, to my surprise and alarm, a semi-circle of female elephants, with their calves, bearing down upon me. My position was critical, being between two fires, so to say, and I had no other choice than either to plunge into the pool, which could only be crossed by swimming, in the face of the male elephants, or to break through the ranks of the females. I adopted the latter alternative, but first fired at the nearest of the seven bulls; and then, and without a moment's delay, I rushed on the more open rank of the female phalanx, uttering at the time loud shouts. My cries caused a momentary panic amongst the animals, of

which I took advantage, and slipped out between them, discharging my second barrel into the shoulder of the nearest as I passed her. No sooner, however, had I effected my escape, than the whole herd made a simultaneous rush at me, and trumpeted so shrilly as to cause every man at the camp, as I learnt afterwards, to start out of his sleep. Fortunately the darkness prevented the beasts from following me, and the jungle being close by, I was soon in safety. In my precipitate flight, however, I severely lacerated my feet; for, when stalking the elephants, I had taken off my shoes that I might the better steal upon them.

When after awhile I ventured out of my place of concealment, I found everything quiet—only one solitary elephant remained. Having approached within a short distance, I could distinctly see him laving water on to his sides with his trunk. I immediately suspected he belonged to the troop of seven bulls, and was the one that I had fired at. Seating myself right across his path, I quietly watched his proceedings. After a time I saw him, as I thought, moving off in an opposite direction; but I was mistaken; for in another instant his towering form loomed above me. It was too late to get out of his way; so, quickly raising himself on one knee, I took a steady aim at his fore leg. On receiving the ball he uttered the most plaintive cries, and rushing past me, soon disappeared in the neighbouring forest. The next afternoon he was discovered dead within rifle-shot of the water. It had been a very successful night, for a fine female elephant had also fallen to my other shot.¹

VI.

CALF OF THE TRAVELLER'S LEG GOES ASTRAY—ESCAPES DEATH BY A MIRACLE—SHOOTS A WHITE RHINOCEROS—IS DESPERATELY WOUNDED BY A BLACK RHINOCEROS—SAVES HIS HALF-CASTE BOY.

OUR traveller determined to lose no more time, but to push on at once to the lake. His leg had in some degree recovered its strength, but, unobserved by him it had received a somewhat ugly twist. Little George, he relates, first drew his attention to the fact:

“Sir,” said he, “your leg has grown crooked.”

“Crooked!” echoed I, somewhat angrily. “What do you mean?”

“Only,” he wickedly replied, “the calf is nearly where the shin ought to be.”

The boy's remark was not without foundation; but in time the leg assumed its proper shape.

Notwithstanding my anxious desire to reach the Ngami—the goal of my wishes—I determined, before finally leaving Kobis, to devote one more day, or rather night, to the destruction of the denizens of the forest. But the adventure nearly terminated fatally; and the night of the 15th of July, will ever be remembered by me as one of the most eventful epochs of my life; for, in the course of it, I was three several times in the very jaws of death, and only escaped destruction by a miracle.

¹ I lost many noble beasts from the small calibre of my guns, which did not carry more than fourteen and seventeen balls respectively to the pound. This was more especially the case as regarded the elephants; and it was not until after a time, and when they had become scarce and shy, that I found out the way of bringing them down with any certainty at one or two shots. I found the best part to aim at (when shooting by night) was the shoulder, either behind or in the centre, near to the lower edge of the ear. Another good point, provided the gun be of large calibre, is to fire at the leg, which once broken, the animal, in almost every instance, is completely at the mercy of the hunter.



HUNTER AND LIONS.

HUNTER AND ELEPHANT.



HUNTER AND ELEPHANT.

HUNTER AND LIONS.

From the constant persecution to which the larger game had of late been subjected at Kobis, it had become not only scarce, but wary; and hearing that elephants and rhinoceroses still continued to resort to Abeghan, I forthwith proceeded there on the night in question. Somewhat incautiously I took up my position—alone, as usual—on a narrow neck of land dividing two small pools; the space on either side of my "skärm" being only sufficient for a large animal to stand between me and the water. I was provided with a blanket, and two or three spare guns.

It was one of those magnificent tropical moonlight nights, when an indescribably soft and enchanting light is shed over the slumbering landscape; the moon was so bright and clear that I could discern even a small animal at a considerable distance.

I had just completed my arrangements, when a noise that I can liken only to the passage of a train of artillery, broke the stillness of the air; it evidently came from the direction of one of the numerous stony paths, or rather tracks, leading to the water, and I imagined it was caused by some waggons that might have crossed the Kalahari. Raising myself partially from my recumbent posture, I fixed my eyes steadily on the part of the bush whence the strange sounds proceeded; but for some time I was unable to make out the cause. All at once, however, the mystery was explained by the appearance of an immense elephant, immediately followed by others, amounting to eighteen. Their towering forms told me at a glance that they were all males. It was a splendid sight to behold so many huge creatures approaching with a free, sweeping, unsuspecting, and stately step. The somewhat elevated ground whence they emerged, and which gradually sloped towards the water, together with the misty night-air, gave an increased appearance of bulk and mightiness to their naturally giant structures.

Crouching down as low as possible in the "skärm," I waited with beating heart and ready rifle the approach of the leading male, who, unconscious of peril, was making straight for my hiding-place. The position of his body, however, was unfavourable for a shot; and, knowing from experience that I had little chance of obtaining more than a single good one, I waited for an opportunity to fire at his shoulder, which, as before said, is preferable to any other part when shooting at night. But this chance, unfortunately, was not afforded till his enormous bulk towered above my head. The consequence was, that while in the act of raising the muzzle of my rifle over the "skärm," my body caught his eye, and, before I could place the piece to my shoulder, he swung himself round, and with trunk elevated and ears spread, desperately charged me. It was now too late to think of flight, much less of slaying the savage beast. My own life was in imminent jeopardy; and seeing that, if I remained partially erect, he would inevitably seize me with his proboscis, I threw myself on my back with some violence; in which position, and without shouldering the rifle, I fired upwards at random towards his chest, uttering, at the same time, the most piercing shouts and cries. The change of position in all human probability saved my life; for, at the same instant, the trunk of the enraged animal descended precisely on the spot where I had been previously crouched, sweeping away the stones (many of a large size) that formed the fore part of my "skärm," like so many pebbles. In another moment his broad fore-feet passed directly over my face.

I now expected nothing short of being crushed to death. But imagine my relief, when, instead of renewing the charge, he swerved to the left, and moved off with considerable rapidity—most happily without my having received other injuries than a few bruises occasioned by the falling of the stones. Under Providence, I attribute my extraordinary escape to the confusion of the animal caused by the wound I had inflicted on him, and to the cries elicited from me when in my utmost need. (See p. 257.)

Immediately after the elephant had left me I was on my legs, and, snatching up a spare rifle lying at hand, I pointed at him, as he was retreating, and pulled the trigger; but, to my intense mortification, the piece missed fire. It was matter of thankfulness to me, however, that a similar mishap had not occurred when the animal charged; for had my gun not then exploded, nothing, as I conceive, could have saved me from destruction.

Whilst pondering over my late escape, Mr. Andersson goes on to relate, I observed, at a little distance, a huge white rhinoceros protrude his ponderous and mis-shapen head through the bushes, and presently afterwards he approached to within a dozen paces of my ambushade. His broadside was then fully exposed to view, and, notwithstanding I still felt a little nervous from my conflict with the elephant, I lost no time in firing. The beast did not at once fall to the ground, but from appearances I had every reason to believe he would not live long.

Scarcely had I reloaded when a black rhinoceros of the species Keitlo (a female, as it proved) stood drinking at the water; but her position, as with the elephant in the first instance, was unfavourable for a good shot. As, however, she was very near me, I thought I was pretty sure of breaking her leg, and thereby disabling her; and in this I succeeded. My fire seemed to madden her: she rushed wildly forward on three legs, when I gave her a second shot, though apparently with little or no effect. I felt sorry at not being able to end her sufferings at once; but as I was too well acquainted with the habits of the rhinoceros to venture on pursuing her under the circumstances, I determined to wait patiently for daylight, and then destroy her with the aid of my dogs. But it was not to be.

As no more elephants or other large game appeared, I thought, after a time, it might be as well to go in search of the white rhinoceros, previously wounded; and I was not long in finding his carcass, for my ball, as I supposed, had caused his almost immediate death.

In heading back to my "skärm," I accidentally took a turn in the direction pursued by the black rhinoceros, and by ill luck, as the event proved, at once encountered her. She was still on her legs, but her position, as before, was unfavourable. Hoping, however, to make her change it for a better, and thus enable me to destroy her at once, I took up a stone and hurled it at her with all my force; when, snorting horribly, erecting her tail, keeping her head close to the ground, and raising clouds of dust by her feet, she rushed at me with fearful fury. I had only just time to level my rifle and fire before she was upon me; and the next instant, whilst instinctively turning round for the purpose of retreating, she laid me prostrate. The shock was so violent as to send my rifle, powder-flask, and ball-pouch, as also my cap, spinning in the air; the gun, indeed, as afterwards ascertained, to a distance of fully ten feet. On the beast charging me, it crossed my mind that unless gored at

once by her horn, her impetus would be such (after knocking me down, which I took for granted would be the case) as to carry her beyond me, and I might thus be afforded a chance of escape. So, indeed, it happened; for having tumbled me over (in doing which her head, and the forepart of her body, owing to the violence of the charge, was half buried in the sand), and trampled on me with great violence, her fore-quarter passed over my body. Struggling for life, I seized my opportunity, and, as she was recovering herself for a renewal of the charge, I scrambled out from between her hind legs.

But the enraged beast had not yet done with me! Scarcely had I regained my feet before she struck me down a second time, and with her horn ripped up my right thigh (though not very deeply) from near the knee to the hip: with her fore feet, moreover, she hit me a terrific blow on the left shoulder near the back of the neck. My ribs bent under the enormous weight and pressure, and, for a moment, I must, as I believe, have lost consciousness—I have, at least, very indistinct notions of what afterwards took place. All I remember is, that when I raised my head, I heard a furious snorting and plunging among the neighbouring bushes. I now arose, though with great difficulty, and made my way, in the best manner I was able, towards a large tree near at hand, for shelter; but this precaution was needless; the beast for the time at least, showed no inclination further to molest me. Either in the *middle*, or owing to the confusion caused by her wounds, she had lost sight of me, or she felt satisfied with the revenge she had taken. Be that as it may, I escaped with my life, though sadly wounded and severely bruised, in which disabled state I had great difficulty in getting back to my "skärm."

During the greater part of the conflict I preserved my presence of mind; but after the danger was over, and when I had leisure to collect my scattered and confused senses, I was seized with a nervous affection, causing a violent trembling. I have since killed many rhinoceroses, as well for sport as food; but several weeks elapsed before I could again attack those animals with any coolness.

About sunrise, Kamapyu, my half-caste boy, whom I had left on the preceding evening, about half a mile away, came to the "skärm" to convey my guns and other things to our encampment. In few words, I related to him the mishap that had befallen me. He listened with seeming incredulity, but the sight of my gashed thigh soon convinced him I was not in joke.

I afterwards directed him to take one of the guns and proceed in search of the wounded rhinoceros, cautioning him to be careful in approaching the beast, which I had reason to believe was not yet dead. He had only been absent a few minutes, when I heard a cry of distress. Striking my hand against my forehead, I exclaimed—"Good God! the brute has attacked the lad also!"

Seizing hold of my rifle, I scrambled through the bushes as fast as my crippled condition would permit; and, when I had proceeded two or three hundred yards, a scene suddenly presented itself that I shall vividly remember to the last days of my existence. Amongst some bushes, and within a couple of yards of each other, stood the rhinoceros and the young savage; the former supporting herself on three legs, covered with blood and froth, and snorting in the most furious manner; the latter petrified with fear—spell-bound, as it were—and riveted to the spot. Creeping, therefore, to the side of

the rhinoceros, opposite to that on which the boy was standing, so as to draw her attention from him, I levelled and fired, on which the beast charged wildly to and fro without any distinct object. Whilst she was thus occupied I poured in shot after shot, but thought she would never fall. At length, however, she sank slowly to the ground; and, imagining that she was in her death-agonies, and that all danger was over, I walked unhesitatingly close up to her, and was on the point of placing the muzzle of my gun to her ear to give her the *coup de grace*, when, to my horror, she once more rose on her legs. Taking a hurried aim, I pulled the trigger, and instantly retreated, with the beast in full pursuit. The race, however, was a short one; for, just as I threw myself into a bush for safety, she fell dead at my feet, so near me, indeed, that I could have touched her with the muzzle of my rifle! Another moment and I should probably have been impaled on her murderous horn, which, though short, was sharp as a razor.¹

When reflecting on the wonderful and providential escapes I recently experienced, I could not help thinking that I had been spared for some good purpose, and my heart was lifted in humble gratitude to the Almighty who had thus extended over me His protecting hand.

The second day after the scenes described, my bruises began to show themselves; and on the third day they were fully developed, giving my body a black and yellow hue. So far as I was aware, none of my bones were broken; but burning and agonising pains in the region of the chest were clearly symptomatic of severe internal injury. Indeed, at first, serious apprehensions were entertained for my life. After great suffering, however, I recovered; and, as my shooting mania had by this time somewhat cooled down, my whole thoughts were bent on seeing the Ngami. Though my frame was quite unequal to bear fatigue, my spirit would not brook longer delay.

With the assistance of my men, I therefore mounted my steed, on the 23rd of July, and was off for the Lake, leaving my hunting spoils and other effects under the care of the bushman-chief at Kobis.

VII.

FIRST VIEW OF LAKE NGAMI—ANIMALS, BIRDS, AND FISHES—NABONG AND LECHÉ—ASCENT OF THE TROGE—ADVENTURE WITH A LECHÉ—HORRIBLE DEATH OF A TRAVELER—HARPOONING THE HIPPOPOAMUS—A LION FOR A BED-PARTNER.

THE way from this wondrous shooting-pool of Kobis to Lake Ngami, lay through densely thick thorn-coppice, crossed in every direction by numerous paths of rhinoceroses and elephants. The second day they arrived at a fine vley or pool of water, where he was met by some Bechuanas of the Batwana tribe, who reside on the shores of the lake. They were remarkably fine-looking fellows, stout and well built, with Caffre features and longish hair. Their appearance, indeed, was not unlike

¹ The black rhinoceros is, under all circumstances, as already mentioned, a morose and sulky beast. The one in question was unusually savage, as she had probably a young sucking calf. We did not see the latter, it is true, but assumed such to be the case from the beast's teats being full of milk. It is most likely that her offspring was of too tender an age to accompany her, and that, as not unfrequently happens, she concealed it among the bushes when about to quench her thirst at the pool.

that of the Damaras. The approach to the lake was also characterised by the first appearance of the gigantic baobob tree.

At length on reaching the top of a ridge, the natives, who were in advance of our party, suddenly came to a halt, and, pointing straight before them—"Ngami! Ngami!" In an instant I was with the men. There, indeed, at no very great distance, lay spread before me an immense sheet of water, only bounded by the horizon, the object of my ambition for years, and for which I had abandoned home and friends, and risked my life.

The first sensation occasioned by this sight was very curious. Long as I had been prepared for the event, it now almost overwhelmed me. It was a mixture of pleasure and pain. My temples throbbed, and my heart beat so violently, that I was obliged to dismount, and lean against a tree for support until the excitement had subsided. The reader will, no doubt, think that thus giving way to my feelings was very childish; but, "those who know that the first glimpse of some great object which we have read or dreamt of from earliest recollection is ever a moment of intensest enjoyment, will forgive the transport." I felt unfeignedly thankful for the unbounded goodness and gracious assistance, which I had experienced from Providence throughout the whole of this long and perilous journey. My trials had been many; but, my dearest aspirations being attained, the difficulties were all forgotten. And here I could not avoid passing my previous life in review. I had penetrated into deserts almost unknown to civilised man—had suffered the extremity of hunger and thirst, cold, and heat—and had undergone desperate toil, sometimes nearly in solitude, and often without shelter during dreary nights in vast wildernesses, haunted by beasts of prey. My companions were mostly savages. I was exposed to numerous perils by land and by water, and endured torments from wounds inflicted by wild animals. But I was mercifully preserved by the Creator through the manifold dangers that hovered round my path. To Him are due all homage, thanksgiving, and adoration.

After feasting my eyes for a while on the interesting scene before me, we descended from the higher ground towards the Lake, which we reached in about an hour and-a-half. But though we breathed a fresher atmosphere, no perfumed or balmy scents, as might have been anticipated on the borders of a tropical lake, were wafted on the breeze.

Whether my expectations had been raised to too high a pitch, or that the grandeur of this inland sea, and the luxuriance of the surrounding vegetation, had been somewhat exaggerated by travellers, I must confess that, on a closer inspection, I felt rather disappointed. In saying this, I must admit having visited it at a season of the year little favourable to the display of its grandeur. But, if I am not mistaken, its discoverers, Messrs. Oswell, Livingstone, and Murray, saw it under no more auspicious circumstances. The eastern extremity, however, the only portion ever seen by the gentlemen in question, certainly possesses superior attractions to the western, or where I first struck upon the Ngami.

The Lake was now very low; and at the point first seen by us, exceedingly shallow. The water, which had a very bitter and disagreeable taste, was only approachable in a few places, partly on account of the mud, and partly because of the thick coating of reeds and rushes that lined the shore, and which were a favourite resort

of a great variety of water-fowl. Many species, new to us, were amongst them; but we had no time to spare for approaching the birds.

We twice bivouacked on the south border of Ngami before coming in sight of Lecholètebè's residence, situated on the north bank of the River Zouga, and at a short distance from where its waters separate themselves from the Lake.

I had accomplished the journey from Kobis in five days. With unencumbered oxen, it might, with some exertion, be made in half this time.

A great variety of animals are found in and around Lake Ngami, such as elephants, rhinoceroses, hippopotami, buffaloes, giraffes, koodos, and pallahs, but two remarkably beautiful creatures of the deer and antelope tribe, called the nakong and leché, seem to be peculiar to its shores.

The leché bears some resemblance to the pallah, but is altogether a larger animal. In size, indeed, it almost equals the water-buck (*Aigocerus ellipsiprymnus*), and the horns are very similar to those of the male of that beast. The general colour of the skin is a pale brown; chest, belly, and orbits, white; and front of legs dark brown. The fur (which in the young animal is long, soft, and often curly) of the adult is short and adpressed. The upper part of the nape and withers are provided with a small whorl of hair. The tip of the tail (slender at the base) is adorned with a tuft of black hair.

The leché is a species of water-buck; for though not actually living in water, he is never found any distance from it. When pursued, the leché unhesitatingly plunges into the water, however deep. Great numbers are annually destroyed by the Bayeye, who convert their hides into a kind of rug for sleeping on, carosses, and other articles of wearing apparel.

To the best of my belief, the nakong has never been described by naturalists.¹ Unfortunately, the materials I possessed, and which would in some degree have enabled me to supply this deficiency, were left behind in Africa. Through the kindness of Colonel Steele, an opportunity has been afforded me of inspecting one or two heads of the nakong, as also a caross (brought from the Lake Ngami by Mr. Oswell), made out of pieces of the skins of this animal. But they are all so imperfect, that to attempt anything like a scientific description would be ineffectual; the more so, perhaps, as I only once had an opportunity of viewing a pair of nakongs, and that was at a distance. Suffice it, therefore, to say that the general colour of the animal is a subdued brown, darkest on the back, and on the front of head and legs. Beneath, it is of a lighter hue—almost ash-coloured. On each side of the rump, as also on the inside of the legs, if I remember rightly, there is a whitish line or patch. The hair of the skin, which is much used by the natives for carosses, is long and coarse. The horns are black, very like those of the koodoo; and in the adult animal, would appear to attain to an equal, if not larger, size. Before they are much developed, there is scarcely any indication of spiral turns, and they are then not unlike the horns of goats.

¹ Dr. Gray, of the British Museum, to whom I submitted an imperfect skin, and a sketch of the head, of the nakong, is unable to determine its exact nature, but seemed inclined to consider it identical with the *Tragelaphus eurycerus*—the broad-horned antelope—of which specimens of horns and heads have been brought from the Bight of Biafra, on the west coast of Africa.

The nakong is a water-buck. By means of its peculiarly long hoofs (which are black), not unfrequently attaining a length of six to seven inches, it is able to traverse with facility the reedy bogs and quagmires with which the Lake country abounds—localities only fit for the feathery tribe. When at the Ngami, I offered very tempting rewards to the natives if they would bring me this animal either dead or alive; but they protested, that though they frequently kill the nakong by pit-falls and spears, it was not then possible to gratify my wishes, as, at that season, the beast dwelt almost entirely in

muddy and watery localities, where any attempt to follow it would be certain destruction to a man.

If quadrupeds are numerous and varied, birds are no less so—nineteen species of ducks and geese are said to have been detected. The waders vie with the palmipeds in size, numbers, and gaudiness of plumage. The lake and its rivers also swarm with crocodiles and otters. Snakes and fish, some of a very large size, also abound. The Bechuanas do not fish; they leave this as a drudgery for a conquered race—the Bayeye, who dwell in the same vicinity.



HIPPOPOTAMUS HARPOONED.

Our traveller, whilst at Lake Ngami, crossed the lake from Batwana town to the River Teoge, which he navigated for some distance. He had here a curious adventure with a leché, hundreds of which, he says, might be seen grazing and sporting amongst the shallows and the numerous little islets of the Teoge.

I had gone in advance of my party in the hope of obtaining a shot; but, though I met with vast numbers of animals, the openness of the ground prevented me from getting within range. Being quite tired by my severe but fruitless exertions, I was resting on my

side, contemplating the novel and striking scene,—the Lake with its broad blue waters—its finely wooded shores—the varied and vast herds of animals—the Teoge with its numerous little channels and sedgy shores—when I saw, a little ahead of me, two magnificent stag lechés approaching each other, evidently with no friendly intentions. I was right in my conjecture; for in a few seconds afterwards they were engaged in combat. Taking advantage of this lucky incident, I approached, unperceived, within a dozen paces, when I quickly dropped on one knee and took a

species, new to
time to spare

der of Ngami
residence, situ-
aga, and at a
parate them-

Kobis in five
at, with some

n and around
eroses, hippo-
pallahs, but
the deer and
né, seem to be

ne pallah, but
leed, it almost
rymnus), and
e male of that
a pale brown;
e of legs dark
animal is long,
short and ad-
nd withers are
The tip of the
a tuft of black

for though not
ad any distance
unhesitatingly
Great numbers
who convert
g on, carosses,

has never been
r, the materials
e degree have
re left behind
onel Steele, an
pecting one or
(brought from
out of pieces of
l so imperfect,
fic description
aps, as I only
ir of nakongs,
erefore, to say
abduced brown,
head and legs,
ash-coloured.
inside of the
hitish line or
much used by
e. The horns
; and in the
n equal, if not
loped, there is
and they are

I submitted an
nakong, is unable
ed to consider it
ne broad-horned
heads have been
ast of Africa.

deliberate aim at the shoulder of the nearest; but, just as I pulled the trigger, he received a violent thrust from his antagonist, which made him swerve to one side, and the consequence was, that the ball, instead of piercing his heart, merely smashed one of his hind legs. The animals, nevertheless, were so intently engaged, that, notwithstanding the report of the gun, and the wounded state of one of them (he probably attributed this to his adversary), they did not observe me. Throwing aside the rifle, I drew my hunting knife, and, thus armed, rushed upon the combatants. Just, however, as I was about to bury the fatal weapon in the flank of one of the animals, they both suddenly became aware of me, and fled precipitately. The wounded beast at once made for the river, which was hard by, and though it was running very swiftly at this point—perhaps not less than four or five miles an hour—he plunged into the water.

Not being then aware of the aquatic habits of this species of antelope, I was very much astonished, and for a while thought the beast would surely be carried away by the violence of the current and drowned. But I was soon undeceived; for he struck bravely out for the opposite shore, his course being marked with streaks of crimson. On gaining the bank, he gave one glance behind him, shook his bloody and drizzling coat, and made off. I was determined, however, not to be beaten; and, as I had nothing on but a pair of trousers and a flannel shirt, I threw myself, as I was, into the stream, and soon succeeded in reaching the opposite bank, when I at once started in pursuit.

In this way, swimming and wading alternately, several rivulets, swamps, and dykes were crossed and re-crossed; but, for a long time, the result was doubtful. At last, however, the poor animal slackened his pace, staggered and lay down, but again proceeded, though apparently with pain and difficulty. Seeing this, I redoubled my exertions, and having succeeded in turning him towards the Lake, I drove him right into the water, which was here shallow, and where he several times stuck fast in the mud. I now felt sure of my quarry; and having approached sufficiently near, I seized him by the wounded leg, and severed the tendon at the knee joint. The struggle between us now became severe. On trying to lay hold of his horns, which were most formidable weapons, with the intention of cutting his throat, he struck out with so much violence, as to upset me, and I was nearly smothered with mud and water. But the poor creature's course was run. His loss of blood and crippled state soon enabled me to put an end to his miseries. He was a noble old stag—the finest antelope of the species that I ever shot, and they were many; he well rewarded me for all my exertions.

As our traveller ascended the Teoge, the landscape kept improving. Magnificent palms, date trees, and other fruit-bearing as well as fir-timber trees abounded. The arboreal scenery, indeed, in some places, exceeded in beauty anything to be seen elsewhere in Africa. The woods resounded with the wild notes of birds, and animal life was almost on a par with the exuberant vegetation. Rhinoceroses, hippopotami, buffaloes, sassabys, hartebeests, pallahs, red-bucks, lechés, and herds of the finest of the antelope tribe were daily met with. Pity it is to think that when this glorious inland stream begins to subside after the annual overflow, noxious effluvia are emitted, carrying death along with them. Such is the climate of Africa.

The traveller also first meets that sad pest of Africa, the tsetse fly, on the ascent of the Teoge.

Crocodiles abound, not only in the lake, but in all its rivers, both the Teoge and the Teriga. One does not often hear, says Mr. Andersson, of crocodiles in these parts seizing on human beings when immersed in water, which would seem to prove that these animals are "man-eaters" from the compulsion of hunger, rather than from habit. Indeed, I have been assured by several persons that there is little danger of being attacked, provided one makes a great noise previously to entering the water. Accidents, however, do occur. Only a few years ago an English gentleman, Mr. R—, was carried off by one of these horrid creatures. He and his companion, Mr. M—, who told me the sad story, had encamped on the banks of the Zouga; and, as a number of water-fowl were seen disporting themselves on the stream, Mr. R— proceeded there in the hope of obtaining a shot. He soon succeeded in killing several, and amongst the rest a muscovy duck; but he was unable to secure it for want of a boat.

Whilst looking about for a canoe, he observed a fine antelope approaching; and running quickly towards the waggon, which was hard by, he called out to his men to bring him a rifle. On his return to the river, he found that the antelope had escaped. He then proceeded towards the spot whence he had shot at the duck, which was still floating on the surface. His companion having by this time joined him, he expressed his determination to possess the bird at any cost, and that he would swim after it. He confessed, however, that he felt some doubt about the safety of such a proceeding, adding that he had once been witness to the death of a man who was seized and destroyed by a shark alongside his own boat. Notwithstanding this (his own) opinion of the risk he was about to incur, and the warning of his friend, he undressed and plunged into the stream. Having swam a little distance, he was observed to throw himself on his back, as if startled at some object beneath him; but in another moment, he was pursuing his course. When, however, he was about to lay his hands on the bird, his body was violently convulsed; and throwing his arms on high, he uttered a most piercing shriek, after which he was seen to be gradually drawn under the surface, never to re-appear!

The hippopotamus, we have also seen, abounds equally, and the native Bayeye are accustomed to harpoon this great animal in the Teoge and other rivers to the northward of Ngami in a somewhat similar manner to that practised with the whale.

Hippopotami are not found in all parts of the river, but only in certain localities. On approaching their favourite haunts, the natives keep a very sharp lookout for the animals, whose presence is often known by their snorts and grunts, whilst splashing and blowing in the water, or (should there be no interruption to the view) by the ripple on the surface, long before they are actually seen.

As soon as the position of the hippopotami is ascertained, one or more of the most skilful and intrepid of the hunters stand prepared with the harpoons; whilst the rest make ready to launch the canoes, should the attack prove successful. The bustle and noise caused by these preparations gradually subside. Conversation is carried on in a whisper, and everyone is on the *qui-vive*. The snorting and plunging become every moment more distinct; but a bend in the stream

still hides the animals from view. The angle being passed, several dark objects are seen floating listlessly on the water, looking more like the crests of sunken rocks, than living creatures. Ever and anon, one or other of the shapeless masses is submerged, but soon again makes its appearance on the surface. On, on, glides the raft with its sable crew, who are now worked up to the highest state of excitement. At last, the raft is in the midst of the herd, who appear quite unconscious of danger. Presently, one of the animals is in immediate contact with the raft. Now is the critical moment. The foremost harpooner raises himself to his full height to give the greater force to the blow, and, the next instant, the fatal iron descends with unerring accuracy in the body of the hippopotamus.

The wounded animal plunges violently, and dives to the bottom; but all his efforts to escape are unavailing. The line, or the shaft of the harpoon may break; but the cruel barb once imbedded in the flesh, the weapon (owing to the thickness and toughness of the beast's hide) cannot be withdrawn.

As soon as the hippopotamus is struck, one or more of the men launch a canoe from off the raft, and hasten to the shore with the harpoon-line, and take a "round turn" with it about a tree, or bunch of reeds, so that the animal may either be "brought up" at once, or, should there be too great a strain on the line, "played" (to liken small things to great) in the same manner as the salmon by the fisherman. But if time should not admit of the line being passed round a tree, or the like, both line and "buoy" are thrown into the water, and the animal goes wheresoever he chooses.

The rest of the canoes are now all launched from off the raft, and chase is given to the poor brute, who, so soon as he comes to the surface to breathe, is saluted with a shower of light javelins. (See page 262.) Again he descends, his track deeply crimsoned with gore. Presently—and perhaps at some little distance—he once more appears on the surface, when, as before, missiles of all kinds are hurled at his devoted head.

When thus beset, the infuriated beast not unfrequently turns upon his assailants, and either with his formidable tusks, or with a blow from his enormous head, staves in, or capsizes the canoes. At times, indeed, not satisfied with wreaking his vengeance on the craft, he will attack one or other of the crew, and, with a single grasp of his horrid jaws, either terribly mutilate the poor fellow, or, it may be, cut his body fairly in two.

The chase often lasts a considerable time. So long as the line and the harpoon hold the animal cannot escape, because the "buoy" always marks his whereabouts. At length, from loss of blood or exhaustion, Behemoth succumbs to his pursuers.

It is a remarkable fact that almost the same method of securing the hippopotamus, as that just described, was adopted by the ancient Egyptians.

"The hippopotamus," says Diodorus, "is chased by many persons, each armed with iron javelins. As soon as it makes its appearance at the surface of the water, they surround it with boats, and closing in on all sides they wound it with blades, furnished with iron barbs, and having hempen ropes fastened to them, in order that, when wounded, it may be let out, until its strength fails it from loss of blood."

Before Mr. Andersson returned to the Lake and was fairly on his way home, four months had elapsed, but though this portion of his travels was not devoid of interest, he confines himself to relating merely one striking incident that befel him, and a few general remarks.

Journeying in a very lonely part of the country, and only accompanied by a single native, I arrived one day at a fountain, situated in a defile between some craggy rocks. The water issued from different parts amongst these cliffs, forming little pools here and there; and though the place was difficult of access, elephants, and other large game, were in the habit of flocking to the water nightly. As the stony nature of the ground afforded excellent "ambuscades," and being much in want of provisions, I determined to watch the pools in question for a night or two.

The first night was a failure: but in the second, I succeeded in killing a white rhinoceros. After this, though I watched long and well, nothing appeared, and at last sleep overtook me. How long I slumbered I know not; but on a sudden I thought, or dreamt, that I was in danger. From much night-watching, my hearing and sight had gradually acquired such an acuteness, that even in sleep I was able to retain a certain consciousness of what was passing around me; and it is probable that I was indebted to this remarkable faculty for the preservation of my life on the present occasion. At first I could not divest myself of fear, and for awhile my senses were too confused to enable me to form any accurate notion of the imagined danger. Gradually, however, consciousness returned, and I could distinctly hear the breathing of an animal close to my face, accompanied by a purr like that of a cat. I knew that only one animal existed in these parts, capable of producing the sound, and at once I came to the conclusion that a lion was actually stooping over me.

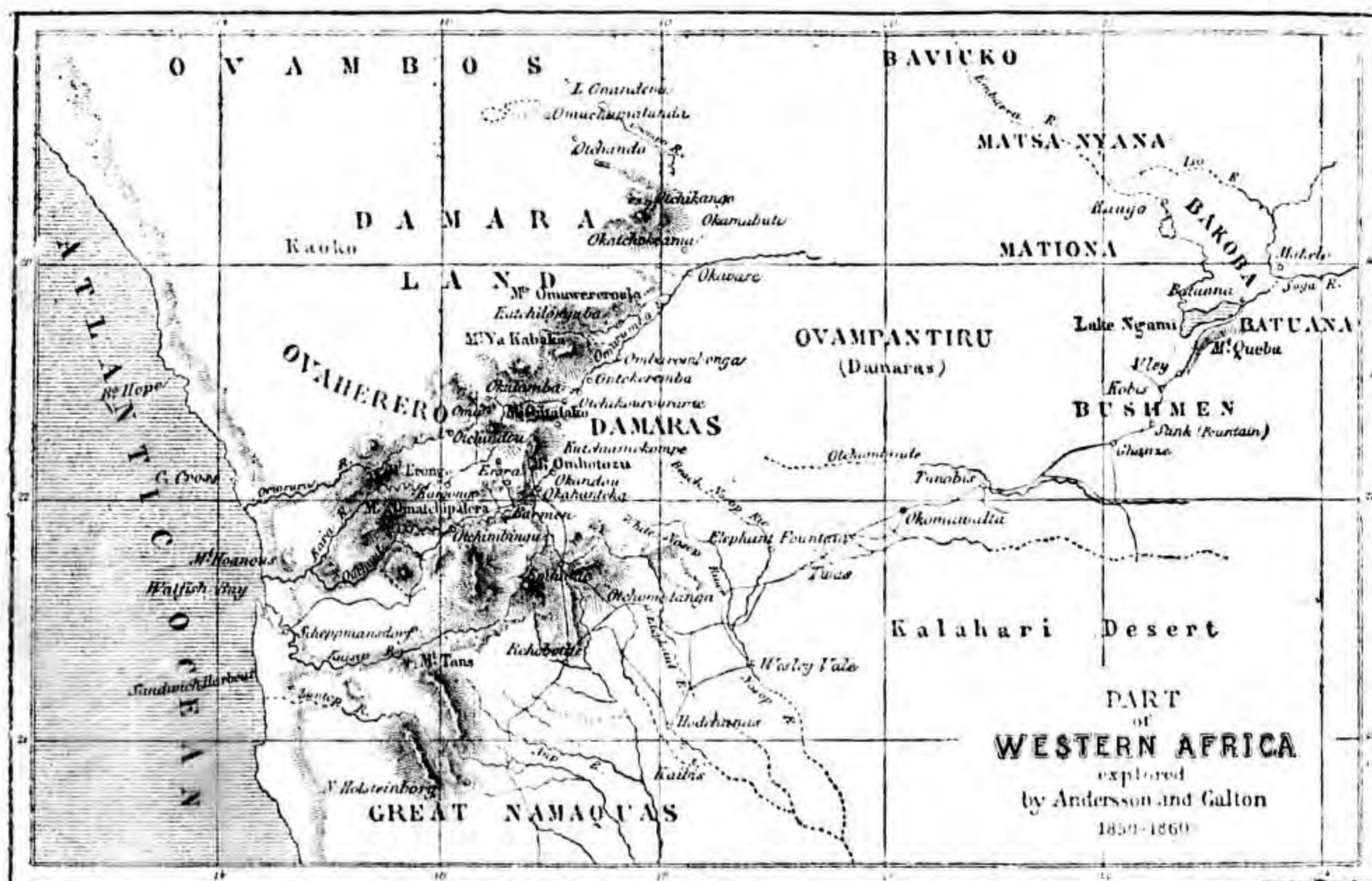
If a man had ever cause for dread, I think I certainly had on this occasion. I became seriously alarmed. My first impulse was to get hold of my gun, which was lying ready cocked immediately before me, and the next to raise myself partially from my reclining position. In doing so I made as little noise as possible; but slight though it might be, it was sufficient to attract the notice of the beast, who uttered a gruff kind of growl, too well known to be misunderstood. Following with my eyes the direction of the sound, I endeavoured to discover the lion, but could only make out a large dark mass looming through the night-mist. Scarcely knowing what I was about, I instinctively levelled my gun at the beast. My finger was on the trigger; for a moment I hesitated; but, by a sudden impulse, pulled it, and the next instant the surrounding rocks rang with the report, followed by roarings from the beast, as if in the agonies of death. Well knowing what a wounded lion is capable of, and how utterly helpless I was, I regretted my rashness. The wounded beast, who at times seemed to be within a few paces of the "skärm," and at others at some little distance, was rolling on the ground, and tearing it up, in convulsive agonies. How long this struggle between life and death lasted is hard to say, but to me it appeared an age. Gradually, however, and to my great relief, his roars and moans subsided, and after awhile ceased altogether.

Dawn at length appeared; but it was not until after some time, and then with much caution, that I ven-

tured to ascertain the fate of the lion, who, to my great satisfaction, I found dead within fifty yards of my place of concealment. The beast was of an average size, but unfortunately, the hyenas and jackals had played sad havoc with his skin.

Some time previously, my men, Eyebrecht and Klaas Zaal, had also shot a lion in this identical spot; but owing to his fearful growls, whilst dying, they thought it best to decamp at once without ascertaining his fate.

During the four months that I was absent from my men, I travelled either alone or accompanied by a single native, sometimes on foot, and at others on horse-back or ox-back, over upwards of a thousand miles of country, parts of it emulating the Sahara in scarcity of water and general inhospitality. Tongue is too feeble to express what I suffered at times. To say nothing of narrow escapes from lions and other dangerous beasts, I was constantly enduring the



cravings of hunger and the agonies of thirst. Occasionally I was as much as two days without tasting food, and it not unfrequently happened that in the course of the twenty-four hours I could only once or twice moisten my parched lips. Sometimes I was so overcome by these causes, coupled with bodily fatigue, that I fainted. Once both my steed and myself dropped down in the midst of a sand-plain, where we remained a long time in a state bordering on unconsciousness,

and exposed to all the injurious effects of a tropical sun. I would at times pursue my course with a pained and listless step, scarcely knowing what I was about, and staggering like a drunken man. "This," says Captain Messum, when speaking of the hardships he had undergone in a short tour into the interior of the west coast, "was the pleasure of travelling in Africa. It requires the endurance of a camel and the courage of a lion."