YB 10250

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

PRESENTED BY
PROF. CHARLES A. KOFOID AND
MRS. PRUDENCE W. KOFOID

TALES OF A NOMAD

OR

SPORT AND STRIFE

ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY PRESS.

TALES OF A NOMAD

OR

SPORT AND STRIFE

BY

CHARLES MONTAGUE

LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

AND NEW YORK: 15 EAST 16th STREET

1894

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

TO
RIDER HAGGARD,

THIS WORK

Is Dedicated

BY ITS AUTHOR,

IN TOKEN OF ESTEEM AND ALSO OF ADMIRATION

FOR HIS GENIUS.

SK 31

M66

P R E F A C E.

A FRIEND when conversing with the Author made the following observations: "I am sick of experiences of sport and adventure conveyed in the form of transcript from diary—why cannot people give us the grain without the husk, and thus avoid making us the victims of tedious prolixity? You have had the experience, why don't you give us some of it in a condensed form? We don't want to know why the favourite horse went lame on the near fore—how you cured the cook when he had a fit of colic—what you did when you were cooped up for a month by the rains—your adventures on the day you went out shooting and didn't see anything to shoot at—why you didn't get your letters by the mail—why the groceries gave out—your manœuvres for a month when you were not in touch with the enemy—and the precise dates, places, and distances which are of no interest to us. We want to know just the pith of your experiences, and nothing more."

My friend's words echoed my own sentiments. If a man has geographical facts to reveal like

Livingstone and Stanley had, then detail becomes interesting ; but when a man has only personal adventure to communicate, why the less of detail the better.

Thus encouraged, the Author put certain experiences into shape, in the hope that they might interest sportsmen and travellers, and would ask his readers to charitably overlook the faults of style and diction.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A RIDE FOR DEAR LIFE, - - - - -	1
II. MY FIVE BUFFALOES, - - - - -	17
III. MY THREE SEA-COWS, - - - - -	41
IV. VARIOUS, - - - - -	65
V. FLAT GAME AND SMALL GAME, - - - - -	84
VI. THE STORMING OF SECOCOENI'S, - - - - -	109
VII. THE SIEGE OF MARABASTADT, - - - - -	134
VIII. A LUCKY KILL, - - - - -	154
IX. MY BIG TUSKER, - - - - -	173
X. A TALE OF THREE ELEPHANTS, - - - - -	197

TALES OF A NOMAD.

CHAPTER I.

A RIDE FOR DEAR LIFE.

A FRONTIERSMAN'S YARN.

THROUGH plains covered with sparse thorn-bushes the Olifants River wends its way. Here it is about fifty yards wide, and is fringed with reeds on either bank. It is the dry season, and the current, which at times would sweep away men, horses, and waggons, has dwindled down till at almost any point a lad of twelve could cross with ease and safety.

The withered vegetation, the bushes devoid of leaf and grey with thorns, display the effects of drought and of nightly frosts ; but everywhere the broad-bladed twitch-grass, perennially green, abounds in quantity sufficient to keep cattle and horses in excellent condition throughout the winter.

To the eastward the rugged, forbidding-looking ranges of mountain which here constitute the frontier of Matshila's-land, stand up in clear relief against the unclouded sky. Every crag, bush and rivulet are as distinct to the naked eye at four miles distance as they

would be in Europe at one mile with the aid of field-glasses.

It is evening, and troops of graceful roebuck are cropping the shoots of herbage and lazily twitching their tails, as with the dainty, stiff-kneed action peculiar to antelope they stalk down to the river in Indian file for their evening drink. The flocks of guinea-fowl are beginning to crrrruck-cuck-cuck-crrrruck, and the bush pheasant gives his discordant plaintive call as he prepares to roost.

But why are the guinea-fowl suddenly silent, and why do the pallahs, giving one spring sideways, stand rooted with astonishment for five seconds, and then airily bound away in alarm?

Well they may, for since the hills first in order stood no such sound has ever disturbed the solitudes through which old Olifant flows as the pealing notes of the bugle which now strike upon the ear.

There amongst the bushes are rows of white bell tents, from which men are now issuing. They are clad in blue shirts, cord breeches, field-boots, and soft broad-brimmed felt hats, and have a hardy, tanned look. Each carries a currycomb and danderbrush and has a nosebag slung over his arm, and, albeit unshaven, they seem a serviceable body of men.

They fall in on the markers in section column by the left at quarter distance. The roll is called, and then they break off and go towards their horses, which are picketed in ranks, and which display by their whinnying that they know the hour for feeding as well as the men do.

“Halt! who comes there?” shouts a sentry. Two minutes later a couple of almost naked Basuto Caffres

enter the camp, and are taken to the commandant's marquee. As the sun sinks a strong guard is mounted, and the sentries are all doubled; for it is war time, and no precaution is omitted.

The mess bugle sounds, and the men gather in groups of eight for their meal. A strange crowd—English, Scotch, Irish, German and Afrikaner, the last being invaluable as a frontiersman for his good shooting and horsemanship, and for his quick eye, knowledge of country, and cool self-reliance.

Amongst them are all sorts and conditions of men—public schoolmen, university M.A.'s, and gentlemen emigrants, mixed with farmers, traders, and gold-diggers; but the utmost good feeling prevails, and many a jest and yarn elicit repeated roars of laughter. It is as well under these circumstances to be on good terms with the quartermaster, for somehow or other after the nightly issue of grog ration there is always a surplus in hand, which, of course, it would be a sin to either throw away or to present to the Government; so taking my pipe and my tin pannikin, I stroll off to pay my respects to that worthy.

"I say, quartermaster, who were those two natives who came in this evening?"

"Can't say—they were friendly natives—I fancy they have been spying. I know the commandant is in touch with a lot of friendly natives, who keep their eyes skinned and bring him information. That issuer is a wonderful man; he always brings me a balance over of just one quart of commissariat rum every night after issuing; excellent man, but I won't recommend him for promotion, for he is so admirably suited to his present position—and to me. Let's play poker. Hulloo, there's

the commandant's orderly. What do you want? All the rum is finished; go to the issuer if you have any complaint."

"The commandant wants Trooper X——, sir."

"I won't be long away, quartermaster; keep my rum for me." So saying, I left the tent, and reported myself to the commandant. He was seated at a small table, on which lay an open map. He was a man over six feet in height and of splendid physique. His marked features, resolute expression of countenance, quiet but decided manner and resonant voice, betokened courage and force of character. He was eminently a man to be trusted in the hour of danger or disaster. He was not a product of the school of discipline, but, like such men in all new countries, he had been brought to the front by a sort of process of natural selection, and owed his position entirely to the personal qualities which he had often displayed on critical occasions. Perhaps some may recognise the portrait.

"Trooper X——."

"Yes, sir."

"Are you disposed to go on special service?"

"That is a curious question to ask me, sir. I am ready to go wherever you order me, or my duty leads me."

"Yes, but I think it is hardly fair to send any particular man on a service of especial danger without asking him whether he is cheerfully prepared to incur the risks."

"I know, sir, that you would not wantonly expose any man to unnecessary risk. The risk you hint at must be in the course of duty, and, that being so, I am quite prepared to undertake it cheerfully."

"Well spoken, my lad. Did you see two natives come into the camp this evening?"

"Yes."

“They report to me that they have heard on good authority that a very large troop of the enemy’s cattle are stowed away in the valley between the first and second range of hills—I mean between the range of hills you see to the eastward and another range behind that range and parallel to it. You will have to follow the course of the river, which runs through a gap in the hills. When you have passed the gap, turn to your right and pass along the valley between this range and the next range. See here on the map. The valley narrows at this point; I am told it is not more than about 400 yards wide just there. There is a town on the slope of the hills to the left, about half a mile beyond this neck, so you will have to go very cautiously, but when you have passed the town you are all safe. You go on about three or four miles until you come to a little round hill in the midst of the valley.

“I am told there is a small patch of bush on this little hill. I want you to hide your horses in the bush, mount the hill, and, keeping yourselves hidden, watch the valley and ascertain if there are any troops of cattle—where they feed, and to bring me all the information you can. I will give you an excellent man to accompany you. You can start when the moon rises to-night. You will reach the spot before daybreak. Remain hidden all day and return to-morrow night. That is all you have to do. You had better take fifty rounds of ball and two days’ rations with you. I will lend you my field-glasses. Trooper G—— accompanies you. The adjutant in person will inspect you and give any final instructions—and, by the way, is your horse a silent one?”

“Yes, excepting at stables, when he sometimes gives a whinny at the sight of forage.”

"That is well. I have known a good man to come to grief owing to an untimely neigh. Have you looked to his shoes lately?"

"Yes, sir; he went to the farrier the day before yesterday, but he is only shod on the fore."

"You want nothing better, even for the roughest ground in this country. You may as well take this pocket-compass. Now, are you sure you fully understand my instructions?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah, well. Good-night, and, mind you, no smoking at night. I know you are a heavy smoker, but if you reflect that striking a match may cost you your life, I think you will be able to refrain."

"May I ask you to do something for me, sir, in case I don't return?"

"Certainly, certainly. What can I do for you?"

"I should like to leave my father's address with you, and to ask you to communicate with him in case it should be necessary; also to open all letters addressed to me, read them, and then burn them."

"Quite so. I promise you faithfully I will do this, but I hope there will be no necessity for such a proceeding on my part. However, enter the address in my memorandum book," and as he spoke he tossed me the book.

Having made the entry, I saluted, turned about in three motions, and left the tent.

The commandant was one of those men who had the rare gift of maintaining discipline, not by the machinery of organisation, but solely by his individual force of character and personal influence. Wherever he took us we had a sort of feeling that he knew what he was about,

and we all would have followed him unhesitatingly, even though it appeared to be into the jaws of certain death.

I have known him ride up to a body of men who were under heavy fire, and who, being hardly pressed by an enemy of superior force, were beginning to get unsteady. The instant he appeared amongst them they became as steady as rocks.

The great duke said of Bonaparte that his presence on the field of battle was equal to a reinforcement of 20,000 men. It is hard to explain, but there are men who exercise this influence over their fellows.

Irregular troops will not fight well unless they have confidence in their leaders; indeed, trust is to them what discipline and organisation are to regular troops.

Our commandant knew every man by name who served under him. There was no restraint in his manner, for he would converse freely with any of us in a way that is usually deemed to be destructive of all discipline. Few men have this power of keeping in close touch with their men, and yet not impairing their control. It is a special gift. Those who possess it not had better abstain from free contact with their subordinates.

As a tactician he was bold in conception and swift in execution. Knowing the nature of his enemy thoroughly, he also knew just how far he could take liberties with them. He never put his foot farther out than he could withdraw it again with safety.

At times he apparently violated all the accepted canons of warfare. He would throw off his line of communication and lead us into positions of apparently great danger; but he was as wise as he was bold, and no contingency was unforeseen or unprovided against. As a

rule his movements were so rapid that before the enemy realised his intentions he had accomplished his object.

Self-reliant energy is characteristic of the Afrikander, and the commandant was merely a typical specimen of his race. For generations past they have in insignificant numbers fought their way northward against savage hordes and dangerous wild beasts, their only weapon the rifle, their only book the Bible, and the constant struggle has evolved a singularly bold and hardy people.

As the moon rose Trooper G—— and myself paraded for inspection. After being very narrowly overhauled by the adjutant, who gave us a final injunction to be careful, we set out on our journey. Trooper G—— led the way. He was an Afrikander born of Irish parents. He was a fine rider, a fine shot, as brave as a lion, and withal, like most Irishmen, had a cheerful temperament which never deserted him even at the moments of gravest danger.

"Mr. X——, I'm thinking we may set to work and do all our smoking and talking now while we can do it with safety, for in the parts we are going to visit we are not exactly popular, so let us light up now."

Thus we continued to smoke and converse in a low tone until we reached the point in the hills through which the river flowed. Dead silence was now to be our rule. The frost had begun to fall, and it was somewhat cold work.

A long ride in a frosty night invariably makes one feel sleepy. Any one much accustomed to riding acquires the knack of sleeping in the saddle. It is a dubious kind of rest though. Every now and then as the head begins to nod and fall forward the sleeper is

suddenly awakened. Besides this, one occasionally gets a reminder by a thorny branch brushing across one's face, or by the horse unwarily putting his foot into an ant-bear hole. However, as G—— had taken upon himself to do the piloting, I gathered as many winks of sleep as was possible under the circumstances.

Eels are said to get accustomed to skinning, and men certainly get inured to exposure and discomfort. Since those days I have often, when travelling at night, comfortably seated in a first-class carriage of an express train, obtained a feeling of satisfaction by recalling to memory the discomforts incurred on a night patrol, and I am by no means sure that the immunity from discomforts which accompanies a high state of civilisation may not in the long run sap the courage and energy of European nations. My dozing was at last interrupted by G——'s voice :—

“Here we are ; there is the valley to our right ; we have been going for two hours ; that accords with instructions, doesn't it ? It should bear southward of us now ; take a look at the pocket-compass.”

Jumping off my horse, I covered the compass with my hat, while G—— struck a match under the hat.

“Yes, that's all right ; let us aim our course between those two shoulders which descend from the hills on either side. I think we had better skirt to the right as much as possible, for the commandant said there was a Basuto town on the slope of the range to the left hand.”

In another half-hour we saw that the two ranges were getting nearer to us, and that we were approaching the neck of the valley. It was, however, difficult to exactly estimate the true size and distance of natural features by the light of the moon.

At last we reached the neck and hurried through it, keeping as much to the right as possible, with the double object of avoiding the proximity of the native town on the left, and also of keeping well in the shadow of the range of hills on the right. Ten minutes took us through the pass. There was evidently no Basuto town in the pass, for we saw no lights and heard no barking of dogs.

The valley now widened out again. Suddenly we heard the barking of dogs apparently about half a mile off on the left of the valley.

"Ah, there is the town," said G—. "I hope the dogs are not taking alarm."

"No, no. The nasty yapping brutes keep it up all night long."

My horse's hoofs now ceased to sound as they struck the earth, and I experienced a sensation as though he were travelling over soft ground. An exclamation of impatient annoyance broke from G—.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"Bad enough; couldn't well be worse. We have got on to newly-cultivated land. If they visit this land to-morrow morning they will be certain to see the hoof-marks, and then we are done for. However, perhaps they mayn't come over this ground to-morrow. In any case we couldn't return to camp without having made an attempt to carry out our orders, so all we can do is to turn back and skirt this field in the hopes that they may not be working here to-morrow."

We wheeled our horses round, and having regained the veldt went off at a tangent to avoid the cultivated ground. When we judged that we must be past it we resumed our direct course; but the incident left an unpleasant impression on my mind, and my spirits were

overshadowed by anxious presentiments of coming evil. We proceeded for about two miles in this manner, when we saw a small round hillock looming up in the middle of the plain. In another ten minutes we reached it. At the foot was a small clump of bushes which we entered, and having off-saddled and affixed the nosebags, we tied up the horses, and ascending to the top of the hillock, wrapped ourselves in our overcoats and lay down to sleep, with the butts of our rifles as pillows. Youth, health, and nerves make a good nightcap, and in those days I could sleep sounder under conditions like this than I can now in a feather bed.

At break of day I was roused by G——, who was pulling my leg. Rubbing my eyes, I looked round me. Before us was spread a wide valley covered with scattered clumps of bush. From the slopes of the hills on both sides of the valley columns of smoke arose from Basuto villages. On examining them with the field-glasses I could see that they were all strongly fortified with *schanses* (or breastworks of stone), and behind them were precipices, or rugged masses of rock, in which, doubtless, were numerous caves in which the inhabitants of the villages took refuge whenever they were driven from their villages by an enemy. Each village contained several score of huts with round conical-shaped roofs, which projected above the walls of the *schanses* which encircled them.

Far back behind us, and on the slope of the hill about half a mile from the neck of the valley through which we had passed on the previous evening, was a village of about a hundred huts. From the hill just above the neck itself was a cloud of smoke, showing that a picket was posted there. We must have passed within 300 yards of them during the night.

We could distinguish the patch of cultivated ground we had unwittingly trespassed upon during our last night's journey.

We munched our biscuits and took a pull at our water-bottles by way of breakfast.

At about nine o'clock from the villages at the farther end of the valley we saw four large troops of cattle descend into the plain and spread themselves out to feed.

In the four troops there must have been at least 1200 or 1500 head of cattle.

We discussed the situation, and speculated as to the intentions of the commandant.

We conjectured that he must contemplate entering the valley by night with a body of men, lying in wait till the cattle came out to feed, capturing them all, leaving another body of men lying perdu near the neck, with orders to seize the hills on each side of the neck, and thus secure a safe exit from the valley for the party who seized the cattle.

All this seemed feasible enough, for the cattle were feeding so far out upon the plain that we could have galloped down from our hillock and have secured them before they could have been driven back within the shelter of the villages. There was, moreover, a gully about a mile farther on, and nearer to the cattle, which was capable of concealing almost any number of mounted men.

As the sun rose higher the heat became more and more oppressive, and we looked forward rather ruefully to the prospect of lying stretched out upon our hillock all day long.

About eleven A.M. Trooper G—— gave a whistle of

astonishment, and, touching me on the arm, pointed back to the village near the entrance to the valley.

On looking with the glasses, I saw a party of about a dozen women descending into the plain, carrying hoes and implements for field-work. They were apparently going straight down towards the cultivated land on which we had trespassed during the night.

Said Trooper G——: "If they find our spoor of last night, we must gallop for it, for the whole of the people will turn out and search the valley until they find us".

We watched their progress with overwhelming anxiety. They reached the cultivated ground and began walking across it straight towards the spot we had traversed the night before.

"By George! it is all up," said G——. "We might as well start off now. It will be a miracle if they don't see the spoor. We'll wait a bit, though, to see whether chance doesn't save us. No, no; not a bit of good. See, they are almost on the very spot. Look, they are all running together to the very spot; and now, by George! look again; they have set off running to the village as hard as they can go. Come on, there isn't a moment to lose. Chuck on the saddles and let us be off for a life and death gallop."

As he spoke we sprang to our feet and rushed down the hillock to where our horses were picketed, threw on the saddles and bridles (surely horses were never so swiftly saddled before), and in less than a minute were heading back for the entrance of the valley at a smart hand gallop.

"Hold your horse together, Mr. X——, there is no saying what call we may not have to make upon the nags."

Rising slightly from the saddle to ease my horse, I gave the brave beast a couple of pats on the side of the neck, for I felt that he would not fail me at a pinch, and would do all that was required of him.

“See!” shouted G——; “look at those three columns of smoke from the picket on the hill at the right of the neck—that is the alarm signal—look at the people all running along the side of the hill from that infernal village. If they reach the neck before we do they will form a line across it, and it will be a hundred to one if we can get through them alive, so let out your horse a bit.”

Notwithstanding the awful nature of our death-ride—notwithstanding the heavy stake depending upon it—I had a feeling almost of exultation, and could have shouted aloud. My good horse, puffing and snorting as he bore upon the bit, the thudding of his hoofs as he sped along, the wind whistling past my ears, all tended to raise my spirits. Men ride in earnest when the hounds are running into a sinking fox; but no men ever rode more earnestly than we twain did for our dear lives—a strained sinew, a stumble, a girth failing, and I should not have been here to-day to tell the tale.

The natives were racing down in hundreds to try and reach the neck before we did, and it became a question as to who would reach the neck first.

Nearer and yet nearer—we were almost at the neck—from the hills on the right about sixty natives, the advanced guard of those who were coming from the village, were running down into the valley to block our track. We saw that we must pass them within a very few yards, and that it was merely a question of seconds as to whether we got past them at all. We bent our horses to the left, for they were almost in front of us now.

G—— shouted: "Now, Mr. X——, let him out and ride as hard as you can".

I got hold of his head, and driving in the spurs rode him on the bit as well, and we managed to dash past them within sixty yards. As we did so they gave a yell, and a volley rattled out from their rifles, the bullets chirping and hissing all round us. I saw G—— flinch and bend slightly over his saddle-bow, and I felt a peculiar tingling sensation in my left arm. My horse, too, gave a flounder.

"Hurrah!" shouted G—— as we dashed along the valley, and sped out at the farther end of the neck into the plain. But my horse was going in a very cramped way, and I had to shout to G—— to draw rein. I pulled up, and on dismounting I found that he had been shot through the thigh. At the same time the trickling of something warm down my left arm and hand revealed to me that I had been wounded also.

G—— galloped back and shouted: "The horse is dead lame; leave him and jump behind me". I noticed that his lips were very white.

With some difficulty I mounted the croup of his horse, which carried us on at a reduced speed under the double burden.

G—— only spoke once the whole time. "By George! the only thing I regret is that I hadn't a chance of dismounting and gruelling one of them."

I now felt terribly thirsty and faint from loss of blood, so as we neared the river I asked G—— to stop and let me dismount for a drink. He handed me his water-bottle, saying, "Please fill it—I am afraid to dismount".

"Why, G——, what is the matter?"

"Oh, I rather think I am shot through the stomach,

but I think I can manage to get to camp if I don't dismount."

I handed up the water-bottle, and the poor fellow took a long drink.

In another couple of hours we were in camp again. G—— insisted on reporting himself to the adjutant, and having delivered his information was lifted from the saddle by many friendly hands, and conveyed to the hospital tent. A couple of days later on three volleys were fired over the poor fellow's grave.

I was recompensed by the Government for the loss of my horse.

That very night the commandant ordered a full patrol. He knew that the cattle would all be removed from that valley to some other spot. He made a shrewd guess at their whereabouts, and succeeded in raiding 600 head on the following morning, and shooting more than thirty of the enemy in revenge for the death of poor G——, at the same time only having two of our men slightly wounded.

I was in hospital for a fortnight, and rapidly recovered from my wound. Since then I have followed the commandant on many a dangerous path, but never till my last day shall I forget that ride for dear life.

CHAPTER II.

MY FIVE BUFFALOES.

OUR hunting headquarters were at Jozanns Kraal, situated at the foot of the western slope of the Libombo range of mountains.

There we left our waggons and oxen and engaged our carriers. In those days the natives did not understand the use of money, and as many carriers could be obtained as one wished for a payment of one cotton blanket each, value four shillings. The condition was that they were to work until we had completely loaded the waggons with dry game hides, for in this manner we used to make our sport pay its own expenses.

Now to load four buck-waggons, each drawn by eighteen oxen, with as great a weight of hides as they could carry, was no small undertaking, and we considered ourselves fortunate if we could effect this in two months. It depended very much on our success in quickly finding the great troops of buffaloes, breaking them up into many small troops and then making our bag.

The time question was therefore an indefinite one, but what Amaswazi Caffre reckoned by time? Time was a disagreeable factor ; it was too logical, too exact for his mind, and he took no more account of moons than we do of days. Besides this, hunting and devouring beef were in themselves pleasures second only in exquisite

intensity to the joys of murdering and plundering one's fellow-men when on the war-path.

Accordingly there was no lack of recruits. We might indeed have remained at Jozanns and have hunted the eland, roan antelope, sassaby, quagga, and wildebeeste. The country was fairly open ; there was no tsetse fly, and we could have used our horses ; but the royal game, the buffaloes, were down in the fly country to the northward between Jozanns and the port by which the Imbeloose River flows through the Libombo Range, and, both for their value and the superior sport afforded by them, the buffaloes became the chief object of our expedition.

A burly Yorkshireman, John C—— by name, was the chief of our expedition. He was tall, broad-shouldered, yellow-bearded and blue-eyed, and was without exception the finest shot and keenest hunter I have ever come across. His splendid physique and great powers of endurance enabled him to cover more ground in a day than I have ever seen any other man able to cover, and as for his shooting—all I can say is that at 400 yards' range he was as sure to hit his game well forward as most men who consider themselves no mean performers with the rifle are at 130 yards. Above all, he was a merry, warm-hearted companion and an unselfish sportsman.

He possessed no such things as nerves,—at least, if he had them, it was impossible to shake them, and his bullet fired at a charging animal was as certain to find a correct billet, as though the animal had been running away from him instead of at him. But modesty was one of his characteristics, and when relating some perilous adventure he would say, "Lord, it quite gave me a shock, governor !" But I have my grave doubts whether

honest John ever realised the meaning conveyed to men of feebler organisation by the word "shock".

Having engaged all our carriers we left our waggons and oxen in charge of the Chief of Jozanns, and marching down into the fly country pitched our camp at a small rivulet named the Gumban, about half a day's journey from Jozanns. Our plan of operations was this—to send native hunters in all directions to visit the various drinking places, find the large troops of buffaloes and break them up. There was one troop in particular, the natives called it "umpehlu 'tuli" or "the dust raiser". It consisted of several thousand buffaloes.

During the winter season the buffaloes got broken up by the parties of hunters, but in the summer they used to reassemble and form immense troops. It was our especial desire to discover and scatter the umpehlu, for it meant certain sport to us as soon as they were broken.

Gumban was our central camp, from which we made excursions in all directions for two or three days at a time, returning thither for stores and ammunition. For the first week we had little or no sport, only getting an odd bull here and there, and shooting occasional quagga, waterbuck, and koodoo. Indeed, I became rather despondent, and began to imagine that the royal game must have left the country. Day after day when our hunters came in we eagerly questioned them, always receiving the same reply: "Plenty of old spoor,—they are somewhere in the country, and if the Fates are propitious we shall find them at last".

A Cèffre has the firmest faith in luck; in other words, that good or ill fortune is controlled by the Fates. If he is fortunate he puts it down at once to the Fates being in a good humour—if the opposite, to the Fates having

their backs up. There is simply hardly any limit to his credulity on this point. At last we found the buffaloes and began to kill freely every day, and our spirits rose accordingly.

One day John C—— and myself left the Gumban camp, intending to hunt separately and in different directions, but we agreed to rendezvous in the evening at a certain spot where there was water.

My luck was nothing to boast of. I shot a koodoo and at about three in the afternoon when I had turned and was directing my course to the rendezvous I killed a bull buffalo.

I reached the spot about an hour before sundown, and feeling somewhat tired, I determined to await C——, and to spend the time in collecting firewood and arranging the camp so that we might have a comfortable night of it.

I was startled by hearing a double shot about a mile off, and not long afterwards my eyes were gladdened by seeing John's burly form coming up at speed.

"What did you fire at, John?"

"I found a troop and killed, but there is a cow that has gone into a horrible place; she is very hard hit, and as vicious as she can be, the dog went in to her, but she chased him about until he got tired and came out to me again. I don't care to go in after her alone; but if you will come, governor, I think we might manage it—mind you, it is a horrible place, with not a tree in it that would save a mouse, but I think the pair of us can tackle her with safety. It is only about ten minutes' walk from here, and we can just do it nicely, so what do you say? Ah, I see you have killed two, that is well."

"I am ready, so let us be off at once."

Taking my double twelve rifle I set off with C — at a smart walk. We reached the place; it was a nasty looking thicket of thorns, here and there comparatively open, so that one could see a buffalo at thirty or forty yards distance, but in other parts terribly thick, and it was in one of these thick places that she had taken refuge.

"She is in there," said C —, pointing to a particularly nasty spot. The remark caused me to suddenly remember that for some time past I had intended to make a will, but had from certain considerations neglected to do so. "Loose the dog again," said C — to one of the Caffres. "Hi in, Sancho, good dog, sa-sa-sssa!"

Loyal Sancho, obedient to the command, went in at once, and soon gave tongue.

A portentous grunting, blowing and crashing of the bush showed that the cow buffalo was on her legs, and that Sancho was having a lively time of it. We cautiously advanced into the bush. At last I noticed a kind of path or avenue in the bush. It had been evidently made by the game. About forty yards farther on along this game path was a small tree with a trunk about a foot in diameter, not sufficient indeed to protect a man from a buffalo, but it was sufficient to enable a man to make one dodge behind it if charged. It would, however, only be available for one man.

I said: "Look, C —, at that small tree. I will get forward and perhaps from that spot I shall be able to see her. You had better remain here, and if she charges me you can see the whole performance and can cover me with your rifle."

Having arranged this matter, I went forward and took up my station behind the tree. I could see the bush

swaying and shaking as the buffalo made furious rushes at Sancho, but I could not make out her form.

Sancho was a tactician. His mode of dealing with a buffalo was to irritate it by barking, and when it charged, he would dodge round it and bite it in the hocks as it rushed past; the buffalo would spin round and charge him again, on which the performance was repeated.

At last I saw Sancho's form flitting about in the underwood, and the next moment I got a glimpse of the buffalo as it pursued him. I fired instantly.

The buffalo halted—and wheeling round in my direction raised her head threateningly, and gazed fixedly at me.

Now a buffalo facing you with its head upraised is a most difficult shot. Very little of the forehead is exposed. If you fire a trifle high you risk the chance of your bullet glancing off its horns. Under such circumstances, it is wiser to give the chest shot; but in this case it was impossible, for her chest was covered by a dense mass of underbush and thorns. The temptation was too great. I levelled again, and tried to shoot her through the brain, but failed to do it. The instant I fired she gave a wrathful grunt and came at me, crashing through the bush as though it were mere grass.

Sancho did his best at her heels to divert her attention, but having seen me she was not to be denied.

C—— was forty yards behind me, and I was in a dead line between him and the buffalo, so that he could not fire without danger of killing me. It was a ticklish situation. I at once realised that if I stood behind the tree, it would be no protection to me, for the buffalo would be brought up dead by the tree and would then in a moment rush round it and gore me.

I did the best and the only thing under the circumstances. I stood in the open about four or five feet to the left of the tree and awaited the buffalo. On she came, grunting every inch of the road. As she neared me and was within three yards, she lowered her head for a toss, and simultaneously I sprang to the right behind the tree, and she thundered past me.

She wheeled round instantly to charge me again, but at that moment, as she wheeled, C——'s rifle rang out, and she fell stone dead with a broken neck.

"My stars, governor! I am very sorry for firing in your direction, but it was the only thing to be done," shouted C——. My nerve now gave way and I found myself trembling like an aspen leaf, so much so that it was with difficulty I succeeded in filling my pipe.

It is indeed strange how a man manages to bear up during excitement or great danger, but gives way after the danger is over. The necessity for action seems to brace the nerves for the time being; but when that necessity has passed away there is a corresponding relaxation, generally in ratio proportionate to the late degree of tension.

Leaving some of our people to skin the buffalo we returned to our small camp, where we found fires lighted, the kettle boiling and grass cut for our bedding. One of our native hunters, named Inyati, had come in, reporting that he had followed the spoor of a very large troop of buffaloes to a point within two miles of our present camp, but had to abandon it, as it was getting late. He had come in this direction on the look-out for water, to encamp for the night, and seeing the smoke of our fires had made his way hither. On questioning him, he told us that the spoor trended in the direction of the

Libombo Range, which was only about five miles from us as the crow flies, so we had good hopes of sport for the morrow.

Inyati was a curious character. He had a great amount of conceit and also of quiet humour. He delighted in boasting of his performances, and, to tell the truth, for a native he was a smart hunter; but caution was one of his characteristics. He generally went about accompanied by a boy. When he shot anything, with the aid of the boy he skinned it, hoisted the hide up into the fork of a tree, and returned to the main camp to call carriers to convey the hide to camp.

One night when he was holding forth as usual, and informing the whole camp that they were mere boys compared with himself, the lad who accompanied him on his excursions let out an incident of the day's hunting which ran as follows: Inyati and the boy were seated under a bush resting during the heat of the day, when the boy saw a large black-maned lion walking past at about sixty yards off. He pointed it out to Inyati, saying, "There is your chance". Now, Inyati, I suppose, not having sufficient confidence in his own marksmanship, and reflecting that there were no trees handy at that precise spot, deemed discretion to be the better part of valour, and did not fire at the lion, but contented himself with abusing the boy for having dared to direct his attention to a fact which was already patent to him, *viz.*, the presence of the lion. On the boy relating this anecdote there was a shout of laughter, and all the Caffres began twitting Inyati about the lion.

However, Inyati was quite equal to the occasion, and indignantly repelled the insinuation that he in any way was discomfited by the king of beasts. "Was it for me

to obey the suggestions of an infant like that?" he cried—"a mere boy! I had already perceived the lion and was waiting for a favourable opportunity to shoot him dead, when this boy spoke and irritated me beyond endurance. I am inspired to do great actions by the Fates, and am constantly under their tutelage; but were I once to obey the suggestions of a boy like this, the Fates, would refuse to have anything further to do with me. I obey that boy! not likely indeed."

However, Inyati's caution was exceeded by that of another Caffre I once knew. I was hunting on the Usutu at the time and had observed the spoor of a large bull hippopotamus in the dense belt of reeds which fringed that river. Thinking it very probable that the hippo would sleep in the reeds during the heat of the day, I instructed this Caffre to take a large bored gun and search for the hippo. I was engaged in hunting buffaloes at the time and could not spare time to seek for the hippo.

The Caffre came into camp the same evening and laying down his gun squatted before me in a despondent attitude.

"Well—what luck?" I asked.

"Bad, 'nkos, very bad."

"Did you find the spoor of the hippo?"

"Yes, 'nkos; I found it, and followed it up and up and up until I came upon him fast asleep in the reeds. He had turned round, and had lain down with his face in the direction he had come from."

I must here observe that a hippo as a rule returns to the river by the very same path he came by from the river.

"Well, and what did you do?"

"I knelt down and took good aim between his eyes and was pressing the trigger, when the idea entered my mind: 'Supposing the gun should miss fire, or supposing I should fail to kill him dead on the spot, he would rush straight along the path towards me, and seeing me in his way would bite me in half'. So I went cautiously backwards, crept round him, approached him from behind and fired at his tail."

Of course he might as well have whistled at the hippo as have fired at its tail in the hope of killing it. It rushed off to the river, and may be there to-day for all I know to the contrary. This was an instance of Caffre caution, but I have known them to do exceedingly bold things. A Caffre lad of about sixteen came to our camp on one occasion, and begged to be allowed to hunt for us. I was rather loth to accept his aid, but as he was almost tearful in his anxiety to be allowed to carry a gun, I lent him the only gun left in camp, *viz.*, a single-barrelled smooth No. 10 bore. He was delighted, and went away with a small boy who accompanied him. He managed to kill a buffalo somehow just at sundown, and there being no time to skin it before dark, he encamped beside the carcase. He lit a fire and lay down to sleep. During the night, he was awakened by the boy pulling at his arm. On sitting up he saw by the dim light of the fire that two lions were feeding on the carcase, which was within ten yards of the fire. He quietly made up the fire and compelled the boy, who was quaking with fear, to hold up a lighted torch, so that he could see the fore and back sight of his gun, and sitting down to take a steady shot put a ball through the head of the male lion, killing him stone dead. The lioness gave a roar and sprang away from the carcase,

but seeing that her mate remained there, in about ten minutes she returned again, on which the young fellow shot her in a similar manner.

The persistent roaring of the lions from a certain quarter seemed to indicate that the troop of buffaloes whose spoor Inyati had been following that day could not be very far distant, for the lions invariably follow troops of buffaloes in the hope of picking up stragglers from the main body. We were in capital spirits, for we anticipated a good day's sport on the morrow.

Certainly the buffaloes are a splendid game, and both from the sport they afford and the danger involved in the pursuit of them ought to satisfy a very glutton with the rifle. I was unfortunate enough on my first hunting expedition to be present at the death of a fellow sportsman named W——.

We were encamped at the Insulutan not a full day's march from Siandas. We got at a troop of buffaloes and fired, with the result of wounding three of them. They were unable to keep up with the remainder of the herd and took refuge in a thicket of no very great extent. We surrounded this thicket with the object of preventing the escape of the buffaloes in the event of their attempting to break away. W—— was armed with an excellent double No. 10 bore rifle, and was standing near a tree that would have afforded him ample protection from a charge. About fifty yards from him was a Caffre hunter named Somajuba. Some one got a glimpse of one of the wounded buffaloes, and fired at it, wounding it again. It rushed away to another spot, not very far from the edge of the thicket, at the place where W—— was standing. It perceived him and at once charged out. The suddenness of the attack must have unnerved W——, for he ran from

the tree that would have afforded him shelter, and made for a small thorn-tree. Before he could reach it, the buffalo was upon him, and the nature of the wounds showed that W—— must have turned round facing it, when it tossed him into the tree, where he hung suspended. The fierce brute then turned round and looked about for another adversary. A certain native waggon-driver named Indaman, who was carrying a gun, ran up and took a shot, but being a bad marksman struck it too high up on the shoulder. It instantly charged him, and was on the point of tossing him when Somajuba fired and rolled it over.

We lifted poor W—— from the bush and laid him on the ground, but he never spoke again. The injuries inflicted by the one toss were fearful, and it was impossible that he could survive.

The event cast a gloom over our party, and we buried him in silence and despondency under a large tree. It startled me at the time, and made me somewhat careful; but the feeling wore off, and I am sorry to say I did many rash things, until I, too, had a misfortune, but was enabled to escape with my life. It was as follows:—

We were encamped at Fatihulu on the bank of the Usutu River. I had been unwell for two or three days and had been confined to the camp. One evening I thought I would take a stroll along the bank of the river to shoot meat for the camp. As the hunters had been firing all round the camp, I had no idea of meeting buffaloes, and only took a single-barrelled small-bore rifle with me. I went out accompanied by two of my Caffres, Langa and Pandela respectively by name. I also took one dog.

We proceeded along the bank until we reached a

thicket of thorns. While passing through this, Langa suddenly pointed with his assegai. At first I could see nothing, but after peering for half a minute I managed to make out the form of a buffalo about sixty yards off. I stalked up, and when I got within about forty yards I thought I could distinguish his outline sufficiently well to take a shot at his shoulder. I fired, and he rushed off with a broken shoulder, and the dog raced after him. I followed up until I heard the dog baying him in a nasty thick place. Impunity having made me over-confident, I rushed in, just in time to meet the buffalo coming out at me. There was no time to settle the rifle into my shoulder, so I fired a snap shot which must have glanced off the dense mass of horn upon his forehead, for he continued his charge. I sprang to one side. It must have been a record standing jump sideways. I am not much of a jumper, but it is astounding what an amount of latent agility is educed by the rush of a buffalo. He made a pass at me with his horns, and I positively felt the wind of the stroke he gave, but his impetus carried him past me, and he dashed on.

The dog brought him to bay again in a place which was, if anything, worse than before. I went in again, and again he came out at me, but this time through a bush so dense that I could not see him until he was close upon me. I had no time to fire, and made a dash to the right along a small path made by game. On this occasion he was too cunning to rush past me, and swerved round to follow me. He was close to me, and in another second I must have been gored, when fortune favoured me. There was a small tree with branches growing at an angle outwards from the very root. Under this tree I dived and lay flat, keeping my body

as close to the roots as I could. He could not get at me, for the width of his horns was too great to allow him to get his head well under the stout branches which sprang from the root, nor could he get near enough to trample me with his hoofs; but he did the next best thing,—he battered my back and shoulders with his nose. I tried to seize him by the tongue and in so doing cut my hand against his teeth. Every time I tried to draw breath he gave me another thump between the shoulders, knocking all the wind out of me. I heard a sort of roaring sound in my ears as if I were taking a long dive, and a mist seemed to cloud my vision. I remember distinctly that I felt no pain, and only thought to myself, “Well, here is an end of me”. I then became insensible.

When I came to again, Langa and Pandela were propping me up and pouring water over my head, and blood was oozing from my lips.

It appears that when I lay perfectly still, the buffalo walked away a few yards and halted. He then returned, as though [meditating further mischief, and began pawing the ground and arching his back preparatory to lying down. I suppose his idea was to lie down in order that he might turn his head on one side, insert one horn under the tree and extract me like a periwinkle. I was however saved by the courage and readiness of Pandela, who seeing that if the buffalo succeeded in carrying out his intention, it would be all up with me, rushed up, hurled his assegai at the buffalo and then fled.

The buffalo left me and went in pursuit of Pandela. There was a sapling with a projecting bough. Pandela being an active fellow swung himself up by the bough. The buffalo dashed against the trunk, knocking off a

great piece of the bark, and went on at full speed through the bush. For this I afterwards presented Pandela with a cotton blanket, so no one can say I place too high a valuation upon myself, but he was highly gratified at this mark of esteem.

When I came thoroughly to myself again, I proposed to follow the buffalo, but the Caffres protested, saying that the buffalo was bewitched, and that no one would ever succeed in killing it. However, I insisted on going after it, but had to give way, for they cunningly pretended that they were unable to carry on the spoor any farther.

On the day following this incident my back was black and blue, and I could hardly manage to turn from one side to the other without assistance. Since then I have always treated the buffalo with respect, but have no wish to renew close acquaintance with him.

I will conclude this long digression on the buffalo and his ways by briefly recounting how a certain Caffre hunter of my friend C——'s met his end.

He was named Umbandé, and was a good shot and experienced hunter.

He was hunting one day, and had a small boy in his train. He found the spoor of a troop of buffaloes and followed it until he came in sight of them. Telling the boy to sit down while he did a stalk, he went forward and got a shot, wounding a buffalo, which separated from the others and entered a thicket.

Umbandé was a careful hunter, and was armed with a very good double No. 14 bore gun. He entered the thicket, and the remainder of the story must be told by the boy.

His account is as follows: "I heard one shot and

then heard the buffalo grunting. I waited for some time for Umbandé, but he never returned, so I followed up on the spoor. I found him lying on his face quite dead, near him was a tree and round the tree were his footmarks and the footmarks of the buffalo. The left barrel of his gun was undischarged as it had missed fire."

Umbandé had evidently approached the buffalo and had fired. It had charged him. He had run to the tree for protection, and had succeeded in dodging it for a little, but had at last been caught, tossed and then trampled. The body was disembowelled and was trampled almost out of all human semblance, and the powder-horn had been split to pieces. But enough of digression. We lay down to sleep in good time, so that we might be up early on the morrow.

At about eight A.M. on the following morning we were all ready. The dogs were coupled up, and we started in a direction which we guessed would enable us to cut the spoor of the troupe Inyati had followed the previous day. In about half an hour's time we came upon their tracks, and at once followed them. The tracks were of the previous evening, but in about half an hour more we came to where they had lain down to sleep during the night. By all appearances there must have been several hundred buffaloes. Farther on we had a little trouble, for they seemed to have divided into two troops. We held a short consultation, and it was agreed that we were to separate; that C—— was to follow the spoor that trended to the left, and that I was to take the spoor to the right.

My spoor led straight towards the Libombo Mountains, which were now not a mile distant. I had not separated from C—— a quarter of an hour when I suddenly came in sight of the buffaloes.

There was a sort of gully on the slope of the mountain. It was shaped almost like a triangle, or like the letter V inverted, that is to say with its apex upwards. This gully was clothed with bush. In the plain, close to the base of the gully, were a fine troop of perhaps 200 buffaloes. Some of them were feeding and some lying down.

On the mountain side above the apex of the gully was a second troop, and considerably higher on the mountain was a third troop.

I now regretted that C—— had parted from me, and sent back a runner in hopes that he might catch a view of him and recall him. I waited for quite twenty minutes, and as C—— did not come up I deemed it advisable to go on and do a stalk, as at any moment the buffaloes might take it into their heads to move.

They were very fairly stalkable, and I managed to get within eighty yards without much trouble. There was a very good bull standing up and slightly raking away from me, at a distance of about a hundred yards. I covered him carefully, intending my bullet to enter just before the last rib on his right side and travel forward to his left shoulder, but I suppose I must have made a mess of it, for though he was hard hit he went off at once, and pounded along as though he had only received a flea bite. The whole troop sprang to their legs and rushed off, making a great rumbling and stirring up a cloud of dust. They swept round to the right with a view of gaining the open plain, and I got a nice left barrel at a big cow that was galloping last. The ball told on her hide, and she immediately lifted her foreleg, whereby I knew her shoulder was broken. She at once swerved off and left the troop, but as I was

anxious to do something more with the troop I did not follow her. I was secretly disappointed at not having bagged a right and left. I ran as hard as I could at a tangent, reloading as I ran, and, pulling up, gave them two more barrels at a range of something over 200 yards. The second ball told with a smart slap. I slipped the two dogs, and followed up myself at full speed.

One of my dogs was an excellent creature. He would bring almost anything to bay, and at the same time had the sense to keep himself out of danger. He would bite anybody excepting me. I bought him from a Caffre for a cotton blanket and a yard of calico, and therefore named him "Four-and-sixpence".

I soon heard the dogs giving tongue, and on getting to the spot found that they had a bull at bay in a small clump of wild dates down in a hollow.

On seeing me arrive on the scene, Four-and-six went in with a dash and irritated him, on which he made a short charge out of the dates and I dropped him. Four-and-six danced round him and did a general worry. The first bullet had struck him on the croup and had travelled forward.

This was not the first bull I fired at. I fancy he had left the troop at once and had entered the bush which skirted the mountain.

C—— now came up having heard the reports of my rifle. I told him about the wounded cow that had separated, and he accompanied me to go and look for her.

We returned to the place where she had left the herd, and began to spoor her up. There was a free blood spoor, and I was in hopes that she would be unable

to reach any dense thicket. However, the blood became more and more scanty, and as the ground was rocky shale, it was difficult work following her. As we were in a hurry to get at the other troops of buffaloes, we agreed to give up the slow work of spooring, and to make a free cast forward in the hopes of stirring her.

The ground was a small hog-backed ridge, with bushes sparsely scattered over it. C—— agreed to go along the top, and I went along the left slope, about half-way from the crest to the hollow. We were about 200 yards apart. We went steadily forward, keeping our eyes open, and had been advancing for about three minutes when I heard the report of C——'s rifle, and casting my eyes to the right in his direction saw her coming down the slope almost straight towards me, sending the shale stone flying in all directions as she rattled along. She was running in a lopsided way, the blood was oozing from her mouth, and she carried her head in the peculiar manner a buffalo does when it is vicious; *i.e.*, straight out in front of her, something like a pointer drawing on a covey of birds. My gun-bearer, a brave lad of about fifteen named Moya, called out to me in Caffre, "Take care, sir". I was in hopes that she might not perceive us and might gallop past about twenty yards ahead, thereby giving a nice broadside shot, but unluckily she observed us, and at once swerved and came full steam at us. I knelt down, covered her chest carefully, and dropped her stone dead when she was within about fifteen yards of me.

I had now bagged two buffaloes, but neither of them had been clean killed, and I regretted the loss of the first bull I fired at. My feelings might be described as being a compound of excitement, gratification and annoyance.

Leaving two Caffres to skin her, we returned to the spot at which I had first fired at the troop. There were the other two troops on the mountain side. We now agreed to send Caffres up the mountain to drive the lower troop down the gully. It was agreed that C—— and I were to remain at the base of the gully. We were to enter the bush, C—— was to keep nearer to the right-hand corner, and I was to look after anything that attempted to break away from the left-hand corner. Having posted ourselves, we awaited events. After some half-hour spent in dead silence, Moyen suddenly stooped down and put his ear to the ground, and then jumping up again exclaimed, "They are coming our way".

At last I heard a faint rumbling sound which seemed to be towards our left front, and shortly afterwards Moyen said, "This way, sir ; they are going to break to the left". We ran to the left as hard as we could, but Moyen suddenly pulled up and seizing me by the arm pointed up the gully to our right hand. At about sixty yards off I could just distinguish, through the sticks of the covert, the back of a buffalo. He was standing stock still, apparently listening. The only part of him that was not obscured by intervening bush was a portion of his back, so I took a steady shot at his liver, thinking that if I was a trifle too high I should break his back. As I fired he fell, and I heard him giving his death call. Running up to within forty yards of the spot, I saw he was done for, for he lay on his flank and was banging the ground with his horns.

The breech of my rifle was still open, for I was reloading the right barrel when Moyen again grasped me and pointed.

A large cow was coming from the left. She had

evidently been attracted by the death call of the bull. When she reached him she began routing at him with her horns as he lay on the ground. I hastily inserted a cartridge and gave her a heavy shot behind the shoulder, which did not drop her though, for she went on as hard as she could to the right, making a great rattle in the bush as she did so. The smoke hung a bit, and I could not get in a second barrel. I ran after her and shortly afterwards heard C——'s rifle speak twice. On getting to the spot I found he had finished her off. He had heard my firing and had run to the left in hopes of getting a shot, and thus met her.

I will here observe in parenthesis, that where there is much shooting going on, the greatest danger of all consists in the risk of coming unwarily upon some buffalo that has been wounded by another hunter. In following your own wounded buffalo you are on the *qui vive* and can exercise due caution ; but no skill or knowledge of hunting can protect you from the risk of being, when carelessly strolling along, with your rifle perhaps under your arm at half cock, suddenly charged by a brute that has been wounded by somebody else. More than once this has occurred to me. We now sent our hunters up the hill again to drive down the other troop which was high up the hill side ; but this drive was a failure. I suppose they had heard the sound of the firing, and for that reason objected to coming down the gully. They galloped along the face of the mountain and sidled down into the plain far away to our right.

My friend C——, the prince of hunters, had been singularly unfortunate. I had bagged four buffaloes and he had got no sport excepting in assisting me to finish off a couple of my wounded ones, but he was a capital

good fellow, and knew how to take bad as well as good luck. As a rule he bagged about five head to every two head that I managed to bag. It only shows how luck varies on particular days.

However, as we saw this last troop escaping untouched, a light expression of impatience broke from his lips; "Bless the brutes, I wish they would all drop down dead". When our men returned to the plain, they reported that they had, when on the hillside, seen two troops of buffaloes about a couple of miles behind us on the plain, so we set off at once in that direction.

We cut the spoor of one troop and began to follow it up, but had not proceeded far when we saw human foot-marks. As it was evident that another hunter was before us on the spoor we saw it was no use and gave it up.

We proceeded in the direction of the remaining troop, found their spoor and followed until we sighted them scattered about on a small conical hill which was very slightly raised above the level of the plain. They were on the feed.

It was a nasty place for a stalk. There was hardly any cover, and the grass had been lately burned off, so that as we crawled forward, the stubs of grass ran into the palms of our hands and our knees. I experienced particular inconvenience from this, as I always hunted without trousers, so after crawling for about 100 yards in this fashion, I touched C—— and said, "You go on, I have had enough of it," and sat down to watch the result.

C—— stalked on and had got within about 170 yards when a bull that was feeding on the slope raised its head and spotted him. C—— remained perfectly still

in the hopes that he would resume his feed, but it was of no use, for he gave the alarm, and the whole troop thundered away over the little hill.

However, fortune seemed determined to favour me to-day.

Moyen, who had an eye like a hawk, said, "Run, sir, as hard as you can to the left front, round the shoulder of the hill—they will turn up the wind". So we set off as hard as we could, Moyen carrying my rifle.

Just as we came round the edge of the hill, there, sure enough, was the troop thundering along, they were taking a sort of diagonal course away from us and yet round us. They were almost out of shot already, being a good 250 yards away. My heavy double rifle was only sighted up to 200, but as it was the last shot of the evening, I thought I would try my luck. There was a particularly fine fat bull pounding along last of all the troop, so I took a very full sight and giving him plenty of room ahead, fired.

I did not hear the bullet tell, but Moyen shouted in ecstasy, "He has got it." I was doubtful, but we went up to the spot and spored on for a couple of hundred yards, just over the next rise, and, to my joy, there he lay panting with a ball through his liver. He was a fine fellow, short in the head, thick in the neck and with a body like a barrel. I gave him the *coup de grace*, and Moyen shouted, "Five buffaloes in one day, and all as fine as you could wish to see. The moment I get home I shall present a fowl to the Fates. How lovely it would have been had they only been Basutos!" This was the only occasion on which I succeeded in killing five buffaloes in a day, and I still recall the feat to my mind with pleasure.

We reached our little camp at dark.

The next day we hunted back to the main camp at Gumban, killing on the way. Gumban presented a lively appearance—our tent was formed by a large wagon sail stretched over a ridge pole. Quantities of beef and marrow bones were hanging on all the bushes and a couple of score of hides were pegged out to dry in the sun.

Old Mr. T——, our cook and factotum, welcomed us with: "I'm glad you've had good luck. I'm main glad to see you come back, for I'm always dreading that some day or other you will get more than you bargained for out of these here buffaloes. Here is Umtyityizelwa just arrived in a nice condition. They carried him in a blanket slung on a pole. He will live, but he won't be able to get about for another two or three months."

"Why, what's the matter with him?"

"Oh, nothing particular—only a buffalo been dancing on top of him. Luckily it was too sick to do for him completely, and dropped dead beside him. Catch me going after buffaloes—never—I'd sooner be a Chinese Mandarin (*sic*). And you calls it sport—pretty sport indeed, a getting mashed up like a potato—well, well! some people has curious ideas of what is enjoyable; I suppose it is in the nature of them—give me a quiet pipe, a glass of something warm, and a rubber. There is one comfort, any way, buffaloes doesn't send you in bills when they kills you same as doctors does, and funeral expenses aren't a heavy item in this part of the country."¹

¹ On 6th August the thoughts of the author persistently reverted to his friend John C——, whom he had not seen for fifteen years. He sat down at once and wrote this chapter, and read it to a person who was present. On the following morning, 7th August, he received a copy of the *Natal Witness*, date of issue 10th July, in which was the announcement of C——'s death by a fall from his horse. This may have been a coincidence, but it also suggests more than a coincidence.

CHAPTER III.

MY THREE SEA-COWS.

“N’KOS, there are many seacows at the Umlumazi River—it is four days’ march from here, but if a man went swiftly and carried nothing he could do it in three days.”

Thus spoke Mataffayen, one of my Caffres who had accompanied me from Natal, as we sat round the camp fire conversing on things in general. He was an old elephant hunter, and had lost the forefinger of his right hand by the bursting of an overcharged gun, but he managed to shoot by using the middle finger of his right hand as the trigger finger, and, indeed, could use a waggon-whip just as well as though his hand were uninjured.

After shooting for some time at any particular spot, however good the sport, I used to have a desire to change my hunting ground for a few days, and thus vary the monotony.

“What other game are there, Mataffayen?” I asked in reply.

“There are a great many koodoo, so I am told, sir, and we should be on the edge of the giraffe country. Buffaloes there are also, though they are not so numerous as they are here,” replied Mataffayen.

Accordingly I made up my mind to leave my belongings at Gumban, and to make an expedition with eight Caffres to the river Umlumazi, intending only to stay

long enough to bag a sea-cow or two and a giraffe and then return.

The next day I spent in loading a sufficient quantity of cartridges, and in packing stores for our journey, and on the morning after we started off. It was not my desire to shoot buffaloes *en route* as we should be unable to utilise the hides, not having enough men to enable us to spare any carriers for the purpose of conveying the hides to Gumban.

But on what occasion does one ever go out with a desire to see no game, without at the same time falling in with the very game one wishes to avoid?

Let any one travel through a game country without a rifle, or let him run out of cartridges, or let him travel on Sunday with his mind made up to fire at nothing, and he will be sure to tumble across troops of game that will hardly take the trouble to trot out of his way.

So it was with us ; we had not left Gumban half an hour before we came across the fresh spoor of about 200 buffaloes. I did not diverge from the path to follow them, but at noon we suddenly came upon a group of five old bulls in a hollow. They were right in front of us, about 100 yards off. They gazed in wonderment for a few seconds, and then went off at the heavy lumbering gallop peculiar to buffaloes. It was almost too much for flesh and blood to stand. I aimed at them, saying to myself, "How warm I could make it for you if I wanted to!" and then lowered my rifle with a sigh of annoyance and relief that I had avoided the temptation to commit unwarrantable slaughter.

Towards evening I relieved my feelings by shooting a pallah, for we required some meat for the Caffres and for my two dogs. The next day was a very long hard one.

I fancy we must have covered forty-five miles, for we were going from sunrise to sunset, only stopping to rest for a quarter of an hour during the heat of the day. We saw nothing but pallahs and zebras, for the country was rather dry, and most of the game had moved away nearer to the Libombo range of hills. The journey was a very tiring one, for we followed a native path only about a foot in width, and at every slight incline the rain-water had channelled the path until its cross section was shaped like the segment of a circle, so that in walking one's ankles were bent inwards and the heels outwards. Any one who had travelled along a native path will have experienced this inconvenience.

In the evening we arrived at some kraals and camped for the night. I doubt whether any European had ever before camped at these kraals. Our fires were surrounded by inquisitive groups of natives, who examined guns, blankets and all our impedimenta, giving vent all the time to expressions of astonishment at the wisdom of the white men who could do all things. The girls were never tired of examining my watch, which I firmly believe they either thought to be a creature endued with life, or that motion had been imparted to it by exercise of magical powers with which they freely credited us.

The head man of the village came and sat down in silence for some time, and then, having exchanged salutations, broke out into a string of compliments: "The sun shines very brightly to day. How honoured is my village! Wow, but I have seen wonderful sights—methinks I have seen Umswaz!" Now Umswaz was their great chief from whom the nation derived their designation of Amaswasi or people of Umswaz.

I questioned the old gentleman concerning the pros-

pects of sport at the Umlumazi, the distance to it, and so forth; but he was totally ignorant of anything more than a day's journey from his own village, and replied to all my queries by saying, "I do not know, we never go there".

These people seemed to live a quiet, uneventful, isolated existence. The most exciting factor in their lives seemed to be the possibility of being invaded at any moment by the Ngwani section of the Amaswazi.

The Ngwani people are the military tribe of Amaswazi; they live in the healthier belt of country just out of, and higher up than, the thorns. They are the king's own people, though he is suzerain over a large extent of country. From time to time he sends his Ngwani Caffres to invade his vassals dwelling in the thorns, just to remind them that he is still in existence and is able to exercise all the *de facto* powers of a ruler. Some pretext is always found for invading his vassals. Sometimes it is that his cattle have fallen sick—if so, it is attributed to spells cast upon them by the natives dwelling in the thorns, and it becomes necessary to invade them and take away their cattle. Or if the king has indigestion it is immediately put down to his having been bewitched by somebody living in the thorns, and accordingly they must be murdered. If any of the royal family die, then a number of the unfortunate thorn people must be killed, in order to produce the amount of genuine weeping which is considered an adequate and respectable accompaniment to a royal funeral.

Hence the wits of the thorn dwellers are continually exercised to find means of dodging the king's people, and the king's people on the other hand are always

cogitating on the best way of taking the thorn dwellers unawares. I am speaking of the times when Ludonga was king. Of course now, since European influence is extending in the country, it may be very different.

All Caffres have the most unbounded faith in the innyanga (or moon man). He generally combines the practice of medicine with divination. He usually arrays himself in a grotesque costume and adorns himself with bunches of feathers, bits of wood, bones, and various medicinal roots, until he looks like a peripatetic Christmas-tree. All this affects the imagination of his patients or of those who wish to consult him on mysteries.

Innyangas are not invariably hypocrites. Many of them are as strongly imbued with belief in their own powers as the dupes who consult them, and I will not go so far as to deny that some of them may not possess clairvoyant faculties, for I have heard of remarkable things done by them. In some instances even Europeans, while pooh-poohing their claims to powers of divination, have consulted them with successful results.

I do not attempt to explain this, or to put it down to coincidence, chance or genuine clairvoyance. All I know is that such instances of successful consultation have occurred.

The usual mode of procedure is as follows. We will assume that a Caffre has lost a black and white cow and wishes to recover it. He goes off to consult the innyanga. The innyanga puts a series of questions to him, which the Caffre replies to by a stereotyped expression. Now if the innyanga happens to be near the mark, the tone of voice in which his client replies betrays that he has made a good shot. It is like the children's game of hot and cold.

On the supposititious case given above, the questions and replies will run something as follows.

"My friend has come to consult me?"

"Yes" (rather warmly).

"My friend is ill?"

"Yes" (coldly).

"There is sickness in my friend's private family?"

"Yes" (coldly).

"My friend has lost something?"

"Yes" (warmly).

"My friend has lost goods?"

"Yes" (coldly).

"He has lost cattle?"

"Yes" (warmly).

"It is a black cow?"

"Yes" (rather coldly).

"It is a red cow?"

"Yes" (coldly).

"It is a white cow?"

"Yes" (warmly).

"It is a black and white cow?"

"Yes" (very warmly).

"It ran away yesterday?"

"Yes" (very warmly).

"My friend bred the cow?"

"Yes" (coldly).

"He bought the cow?"

"Yes" (warmly).

"He bought it a year ago?"

"Yes" (coldly).

"He bought it a month ago?"

"Yes" (very warmly).

"He bought it from a place in the north?"

"Yes" (coldly).

"From a place in the south?"

"Yes" (very warmly).

"He bought it from so and so's district?" (naming it).

"Yes" (coldly).

"He bought it from another district?" (naming it).

"Yes" (very warmly).

"He bought it from so and so's kraal?" (naming it).

"Yes" (coldly).

"He bought it from another kraal?" (naming it).

"Yes, yes, yes" (very warmly).

The innyanga now appears to be plunged in thought—perhaps he does a divination to clarify his ideas—finally he addresses his client as follows:—

"My friend bought a black and white cow from so and so's kraal (naming it). If my friend goes to that kraal he will find the cow, for it has run back there; and now I will trouble my friend to hand over my fees."

The client thinks at once, "Heavens, what a wonderful man he is—how did he know that I had bought a black and white cow from so and so's kraal and that it has run back there?" he pays his fees cheerfully and goes off in search of the cow, probably finding it at the place indicated, and the next day the country rings with the fame of the innyanga.

The innyanga has a keen knowledge of human nature and utilises it. One successful case obliterates the memory of many unsuccessful ones.

When he fails in a divination he tells his client either that he does not know how to inquire of him properly or that the Amahlosi (Fates) are not propitious. This excuse always goes down. The foregoing mode of divination is employed in all sorts of cases, loss of goods or cattle, causes of sickness, etc., etc.

I once had a Caffre who was a very good shot. I suppose his nerve became affected or his liver got out of order, for he took to missing or wounding everything he fired at. He was convinced that he was bewitched, and went off to consult an innyanga, who told him that there was a certain old bull buffalo with three white hairs in his tail. He must go on hunting in a certain district until he met this buffalo, and having killed it, he must extract the three white hairs from his tail and burn them, on which the spell would be broken and his skill with the rifle would return. Now the innyanga reasoned cunningly in this case. Every old bull buffalo has white hairs in his tail. When my hunter had begun to kill a sufficient number of buffaloes to secure an old bull, it would mean that his nervous system had recovered its tone and the probabilities were that he would go on shooting as well as he formerly did.

My hunter was thoroughly convinced of the soundness of the advice, and hunted patiently until he got an old bull with the requisite number of white hairs in his tail. His shooting powers returned to him, and he paid the innyanga's fee and ever after extolled him as an infallible clairvoyant.

The innyanga plays a great part in Caffre life, and most acts of barbarity perpetrated amongst Caffres have their origin in his divinations. Few persons are supposed to die a natural death. It is generally put down to the machinations of wizards. Recourse is had to the innyanga. As a rule, the persons who inquire of him already have their suspicions, and by the method I have just illustrated the innyanga is naturally led to point out as guilty the very person or persons against whom there is already an *a priori* suspicion in the minds of the inquirers.

The death of any leading member of the royal family is almost always followed by an appeal to the innyangas, and the result is that a number of innocent persons are massacred. I have often attempted without success to shake the belief of Caffres in witchcraft and the efficacy of divination.

A conversation I once had with Segetwayo, a leading chief in Western Zululand, has indelibly impressed itself on my memory. I called on him as I was returning to Natal, and the conversation ran as follows:—

“How are you, head-man, friend?”

“Oh just so-so—but I am terribly troubled by the witches. I have had a pain in my stomach, and two of my children have been ill.”

“Well, why don’t you do something to prevent it?”

“So I do. No one can tax me with neglect of duty in that respect. I have been killing witches right and left, but the more of them I kill off the more there seem to be;” and he gave a great sigh.

“Now, Segetwayo, listen to me. In the Zulu country you are always killing witches. In the queen’s territory we do not kill on that score. Witches therefore ought to be more plentiful in the queen’s territory than in Zululand, and therefore the death rate from witchcraft should be greater in the queen’s territory. But it is well known that it is not so, for our country is just as healthy as Zululand. This must prove to you that your ideas as to the mortality arising from witchcraft are erroneous.”

“Ah, that is all very fine; but the witches are afraid of the queen, and do not practise their arts in Natal as they do in Zululand.”

I could get nothing more out of him. As I was

leaving, he recalled me and made a complaint, to wit: "Two of my wives ran away into Natal. I sent four fat oxen to the Border agent, with a request that he would be good enough to return my wives. He declined to do so, saying that having taken refuge under the British flag, my wives were now British subjects, and it was not in his power to return them to me. I consider this to be very discourteous. Had any of his wives run away from him and come to me, I would have returned them at once, without waiting for him to send me his compliments and a present of cattle."

It is a hopeless task to attempt to overcome Caffre prejudices.

The next morning, just as we were preparing to resume our journey, the head-man of the village came and sat down before me. He stated that he wished to consult me on a matter that was very near his heart, and hoped that I should not be offended.

I naturally thought that it must be very important, and begged him to make me his confidant. After much circumlocution, he very diffidently asked me to give him three charges of gunpowder. I granted his request readily, and by the expression of his face he seemed sorry that he had not asked me for more while he was about it.

Caffres are inveterate beggars. They are just like children, and ask you to give them anything they take a fancy to.

We travelled all that day, and on the next day began to get into the koodoo country. Two troops of koodoo cows and young bulls crossed our path, but as none of them carried good heads I would not fire. Towards the evening as we were approaching our camping ground,

three large koodoo bulls broke out of a bush, and cantered across a piece of open ground. I fired the first barrel, dropping one dead as I thought, and with the second barrel hit another heavily. He galloped on for about fifty yards, pulled up short, turned round to look at us, began rocking and staggering, and then fell on his flank quite dead. My attention was taken up by him, and I did not reload as rapidly as I should have done. Moyaen shouted out, "The other one is getting up." I turned round and saw him struggling to regain his legs, but before I could reload, he managed to rise and gallop off into the bush.

I can only account for it by my bullet having grazed his spinal cord (probably somewhere about the neck), thus temporarily paralysing or stunning him.

The koodoo which I killed had a fine head. I would say to all hunters: "Be suspicious of the animal that collapses suddenly to the shot and afterwards begins to struggle; but have no fears about the animal that runs hard on receiving the shot, and after going a certain distance pulls up and sinks, for he will never rise again".

On the fourth day we began to approach the Umlumazi River. We saw several spoors of black rhinoceros, also spoor of a troop of eland. About three in the afternoon we reached the river and set to work at once to make our camp. I was very anxious to explore the river, so after having seen to the camping, I started up stream, at the same time instructing Mataffayen to go down stream and examine spoor. I ordered him not to disturb hippopotami, and not to fire a shot at all within a mile of the river banks, but merely to gather information and return to camp.

Leaving the two dogs tied up in camp, I strolled off

with Moyen, who carried my heavy double rifle. He was a mere lad of about fifteen, with a big head and lanky limbs. He was attired in a little piece of string round his waist, two little skins about the size of your hand, and a smile—*voilà tout!* He carried an assegai and a small axe. He was born in the thorn country, but his parents were of the warlike Ngwani tribe, and the lad inherited all the gallantry which has enabled his tribe to make their war shields respected far and wide throughout the country. He was a very keen sportsman, and of a very affectionate disposition. He ran away from home to follow me. He was a very cheerful lad, but the saying goes, "There is a skeleton in every closet". One day I saw Moyen brooding, and asked him what was the matter. He answered me as follows:—"I am sorrowful because I have never yet killed anybody, but I hope to do so as soon as I am big enough to go on the warpath. Do you think I look big enough, sir?"

He behaved on one occasion uncommonly well when I was all but killed by a lioness, and I promoted him to be my gun-bearer, a thing of which he was excessively proud.

We observed spoor of sea-cows everywhere; but as these creatures travel about a good deal at night, it was difficult from the mere observation of spoor to judge of their whereabouts during the daytime. I came to where buffaloes had drunk that morning, and twice saw water-buck, but did not fire as I wished to avoid alarming the sea-cows.

The river was a rocky one, and could be crossed at almost any point where there were rapids. When I say it might be crossed, I mean that one could get over by wading waist deep; but the crocodiles were so numerous

that no man in his senses would attempt such a thing. I have never seen crocodiles so numerous, and I suspect that the river takes its name from that fact. Umlumazi is from the root *luma*, to bite. By free translation one might call it the biting river.

Here and there it formed deep pools of considerable length, and about a hundred yards in width.

While skirting the bank of one of these pools we came to a sea-cow path. Moyen examined it, and announced that a sea-cow had quite recently entered the pool, as the sand at the spot where he had slid into the water was still wet from the effect of the splash caused by his entering the water.

We ensconced ourselves on the bank and watched for some time. At last Moyen touched me and pointed. On casting a glance in the direction indicated I saw the head of a sea-bull rise out of the pool. The nostrils, eyes, and ears appeared first, and then he rose until the crown of his head was quite a foot above the surface of the water. He was directly facing us, and was apparently gazing at us. The points of his two huge under tusks were visible, and I longed to own them. Taking him between the eyes, I fired. The bull gave a smart slap as it struck him and he sunk instantly, but whether I had killed him or not I cannot say. I think not, for the next morning I sent a man to examine the pool, but he returned saying that he could not see the body floating in the pool.

It is one thing to hit a sea-cow, and quite another thing to kill him. Indeed, I consider him to be the toughest animal in creation. He did not show any more, and had probably gone under the other bank, where he could protrude his nostrils and breathe with safety.

As all prospect of sport seemed to be over, I walked along the bank until I came to a place where it shelved down to the water's edge with a gradual slope. I sat down on a block of stone to watch.

Soon I saw an object on the surface of the water, somewhat resembling a piece of dead timber drifting along; but it had this peculiarity, it drifted against the current. On looking more narrowly I perceived the nostrils, the eyes and the serrated back of a large crocodile. Two more crocodiles were coming down stream in a similar way.

When they had reached a point opposite to me, they remained still, evidently observing me carefully.

It gives one a sort of uneasiness being watched by these uncanny saurians, so I stood up, but they did not move. I was quite close to the water's edge, and, being in a vacant mood, I tapped the brink of the water with the toe of my boot. They instantly disappeared, but in another minute or so reappeared. This suggested to my mind that their sense of hearing must be uncommonly acute. So I again cautiously placed the sole of my boot upon the water, taking care to make no splash as I did so. They instantly disappeared, nor did they reappear until I had withdrawn my boot from the water. I am convinced that they were watching me, in hopes that I should swim across the river, and also that they distinctly heard what to me was inaudible, *viz.*, the sound of my shoe touching the water. Resuming my seat on the stone I watched for another half-hour, but seeing nothing of the sea-cows began to think of returning home.

Glancing over my right shoulder I saw a curious sight. In the bush not ten yards from me was a bush-buck apparently petrified by astonishment. He was standing

stock still, with his head raised, and was staring hard at me. He had come down to drink, and was taking the measure of the first European he had ever seen in his life. I slowly took up my rifle and raised it inch by inch to my left shoulder until I covered him. He never moved during this operation. I shot him.

The bush-buck is a handsome little antelope, about the size of a roedeer, and has bayonet-shaped horns. He has a reputation for being dangerous, and there are many instances of dogs and hunters having been killed by a wounded bush-buck. We now retraced our steps to camp. On the way I heard the sound of Mataffayen's gun. He always put in a fistfull of powder, so that you could hear the report a couple of miles off. I was very much annoyed at his disobedience of orders, and on arriving in camp gave him a sample of true British rhetoric, but became mollified on hearing his explanation.

He wished to cross the river at a point where the water was not more than two feet deep. At this spot there were two or three small islands of reeds in the river, and it was his intention to wade from island to island and thus gain the farther bank. He had reached the first island, and was just about to cross the channel of water which separated it from the next island when a crocodile ejected a quantity of water from its mouth at him, and then made a dash to seize him, on which he fired at it.

This may or may not have been true. The Caffres who accompanied him vouched for it, and stood examination satisfactorily. I have often been told that the crocodile waits until its prey stoops down its head to drink, and then ejects a lot of water into the animal's

face in order to daze it, while at the same moment he seizes it by the head. I am bound to say, though, that an instance of this never came under my personal observation. Mataffayen never deceived me, and I am not unphilosophical enough to deny the possibility of an occurrence on the ground that I did not see it myself.

Mataffayen had seen plenty of spoor, but had not come across any sea-cows.

The next morning I sent off Caffres at dawn of day both up and down stream to gather information, remaining in camp myself to await news.

About ten o'clock two Caffres returned from up stream, reporting that about six miles higher up, the river narrowed considerably, and that they had marked down two sea-cows (a cow and large calf) in a pool not more than forty yards in width.

I set off at once, taking the dogs with me, as on my return journey I intended to make a small *détour* and hunt back to camp.

We reached the spot, but no sea-cows were visible in the pool. The river could be crossed here with safety both above and below the pool, so I sent Caffres across with instructions to proddle under the banks with poles, and thus drive out the sea-cows if they were skulking. The sea-cows were soon afoot. There were two of them. A cow and a young bull nearly as big as herself. He was evidently her son. The water was very clear, and I could see them swimming along under the surface. They would not show heads, but kept swimming about up and down the pool, and we raced along the banks beside them to prevent their getting under the banks for shelter and air. I think they must have swum for fully five minutes before they were compelled to rise for

breath. The old cow rose first, showing her muzzle only. I gave her both barrels, on which she dived and came up again with a plunge, showing head and shoulders, but unfortunately I was not reloaded, or I could have finished her off then and there.

They then managed somehow or other to disappear, nor could our utmost efforts with poles succeed in dislodging them from their place of refuge under the farther bank. The water was deepest there, and it was evidently there that they had hidden themselves.

I then ordered the reeds upon the farther bank to be set on fire. This had the effect of stirring them at once. The fire seemed to have terrified them, for they were a long time before they came up to breathe, and when they did so, they came up simultaneously, both showing full heads.

I gave them a quick right and left. The cow doubled up instantly and sank; but the young bull began floundering about like a fresh run salmon on a fly, and then dived again, and I lost sight of him for a few moments. Presently I heard a cry from one of my Caffres whom I had stationed at the head of the pool, "This way, sir; he is coming out".

I raced along the bank to the head of the pool, and sure enough there he was making his way up the rapid, which was not more than two feet deep at this point. He got over the ground with amazing agility for such a ponderous animal, and though he was in the water and had to gallop over rocks, and I was on a firm, dry bank I had to run hard to get abreast of him. He galloped along, sending the spray flying in all directions. I gave him both barrels behind the shoulder, at which he pulled up, and then did an acrobatic performance which I

should have deemed impossible for a creature of his build and weight. He went head over heels, and rolled over and over with such swiftness that when I had reloaded I could hardly cover him surely enough to give the *coup de grace* in the way it should be given. Just as I was pressing the trigger, his struggles ceased, and he fell dead. His capers reminded one somewhat of a rabbit which has been half stunned by a single grain of shot somewhere about the head. The large cow was stone dead.

I left Mataffayen to superintend the skinning and the extraction of the teeth. The hide of the sea-cow is very valuable for sjamboks. It is peeled off him in long strips about a foot wide, running from neck to croup, and the bacon is peeled off with the hide, that is to say adhering to it. Afterwards the bacon is separated from the hide, and the hide is then cut into strips and pegged out to dry.

The hide is very thick and firm along the upper portion of his body, so much so that a soft lead ball propelled by two and a half drachms of powder from a Snider-Enfield rifle will not penetrate, but on the legs and belly it is not much thicker than that of an elephant.

I left the river and made a *détour* on my way back to camp. The dogs were running loose. Four-and-six went into a thicket and found an old buffalo bull, but was at once fiercely charged. He came out with his back arched and his tail clapped between his legs, from which I inferred that the buffalo had been both uncivil and exceptionally active in his attentions. The buffalo broke away on the other side of the thicket, and I did not get a shot.

As I neared the camp, I came across two elands going down to drink, and making a careful stalk got within

eighty yards, and bagged the pair of them. Neither carried particularly good heads, but we required some beef in camp.

On the second night after the killing of the two sea-cows an unfortunate occurrence happened. My dogs ran loose in camp, as it never occurred to me that they could come to any harm. One of them went down to the river bank at night to drink. I am glad to say it was not Four-and-six. We heard a loud howl, and as the dog did not return, the Caffres went down with torches, and returned reporting that the dog had been taken by a crocodile. I tied up Four-and-six, which seemed to annoy the poor fellow, for he considered it his privilege to run loose and rush out at night-time barking furiously at anything unusual. However, I pacified him by having him tied up close to me.

On the fourth day, having been unsuccessful in discovering any more sea-cows, I determined to go down to the junction of the Umlumazi with the Inkomokazi River. When we had travelled about three hours down stream, the river got very much wider, and there were large sand banks here and there above the surface. On one of these I counted no less than eighteen crocodiles basking in the sun.

A little farther on we came to some little falls. The river here ran amongst boulders of granite rock. Moyén suddenly pulled me down and pointed excitedly, saying, "There is a sea-bull—such a big one!" At first I looked at the water, and seeing nothing turned my eyes to the rocks, but still failed to observe anything, until Moyén showed me what looked for all the world like a rock, but on careful inspection turned out to be a great sea-bull fast asleep.

He was on an island of sand and rocks about midway across the river. By careful wading amongst rocks, I saw that I could get within about forty yards of him ; but the river was treacherous. After a short consultation, we agreed to try. Moyer went first, assegai in hand, both to probe the depth of the water, and also to be ready to repel the assaults of crocodiles. I handed my rifle to a Caffre, and taking a pole in one hand and an assegai in the other waded after Moyer. In some places where the water rushed between rocks it nearly carried us off our legs. The stones were also slippery, and twice I went a cropper, getting wet through, but each time was pulled upon my legs again by a Caffre. Anything more infernal than stalking in a swift and rocky stream can hardly be imagined.

There was a big boulder which it was my intention to reach if I could. I also took care to keep it as much as possible between ourselves and the sea-bull. We had nearly reached the boulder when we met with an obstruction which nearly spoiled our sport. The channel of water on this side of the boulder was only about eight feet in width, but it was quite four feet in depth, and the water ran so swiftly that I feared I should be carried away.

Moyer, however, took my pole, and finding a sure footing for it in some crevice in the stones, waded across, propping himself by the pole, and mounted the boulder. He then threw back the pole to me. I managed to fix it amongst the stones and began to cross, but when midway the footing was so slippery that, like the chief of the apostles, I began to be afraid.

(By the way, this is almost the only thing I resembled him in, unless it was also that we had a mutual taste for fishing.)

However, Moyen stretched out the handle of his assegai, and by grasping it I managed to steady myself sufficiently to get across without mishap.

The next Caffre brought over my rifle. I now climbed upon the boulder, and lying on my face peered over. Yes, there he was fast asleep and almost broadside on. Distance is deceiving. From the shore he appeared to be not more than forty yards from our boulder, but he was at least fifty-five yards off. This seems near enough for anything; but it is necessary to remember that a sea-cow must be shot exactly in the right spot to an inch, and it is difficult to make fine shooting with large bore rifles and heavy charges of powder.

There was no necessity for hurry, so I waited to allow my nerves to regain their steadiness, and then sat down to take a shot at him.

I shot him between the eye and the ear, killing him stone dead.

He was an immense brute, and must have weighed half as much again as the cow I had previously killed.

But now came the question: How were we to get at him? I knew it was hopeless to attempt to secure the hide, but I wanted the two large curved tusks in the under jaw.

We returned to our own shore, and held a council. Moyen and another Caffre agreed to make a raft and launch it higher up stream and drift down upon the island where the sea-cow lay dead. They averred that they could guide the raft with poles, and had no fears of the crocodiles if I would lend them my single-barrelled express and a dozen rounds of ball. They said the crocodiles were not very bold during the heat of the day, and that they could frighten them by occasionally firing a shot.

In about an hour's time they made a very creditable raft, by lashing the trunks of saplings together with bark thongs.

They launched it and were soon in mid-stream, bearing down upon the island. At intervals they fired shots and kept up a perpetual hallooing to intimidate the crocodiles. They reached the island, cut out the tusks, and again launching their raft drifted down stream and arrived at our bank of the river at a point some distance lower down.

It was too late now to return to our camp, so we had to choose a convenient spot for resting the night. I had given up all intentions of going on to the crocodile river for giraffe; and having got as many sea-cows as I wanted, I made up my mind to return to Gumban without delay.

At the spot where we camped down there was a broad belt of reeds between us and the river, through which the Caffres cut a path in order to go and draw water.

We were very much bothered by the hyænas. I had shot a water-buck for the Caffres, and as there was no shooting going on in this district, I suppose the hyænas got rather hungry. They were at any rate very bold. One of them entered the camp and ran away with the hide of the water-buck.

I had brought some strychnine with me as a protection against this pest of hyænas, and my Caffres begged me to use it, or else we should be kept awake all night by the brutes.

So I took a piece of meat, and rubbing strychnine on it threw it on the ground about twenty yards from the camp. We soon heard a hyæna making most ghastly noises, and then he seemed to have gone down to the

river, for we heard his cries from that direction. An animal poisoned by strychnine invariably goes to water.

I wanted a hyæna skin for foreslock (*i.e.*, point of whip-lash), so taking torches we went down to the reeds. Four-and-six rushed in and began barking furiously. We made our way to the place, and on holding up the torches saw a large hyæna lying on its flank, but still alive. I borrowed an assegai from a Caffre, and drove it into him. He turned his head and gave a snap at the shaft, crushing it into splinters, and the dents of his teeth were visible upon the iron spike of the blade which fits into the socket of the shaft. The hyæna has an almost incredible power of jaw, and will crack the largest bones without hardly an effort.

The hyænas follow the lions and finish the carcase the moment the lions have had enough. Sometimes, however, the hyænas are rather too eager, and annoy the lions by approaching and stealing bits of meat while the lions are still at their feed.

I have been told that the lion rids himself of the nuisance in the following way. He throws a piece of meat aside. When the lion is looking the other way the hyæna dodges in and rushes off with the meat. Presently the lion throws another piece of meat, this time a little nearer. The hyæna takes that also. At last the lion throws a piece very near indeed. The hyæna, having become reckless, makes a dash at this also, but the lion wheels round and lays him low with a pat of his paw and a growl of annoyance.

I remember at the Usutu on one occasion hearing at night time the cries of a hyæna in pain, mingled with an occasional short growl from a lion. This went on for about twenty minutes before it ceased.

Next morning we saw the spoor of the lions, and there lay the carcase of a hyæna bitten across the neck, and marked by the claws of the lions. They had evidently caught it, and had played with it for some time before killing it. I suppose this was done in revenge for the annoyance they sustained from the hyænas.

The following day I reached my camp, and packing up started on my return journey to Gumban. I left two Caffres to take care of the sea-cow hides, promising to send back carriers from Gumban to bring the hides as soon as they were dry enough.

CHAPTER IV.

VARIOUS.

ON the ensuing morning I started on the return journey to Gumban.

If ever one happens to be especially in need of meat the game seems to avoid one. I relied upon shooting enough for our consumption *en route*, but found that the natives had been burning the grass all over the country through which we had to pass, and in consequence that the game had been entirely driven away.

We went for two days without anything to eat. On the evening of the second day, I devoured a whole pot of jam which our factotum had thoughtfully inserted amongst the stores when I left Gumban. I remember it was black currant, a jam which I detest, for when I was a boy it was cunningly used as a vehicle for the concealment of nauseous medicines periodically administered to me. On the morning of the third day I shot a blue wildebeeste. It was a great fluke. He was standing broadside on at what I estimated to be a range of 450 yards. He had already seen us, so that to stalk him was impracticable. I aimed for his shoulder, but struck him on the root of the neck, breaking the spine and killing him on the spot.

The blue wildebeeste are very wary, and the Caffres have a saying that every wildebeeste has a maggot in his brain, which warns him of the approach of danger.

I have never opened the skull of one to verify this, but I have seen what is almost as extraordinary, *viz.*, in the forelock of an eland bull a small green snake which sometimes takes up its residence there.

On our arrival at Gumban we found they had been having good sport, but that some of the troops of buffaloes, worried by the continuous shooting, had crossed over the Libombo Range and had gone down to Amatongaland.

Up to date I had killed twenty-eight buffaloes, and made up my mind to hunt at Gumban until I had killed forty. The first night of our arrival at Gumban was an exceedingly enjoyable one, and we sat up until past midnight recounting mutual experiences since we had parted. The hour of sundown in a hunting camp is always pleasant, for then it is that the hunters return one by one, and laying aside their rifles gather round the fire to relate the events of the day. Nor are such gatherings devoid of the comic element.

I remember once having in our party a young and very inexperienced Englishman, who invariably returned without a kill, but who by his own account must have done a terrific amount of wounding. Nearly everything he fired at was very hard hit, but somehow or other always managed to get away. He used to bring home blades of grass with spots of blood upon them as vouchers for the correctness of his aim. He fired from the right shoulder, and as his left eye was the strongest of the two, I fear he never could become a rifleman. He was moreover a most dangerous adversary towards humans with his rifle. One day I determined to show him some sport, and asked him to accompany me, to which he gladly consented. I observed that he handled his rifle in a peculiar way. He would carry it at full

cock, and while playing with the locks would wave the muzzle around at the company generally.

At last I remonstrated: "Look here, old fellow, I don't particularly wish to see down the barrels of your rifle, so if you would kindly refrain from carrying it aimed at my brains, I should be much obliged". He apologised, blushed, and timidly directed the muzzle at the pit of my stomach.

"No, no; carry it at the slope, so that the muzzle is always in the air, and don't you think you had better let the hammers down to half cock?"

He essayed to do this, but in his confusion placed the thumb on the right hammer and the finger on the left trigger, and let it off, at the same time dropping the weapon and gazing at me with a sort of expression as though to say, "Dear me, how very extraordinary!" I know it is wrong to be angry with one's brother without a cause; but really this was very trying, and my oratory was equal to the occasion.

He would speak when silence was required. If there was a hole anywhere he was sure to tumble into it, and the way in which he trod upon dry sticks and cracked them would have annoyed a saint. I began to think that if we had any dangerous work to do, he would be an encumbrance rather than an aid, so I put on the steam and travelled at a great rate in the hopes of tiring him out. Notwithstanding my remonstrances he would keep on drinking too much water, and soon began to feel the effects. At last he said, "When are you going to halt for luncheon?"

"Not until we have done some killing," I replied.

"Well then, I think I shall work my way slowly back to camp, for I am feeling hungry and tired."

I gave him his share of luncheon and saw him depart with a feeling of relief, for really nothing is so depressing as to have a companion who is incapable of taking care of himself, and for whose safety you are in a measure responsible while he is with you.

One evening he came into camp with an air of triumph. Handing over his rifle to be cleaned, he stalked up to the fire with both arms akimbo, as though to say, "Now let nobody talk. By George, I have done something to day"!

"What sport?" I inquired.

"Oh, an impala."

"Well done at last! At what range?"

"Three hundred yards."

"How did you manage it? Tell us all about it. Your rifle is only sighted for 200. What elevation did you give?"

"Oh, I required no elevation. *I was standing on an ant-hill.*"

On another occasion he came in announcing that he had fired at two lions without tails and had nearly killed them both; but on making inquiry from one of the natives who accompanied him we found that they were hyænas.

Mataffayen accompanied me one day to show me where he had left the spoor of some buffaloes on the previous evening. We followed the tracks for a long distance, and the spoor freshened rapidly. At last it entered a long, narrow thicket in which we judged that they would stand for the day. We agreed that Mataffayen should follow on the spoor and enter the thicket, and that I should post myself outside, keeping about 300 yards ahead of Mataffayen, as the buffaloes would be nearly sure to break out and try to run up the wind.

I went ahead and posted myself, when I heard the report of Mataffayen's gun, and then a fierce roaring of lions. Mataffayen was hallooing out in Caffre: "No, you don't! Get back, you brutes! Ah, would you!"

I ran up as hard as I could, but as I ran the roaring suddenly ceased, and Moyon pointed back to the other end of the covert. There were two lions going away as hard as they could.

On getting up to Mataffayen, I found him trembling with excitement. It appears that while following the traces of the buffaloes he observed a lion and lioness recumbent under the bush. The male lion was lying on his flank, with the back of his head turned towards Mataffayen, who aimed between his ears with the idea of shooting him through the brain; but his gun being, as usual, overcharged, threw the bullet too high, and thus perhaps grazed the lion and irritated him. The lions sprang up, and wheeling round charged up to within a few feet of Mataffayen, but, being checked by his determined attitude, stopped and contented themselves with roaring at him. His position was rendered more critical by the conduct of the other natives, who bolted, leaving Mataffayen to face the lions. I asked him why he did not shoot the male lion through the head with his second barrel; and he replied that there being two of them, if he had killed one, the other would have sprung upon him and killed him.

I remember, in connection with the subject of lions, a most melancholy incident, which I did not witness myself, but which was related to me upon the best authority. I may not give the details with absolute correctness, for the story was told me many years ago by those who were present on the occasion.

John E —— a bold and experienced hunter, had completed a successful season amongst the great game in this part of Amaswaziland. He was returning to his waggons with the intention of going home. Sport was all over for the season, and doubtless his mind was dwelling on the pleasant prospect of rejoining friends and kindred.

The party were travelling along a native path. They saw a troop of four or five lions not very far from the path ; one of these was a large black-maned lion, and E —— proposed to diverge from the path and take a shot at them. Some of the party objected, but gave way to E ——'s wish, as he wanted to kill the black-maner. They approached the lions, who perceived them and began to make off. They fired, I think killing one lion, and breaking the shoulder of the black-maner. He separated from the rest and went down towards a hollow which lay to the right.

E —— had a native hunter, named Betyan, who was armed with a single-barrelled musket. The party followed the lion, but Betyan, being fleet of foot and courageous, managed to cross the hollow and thus head the lion, who only having three legs to run with could not get over the ground very fast.

The lion descended into the hollow and was mounting the farther bank when he met Betyan face to face. Betyan fired and knocked the lion backwards into the hollow, smashing one side of his lower jaw with the bullet.

The lion turned straight back in the direction from which he had just come, and met the party who were following him. The suddenness of the *rencontre* appears to have startled the party. There was a cry of, "Look out, there he comes back again" !

In the pursuit the party had got considerably divided. The lion, being infuriated by his wounds, on perceiving his enemies at once made for them. The natives climbed into trees. One native was in a small tree and could not get up more than eight or ten feet from the ground. The lion rushed up to the tree. His shoulder being broken, he could not spring up to seize the man, so he contented himself with bellowing and roaring at him. The man was terrified and cried out for assistance. The Europeans were all running up to his assistance, but E—— arrived first. On seeing E—— the lion left the native and made for E——, who levelled his rifle. Unfortunately it was one of those rifles with a safety catch behind the hammer. E—— had locked the catch, and in his hurry had forgotten to unlock it. The lion came on and on, and E—— pressed the trigger, but of course could not fire. The lion knocked him over and began mauling him fearfully. Betyan, who had run after the lion, reloading as he went along, now came up, and shot the lion dead as he was in the act of mauling E——.

E—— was alive, but his injuries were of such a terrible nature that in a short time he expired.

The depression of spirits amongst the party can be better imagined than described.

But to revert. We resumed the pursuit of the buffaloes, but did not come up with them until it was nearly dark. I did a stalk and killed a fine cow.

The water-bottle was empty, and we were miles from any drinking-place. Night was coming on and we had to encamp where we were. I was terribly thirsty.

The Caffres began to extract the water from the grass bag of the buffalo. It was a disagreeable idea, but it seemed to quench their thirst. I know nothing so trying

as exposure to thirst, and at last I was tempted to follow the example of the Caffres. However, I strained the liquid through a handkerchief to render it a little clearer. It had a bitter taste, but it had the desired effect of mitigating my thirst.

One day I was hunting amongst the gullies at the foot of the Libombo. I was descending into a nullah, and had not the remotest idea that a buffalo was within miles of me. Suddenly Four-and-six dashed past me into the nullah with a growl, and then before me, within ten yards, uprose an old bull buffalo, grey with age. He glanced at me for a moment, but, fortunately for me, thought better of it, and wheeling round made along the bed of the nullah. I raised the rifle and pressed the trigger, but it was half cock. I had to remove the rifle from my shoulder to put it at full cock, and then managed to give him a ball in the croup just as he was disappearing. He managed to mount the other bank of the nullah, and Four-and-six brought him to bay there. One of my Caffres incautiously ran up the other bank of the nullah to mark the buffalo, but came suddenly upon him. The buffalo instantly charged him. The Caffre sprang into a small tree, but could not climb more than a certain height from the ground. When I crossed the nullah and arrived on the scene, there was the Caffre embracing the tree, and there was the buffalo, making his utmost endeavours to reach him with his horns.

Had the Caffre been six inches lower down he would have been gored to a certainty. Four-and-six was doing his best to create a diversion by biting the buffalo's heels, but it was so enraged by the sight of the Caffre that it took no notice of the dog's attentions.

I killed the bull with four shots.

It may seem strange to some people that large game sometimes require so many shots to bring them down. The African game is the toughest of all. I have seen a buffalo take fourteen shots before he fell, and then he had succeeded in killing our best dog and maiming another. It is very curious how some animals will drop instantly to a shot, while others will receive shot after shot, only giving a slight rock each time they are struck.

There is a popular fallacy that an animal shot through the heart must drop dead on the spot. It is nothing of the kind. I have seen animals shot through the heart run for a considerable distance after getting the ball. The only shots absolutely certain to stop an animal on the spot are the shot through the brain or the shot which breaks the spine.

One evening I was returning to camp and had given my rifle to Moyon to carry. We were passing through a small thicket. I was smoking, and had given up all thoughts of sport. I was going along in a sort of day dream, and was, I distinctly remember, speculating as to what news the mails had brought for me during my absence from civilisation. I was rudely awakened from torpor, for with a tremendous roar three lions sprang up in front of me. The lioness jumped up at me and snapped her jaws within a couple of feet of my chest, and then bounded away after the others and disappeared. I had unwittingly intruded upon a lioness and two large cubs. I have no doubt they wished to avoid me, but their proximity was unpleasant, and I received a severe start.

This unexpected *rencontre* puts me in mind of an incident which occurred to me at the Unguevuma. I had

killed, and was walking along in an absent-minded way with my rifle under my arm. As a rule when carrying my rifle in this manner I kept it at half-cock, but by a providential interposition, or by accident, whichever you may please to term it, I had it full-cock on this occasion. A few minutes previously I got a glimpse of a bull water-buck, and having suddenly cocked my rifle had replaced it under my arm, forgetting to lower the hammers. I have no doubt whatever that but for this trivial accident I should not have been alive to-day to relate what happened.

We were passing through some grass about two feet in height, with clumps of low scrub here and there. We were in Indian file. I was leading, and my spoorer, a Caffre named Jacha, was following me. He only had one eye, and that eye was keener to detect game than two pairs of ordinary optics; but on this occasion it overlooked a terrible danger, for the reason that the danger, though within a few yards of us, was invisible.

There was a rustle in a patch of scrub about six or seven yards before me, and suddenly out of it uprose a wounded buffalo with bloody mouth and glaring eye, which wheeled round facing me in act to charge. It all took place quicker than thought. My rifle went up to my shoulder instinctively, and I dropped him in his tracks with a ball through the brain.

So sudden was the whole affair that my heart had not time even to give a great thump. I do not quite remember how I did it. I am sure I did not take a fine sight, and I doubt whether I looked at the rib of my rifle at all.

There he lay, and while the vaporous cloud of smoke still hung before me, I simply exclaimed: "Gracious God!"

Strange it is, that the human hand, eye and nerve are so constituted as to act automatically and correctly at the proper moment, almost without a conscious effort on our own part.

The reader must be now tired of buffalo, buffalo, *toujours* buffalo, and I must appeal to his feelings of charity by explaining that to my mind the buffalo of Africa is the finest game in existence.

Some may ask : "Wherein lies his beauty?" To such I would reply : "His beauty lies in his very ugliness ; nor can he be rightly judged save by those who have hunted him amid his natural surroundings". How can one describe the grace and stateliness of a stag to those who have never had one before their rifle, and have only seen a stag within the iron railings of a pen in the Zoological Gardens? Or how could one bring home to the mind of a person who had only seen a salmon on the slab of a fishmonger's shop, the loveliness of a fine, short, thick, small-headed fresh-run salmon, with the steely sheen of his scales glittering in the light of day as he springs from the surface of the porter-coloured pool in his frantic endeavours to shake the fatal fly from his mouth?

Feeble is my pen, and weak is my best effort. I can only appeal to the feeling of keen sympathy with Nature which exists in the breasts of all sportsmen, and which more or less enables them to enter into the emotions of fellow-sportsmen in every branch of the chase.

Having completed my bag of forty buffalos, I returned to Jozanns, and went down to Umkotyisa's kraal to shoot eland, roan antelope, blue wildebeeste, water-buck, koodoo, zebra and sassaby.

I left the rest of the party to superintend the removal of our camp and all the paraphernalia up to Jozanns.

I never saw so much game of the kind before in my life as there was at Umkotyisa's. The grass had been lately burned and was again shooting up, and the game had gathered from all quarters. The country was rather too open for very successful stalking, but go in what direction you would, you could not fail to come upon troop after troop of game. My lowest bag was six head, and my highest, fourteen head in a day. I put aside the heavy rifle and used the express, as the shooting was all at light game and at considerable ranges.

An amusing thing happened. A nephew of Umkotyisa was exceedingly anxious to be allowed to hunt for me. As the young fellow seemed very keen, and as I am a bad hand at rejecting importunity, I lent him an old single-barrelled No. 8 bore, which looked as though it had once constituted part of the armament of Noah's ark. He was delighted. He put in a young handful of powder and about a quarter of a newspaper on top of it, and finally a ball, and then rammed the whole charge tightly down.

He went off, evidently resolved to do or die.

He returned in the evening in a woeful plight. His nose and mouth were split, and his face was swollen up like a balloon.

He approached me and squatting down on the ground announced that he had no talent for hunting, and would return home the following morning.

I said, "Good gracious! what have you done to your face?" And he replied as follows:

"A little after noon I found the tracks of elands. I followed them up until I came upon them feeding. There was a gully by which I could conveniently approach them, so I crawled along this until I was close

to them. On creeping up the bank and peering over I saw an eland about twenty yards off. I rested the barrel of the gun on a stone, placed the butt against my nose, directed the muzzle towards the eland and pulled the trigger. I do not quite know what happened, for I seemed to be blind and deaf for some short time, but when I came to, I found myself lying at the bottom of the gully, and the gun was behind me. My face was as you now see it, and I was bleeding. The elands had gone away. Son of a white man, it was very kind of you to lend me the gun, but it is too good a gun for me—it is a powerful gun—too strong for me. It requires the wisdom of the white men to manipulate it properly—farewell!”

Umkotyisa himself came over one evening to pay me a visit. I knew him previously, for he used to hunt for my friend Mr. H—— on the Usutu River, and I once witnessed a brilliant sporting feat performed by him. We had driven a troop of buffaloes into the reeds of the Usutu. It was an extremely dangerous place, for if you entered the reeds you might come upon a buffalo within two yards before you could perceive him. I took off my shoes, and putting on two pairs of socks so that I might move about with silence, entered the reeds, accompanied by my spoorer Jacha. Our only chance of finding the position of a buffalo was to stoop down and peer underneath the reeds. By so doing we could see the feet and legs of the buffaloes. Near the ground the stems of the reeds are bare, and you can see for some distance, but above the reeds spread out their leaves and form a curtain which completely obstructs the vision.

It is true that in reeds, as in dense bush, there is no wind, *i.e.*, the game may get wind, but they do not know

the precise position of their adversary. However, if they get alarmed they may dash wildly about, and there is a chance of their coming right upon you without their even intending to do so. If you wound one and he charges, there is a very poor chance of putting in a good second barrel. Indeed, I would say to all sportsmen: "Do not go into reeds after dangerous game, for it is sheer folly".

After moving about in the reeds for some time, and being nearly run over by a buffalo that had taken alarm and had rushed past me within three yards without giving me the chance of a shot, I gave it up as a bad job and emerged again.

However, Umkotyisa went in and killed four buffaloes with five shots. They then broke cover, and I got one of them as they went away.

The reader will say: "This does not redound much to the credit of the white man". True, but then in the reeds a Caffre has a great advantage. He is naked and barefooted. The last gives him no inconvenience, for he is accustomed to go barefoot. His eye is quicker at distinguishing the game than is the eye of any European, and if charged he is more agile in evading danger.

Where you can see your game clearly, the good European hunter is superior to any native, but amongst reeds the native has a distinct advantage.

As regards the element of personal courage, I think the Caffre (of a military race) equals any white man. I have often thought that the natives who accompany a white man to hunt deserve more credit for courage than their master does. The white man is armed. He as a rule can use his weapon skilfully. He is excited by the pleasure of sport. The whole performance is for his

benefit. In fact, he plays the royal highness part. His courage is heightened by pride, and by the consciousness that he is the white man amongst the party.

The native who accompanies him has to incur almost as much risk as his master, and his sole reward is the pleasure of assisting to procure sport,—not the participating in it.

Umkotyisa presented me with a large pot of native beer, and gave me all the news of the district. We had a long confabulation on matters in general and on sport in particular. He had been an elephant hunter in the old days, and related some curious anecdotes.

“Do you see this small river on which you are now encamped?” he said. “Well, I once had a narrow squeak of my life at a spot about two miles lower down it. I wounded an elephant cow and followed her along this rivulet. I came upon her standing almost in the open at about a hundred yards from the bank. She was very sick, and I went up to give her a final shot. She wheeled round, and pursued me with uplifted trunk and shrieking fearfully. I fled for the rivulet, which at that place forms pools. Before I could reach it she was upon me. I dodged her, and again she followed me and overtook me. I fell down, and she ran right over me. The air seemed full of her legs, but I escaped being trodden upon. I jumped up and made a desperate effort to reach the river, and just managed to take a header into a pool when she was within a few feet of me. I dived, and came up under the bank a little lower down stream. She ran up and down trumpeting for some minutes and finally walked off. I let her alone, but followed her up next day and found her dead.”

Another story he told me impressed itself on my

memory. He had wounded a bull elephant, and followed its track until nightfall. He camped down for the night. Next morning he resumed the pursuit, and at last came to where the elephant had met a buffalo, for the two spoors were side by side. A little farther on he came in view of the elephant and the buffalo walking along together. He ran round ahead and waited for them. As they passed he gave the elephant another shot. The elephant seemed to imagine that the injury had come from the buffalo, for he at once turned and knocked down the buffalo and trampled him to death. Meanwhile Umkotyisa, having reloaded, fired another shot, and killed the elephant.

The next day he accompanied me shooting. His dog and Four-and-six started a sort of cheetah and brought it to bay in a hollow. We ran up and I finished it off.

One evening I made a very peculiar shot, which fixed itself upon my memory. A large troop of blue wildebeeste and zebras which had evidently been disturbed by somebody else, or by lions, came galloping along to my left hand and were passing me at a distance of about 250 yards. They saw me and suddenly pulled up. I gave a wildebeeste bull a ball in the collar which dropped him on the spot. The troop started running again, and as they were passing me broadside and raising a great dust and clatter I fired the other barrel. A zebra at once turned out of the troop and came running at me. There was something very eccentric in his course, for he veered about wildly, now and then coming in collision with small thorn bushes. I reloaded, and as he passed gave him another shot which settled him.

On going up to examine him I found that my first

bullet had gone through his face, destroying the sight of both eyes. This accounted for his erratic movements. Another day I broke the fore-foot of a sassaby below the knee. The sassaby is one of the fleetest of all antelopes. I slipped Four-and-six at him, but although the dog started on good terms, and the sassaby only had three legs to go upon, the dog coursed him for quite a mile before he ran into him.

The early spring rains now commenced, and I received a message from my friend C—— saying that everything was conveyed up to Jozanns, and that I must return, as we were ready for a start.

On my arriving at Jozanns, I found that we had got 248 buffaloes, and that the total bag, including all kinds of game, came to over 800 head. In fact, we were fully loaded up, and started with light hearts on our journey homeward bound.

Poor Four-and-six had been looking rather fishy-eyed for some days past, and his coat began to stare. I could see that the dog was not well. He never liked to be out of my sight, but now he kept closer to me than ever. I knew he had been severely bitten by tsetse, and feared that the first rains would bring out the effects of the poison.

One day I felt a hot dry nose rubbing against my hand, and on looking round saw my dog trying to attract my attention, and looking at me sadly. At last the poor fellow gave a whine and lay down with his head on my lap, and in two hours it was all over, for he was dead.

I could never bring myself to say, "only a dog". There is something so kind, so loyal about the doggy heart, that I am not ashamed to say I hope to meet all

my dogs in another state of existence. Why should the Great Being have given us a kindly feeling—a sort of recognition of far off cousinship—for dumb creatures, unless it is a token that they too shall be the recipients of His infinite kindness, which excels anything that we have the power to conceive?

On reaching Mamba's we met Mr. S——, who was going down to explore the road to Delagoa Bay with a view to opening up communication between Delagoa and New Scotland in the Transvaal.

I observed a crowd of natives. They were in a great state of excitement, and the hubbub was terrific, so I asked S—— what was the matter.

He replied: "Oh, it is only my donkey—they have never seen a donkey before in their lives. You see the bite of the tsetse has no effect upon a donkey, so I brought one down to carry my traps to Delagoa."

I approached the crowd. They made way for me. There in the middle of them was a little donkey with a most beautiful pair of ears, like the sails of a windmill. The uproar was deafening. The subject of discussion was whether the long-eared one was of the genus horse or of the genus rabbit.

"He is a horse!" one of them would bawl at the top of his voice; "he is certainly a horse, for look at his face and at his hoofs."

"Not a bit of it!" roared another; "he is a rabbit—look at his wool and his ears."

At this moment Jack opened his mouth and let out a portentous bray, at which the crowd started back in terror, and the women fled shrieking.

The fame of this wonderful creature had spread through the whole country. At Umbok's the people came out

to meet us, asking: "What prodigy is this we have heard of at Mamba's? what wonderful animal is it?"

Our native guide replied: "He has the mouth and the feet of a horse, wool and ears like a rabbit, and he sings like a lion".

"Wow! but this is wonderful! We must go off to Mamba's to see it at once Is it dangerous?"

"No, it is tame; it will carry a mountain of things upon its back."

I have attempted to give the reader some idea of the pleasures and the perils attendant upon the hunting of the great game in the old days.

The game has disappeared now. Most of my old comrades have gone. Few died in their beds. Some have fallen in battle, some by wild animals, some by pestilence, and some by accidents. Their cheerful voices are stilled in death, and the kindly grasp of their hands I shall experience no more, for the grass is growing above them; but until my latest hour the memory of those happy times we enjoyed together shall be ever green.

CHAPTER V.

FLAT GAME AND SMALL GAME.

THE high veldt of the Free State and the Transvaal is a plateau consisting of wide, grassy, treeless plains. During the wet or summer season they are luxuriantly green and are capable of maintaining any quantity of stock of all kinds, but when the rains cease the vegetation withers up, and the nightly frosts throughout the winter completely destroy all sustenance for stock.

At this time of year the cattle and sheep farmers generally drive away their herds and flocks to lower lying ground where the frosts are less severe, and the grass, kept alive by the nightly fall of dew, manages to retain some vitality throughout the winter season. With the return of spring the farmers go back to the high veldt, for during the rainy season the high veldt is healthier for stock than the low land. At one time immense herds of game wandered over these plains. They too were migratory, and shifted their quarters with the changing seasons. Their numbers were simply incredible. When the seasons arrived for changing their locality, they would assemble in enormous troops and move across country, devouring all vegetation in their path. It is difficult to make computation of great multitudes, but I am quite sure I have at one time seen 50,000 head of game on the move. As far as the eye could see on the horizon they were visible against the

sky line, and as they moved on and disappeared more of them continually came into view.

When the game were collected like this, it was out of the question to obtain sport, for they were unapproachable.

When they reached their destination they would break up into troops, each consisting of so many scores, hundreds or thousands, and spread themselves over the country, and then fine sport could be had with horse and rifle.

The game consisted of white-tailed wildebeeste, bleas-buck and spring-buck, with occasional troops of quagga.

The white-tailed wildebeeste was very wary, and had a curious knack of always observing the hunter the moment he came in sight. It was not of the least use trying to shoot him with a slow throwing rifle, for on perceiving the puff of smoke he would whip round like a teetotum and be off before the ball reached him.

I remember that on my first expedition to the high veldt I was unaware of this peculiarity, and armed myself with a Snider Enfield rifle. I covered them carefully and judged my distance correctly, but it was all of no avail, for they jumped out of the way the moment they saw the flash of the shot.

On one occasion I fired at a wildebeeste at a range of 400 yards. He was looking straight at me. He whipped round at the shot, and receiving the bullet just above the root of the tail came down with his hind-quarters paralysed.

With this rifle I found the best way to get wildebeeste was not to fire at them, but to aim on one side of them in the hope that they would jump into the shot, or else to wait until they were walking along broadside on and then fire slightly ahead of them.

The ranges were long. Three hundred yards was about the shortest, and, indeed, one could only get as near as this by coming over a rise upon them. The commoner ranges were from 400 to 700 yards.

An express rifle was of no use at these distances, for the ball is too light to overcome the resistance of the atmosphere during a long flight.

The best weapon I ever used for this work was a Westley Richards capping carbine. I think it was of about 420 bore. Some of these rifles were afterwards constructed with falling breech-locks and solid metal cartridge cases, but I never considered the locks of these breech-loaders equal to the bar action hammer locks of the capping carbines. The triggers generally set up a drag which is fatal to good practice at game. The Martini Henry rifles were open to the same objection. Any sportsman will realize the truth of the saying: "With a sporting rifle, more than half the secret of success lies in the lock".

The Boer farmers hunted the game continually, not only for profit, but also to keep them off the land, and thus save the grass for sheep and cattle. The hides were loaded up by scores of thousands upon waggons and were sent down to the coast for sale.

The whole country was white with the bleaching skulls and bones of game, and their complete extermination was only a question of time.

Constant practice with the rifle made the Boers perfect shots and judges of distance, and they were the best riflemen in the world, as we learned to our cost when it was our fate to meet them in the day of battle.

I always found them to be hospitable and kindly, and though they looked upon a foreigner with suspicion,

yet, if you once gained their confidence, they would do all in their power to assist you.

They are a simple people, without much education. Their pleasure is the chase; their occupation to look after their sheep and cattle; and almost their only social gathering is a periodical assembling for Divine worship and taking of the sacrament, for the Boers are always devout.

Slow to acquire new ideas and modes of thought, they are remarkably tenacious of anything they have once conceived and digested. In this they resemble their ancestors, who crossed the seas rather than submit to religious and political intolerance.

I am speaking of the old generation of Boer. There are now many excellent educational establishments, so I am told, and the rising generation will no doubt obtain wider knowledge, though whether they will be better men than their fathers remains to be seen.

At the time I am writing of, the Boer seldom used his pen, and when he did there was a regular commotion in the house.

“Hush! Be quiet all of you—drive out the ducks and the geese and the pigs and the fowls—father is going to write his name.” And then the old gentleman, with elbows squared on the table, would seize the pen with a flourish, and putting on a determined look as though he were going to tackle an adversary, would bend down his head till it nearly touched his left arm, write his name with many a splutter, and then throwing down the pen and pushing back the chair, would look round with an air of mingled pride and resignation, saying: “I have done it”.

The blessbuck is of a chocolate-brown colour on the

back and flanks, with a white belly and a white face and muzzle, whence he derives his name. Male and female both carry horns. The weight of a good male blessbuck will be perhaps about 200 pounds.

They run in immense troops, and in many ways behave much as a flock of sheep do. The usual way of hunting them is as follows: You mount your horse, and taking your rifle ride across the veldt until you see a troop scattered about feeding. On perceiving you they will run together into a mass. You approach them from below the wind and take care not to ride straight up to them, but round them, gradually diminishing the distance as you do so. They generally like to run up wind, and as you come round to windward they begin to fidget. At last the leader of the herd breaks away and canters up wind. He is followed by others until a long column has evolved itself from the mass, but the main body of the mass has not as yet unwound itself into column. You now set your horse going and gallop in at a tangent towards their course. If you approach too close you will break the column, but if you halt and dismount at about 150 or 200 yards distance, the remaining blessbuck will continue to follow the leaders, and thus the whole troop will rush past you. You will probably have time to fire several shots if you are quick about it.

It is pretty work. Crack goes the rifle, the thud of the ball shows that you have hit one, and he goes head over heels like a rabbit. In goes a second cartridge—crack again—a miss—crack again—and a crippled blessbuck flounders about in his ineffectual struggles to rise; and so on until half a dozen of them are lying kicking on the veldt, and the last of the troop are disappearing in a

haze of dust. You spring into the saddle and gallop after them as hard as you can over the next rise and half-way down the gentle slope on the other side.

You pull up your horse on his haunches and spring to the ground, letting the reins trail (for a shooting horse will not move from the spot if the rein trails), and, as the blessbuck are careering up the next slope, you put in a few more shots at constantly increasing ranges, and bring down one or two more of them. You then signal the cart to drive up and gather the dead.

Some people will say this is not sport. If it is not sport it requires uncommonly good and quick shooting. Let those who deride such sport try it for once. They will probably find that it takes them about three months of constant practice to get into the knack of killing buck well under these conditions. However, it is all a matter of taste. There are some people who say that shooting driven grouse and partridges is not sport.

Let me recommend the tyro at this kind of shooting to move his rifle *with the game* as he fires. I mean, not aim in front of your buck and then check the rifle while you fire, but rather fire on the swing. Do not give the rifle a jerk forward, as you would at a driven bird; but aim in front of him, moving the rifle steadily the whole time as you aim, increasing the pressure on the trigger until the rifle explodes. You will probably miss a great number, but sometime or other you will knock one over, and then, if rifle shooting is in you at all, you will see the reason why you succeeded—the whole thing will become as clear as daylight to you, and you will discover that you have acquired the knack. Experience and knowledge of the particular weapon you are using will enable you to judge the pace, the distance,

and consequently, the requisite number of feet ahead of your object that you must fire. You will probably be unconscious of the exact nature of the operation, and will do it instinctively, but correctly, under ever varying conditions. Be most particular about the lock of your weapon, and carefully avoid using military arms with their abominably heavy pulls and grating locks.

It is very important to have a flush rib. By this I mean, reject any rifle with a deep foresight mounted high on a block ; or a backsight with a deep notch, for the former bothers you in taking it quickly, and the latter is like shooting in blinkers. Have your foresight made as low as possible—very much like the foresight on an ordinary shot gun (I prefer a small bead), and have the backsight almost flush, with only a little notch in it, just enough to enable you to see the proper amount of foresight as you take aim.

I found it a very good plan to insert a bone or ivory foresight, and over this to pass a band of leather. Then to cut the leather slightly with a penknife, just allowing the very tip of the foresight to protrude above the band. The eye takes this in an instant as you throw the rifle to the shoulder, and there is no danger in your hurry of taking the sight too full.

Avoid browning a herd of bucks, even though they are overlapping each other and running in a mass. You will probably miss them all if you attempt it, and even if you hit something you will most likely only wound. It is not only cruel and unsportsmanlike, but it does not add much to the bag.

For this kind of sport it is essential to have a good sure-footed horse that can get over the country without blundering into holes ; but let me advise any one never

to buy a cheap horse from its owner. He may buy a cheap one in market overt if it has been stolen, with such satisfaction as his conscience will allow him, but from its owner—never.

I have bought several cheap horses and several nasty ones, and the cheap ones were always nasty and the nasty ones always cheap. I have bought expensive horses, and some of these were good and very cheap—if value for money is the measure of cheapness.

The cheapest horse I ever bought was a black one with a fiddle head and a lamb-like eye ; but this was all pretence, for his behaviour was as of a dragon. His owner was riding him. "Throw your leg over him and take a canter," said he. I did so. His paces were beautiful. He certainly wasn't a beauty to look at, for he had lost all the hair off his head ; but the owner explained to me that this was an advantage, as it showed that he had recovered from the horse sickness, and was therefore salted. We concluded a bargain.

Considering him somewhat low in condition, I fed him up for a week. I was charmed by his mild, intelligent eye, and walking round him bestowed a pat on his quarters.

He instantly kicked me in the stomach. He had behaved well for a week in order to get me into the proper position for delivering that kick.

"Poor creature ! he wants exercise," I said to myself, and so next morning I saddled him up and mounted.

In the first second I was shot up into the air and descended upon the saddle again. In the next second I went up again and descended upon his neck, and on the expiration of the third second I found myself lying on my back on the ground with the horse trying to eat me. I was rescued.

A friend explained that his back was cold (on buying a horse be sure you ask if his back is always warm), and therefore he was eccentric. So he was walked up and down for a quarter of an hour.

A contingent of allies came to my aid. One man held up his off fore-leg; another shaded his near eye (the mildest of the two) with the palm of his hand; a third held the off stirrup; a fourth gave me a leg up. I was hoisted into the saddle, and after being led for a couple of hundred yards he went away all right.

The horse always commenced with this performance and afterwards went well, until he came to some place where he had once been fed, on which he would refuse to proceed farther unless you got off and led him.

Sometimes he became resentful of opposition to his will, but would bide his time.

While you were cantering along immersed in thought or admiring the beauties of nature, he would without the least notice (even so much as by twitching an ear) give a furious buck and send you flying. I christened him Satan. More than once have I meditated the loss I should incur by shooting him. I lent him to a clergyman. My friend returned him with thanks, saying that he preferred walking. I tried to sell him without avail, and at last gave him away.

Let me recommend a sportsman to use a double-rein bridle. When you jump off it is necessary to let the rein trail on the ground to ensure your horse standing still while you fire. Pulling the rein over his head takes time, and replacing the rein in its proper position before remounting to pursue the game also causes loss of time.

On starting to gallop into buck I used to throw the off curb rein over the horse's head, thus bringing both

curb reins on the near side of the neck, and riding him entirely on the snaffle.

When I halted and jumped off, there was no necessity for drawing a rein over the horse's head, because by merely letting fall my curb rein it trailed at once. On remounting to gallop on, I merely gathered up the curb rein in my hand without passing it over his head. This gain of a few seconds may seem unimportant, but it is not so. It should mean firing at least one round more and perhaps securing an extra buck.

I have fired from the saddle, but I do not believe in it, more especially after a smart gallop, for in that case the horse is breathing heavily, and the motion disturbs your aim. You will do far better by jumping off.

In galloping over rough ground on a trained shooting horse, do not interfere with his mouth, but let him find his own way amongst holes and obstacles. Above all, do not sit too tight, for if there is a disaster he may turn over on top of you. It is far safer to be thrown clear of your horse.

I have shot blessbuck with a cart and four horses, but this mode of shooting has drawbacks, as the sequel will show.

S——, N——, and myself took a cart and four horses and went out for a sort of shooting picnic. We were returning, and saw a troop of wildebeeste cantering along in a direction diagonal to our own. We told the driver to cut across the veldt and if possible bring us within range. He set his horses going, and we gradually neared a point which the wildebeeste must pass if they continued on their course. However, it was a question whether we could reach the place before the wildebeeste passed and were out of shot. The cart

swayed and rocked about, for the veldt was covered with stones, ant hills and other obstacles, and we had to hold on to the rail of the cart to avoid being thrown off. The wildebeeste would not swerve from their course, but they quickened their pace, and it became very exciting. We urged our driver to increase his speed, so he laid his whip across the horses, and we literally flew along. Another couple of hundred yards would bring us nicely within range. Our excitement reached its climax, and we were getting our rifles ready for action, when crash we went against an ant hill—the axle broke, and we and our rifles were projected into space. I found myself sitting on the ears of the near wheeler; S—— landed on a particularly hard ant hill, and N——’s language was something superb in its emphasis.

In a most provoking way, the troop of wildebeeste suddenly pulled up and gazed in astonishment, as though to say: “Dear me, what very eccentric people those are”! but before we could get to work with our rifles they galloped off out of range.

In shooting blessingbuck a good dog is of use; for he assists in securing the wounded ones.

A Boer once lent me a very fine dog. He had great speed, and was quick in dodging the horns of a wounded buck. He would seize it by the nose and hang on until you rode up and cut its throat.

Large dogs are noble creatures, and have a correct sense of sport. I remember a lady once asked me to get her a spring-buck fawn. In the spring-time in certain districts you find the fawns scattered all over the veldt. They squat like hares, but when you are close to them will get up.

A fawn rose and went away. I set the dog at it, but

the dog did not seem to understand it at first. He looked up at me with a sort of wondering expression, but on my repeating the order, he cantered after the fawn and put both his paws upon it and lay there without otherwise hurting it. Now, I had fully expected that I should have to use threatening language to prevent him killing it.

The spring-buck is a very beautiful little creature. He is very fast, nor do I think there is a greyhound in existence that can run into a healthy unwounded spring-buck.

I have seen them, when pursued by a greyhound, suddenly pull up and turn round to look at him as though to say: "What funny creature is this trying to run after me?" And then when the dog nears them, suddenly spring away, and in a few bounds, as the saying goes, leave the dog standing.

The spring-buck sometimes begins jumping, and erecting the mane or frill of hair along his spine, in a way that produces a peculiar effect.

They are more approachable in the evenings than during the daytime, for they get on the feed then and take less notice of the sportsman. They make fine practice for the rifle.

There are particular times when game will allow themselves to be approached more readily than at others. When the game are on the feed at sundown, if you get between them and the setting sun they will let you walk up to within a couple of hundred yards. They seem to be dazzled, and cannot make out what you are. There is an element of curiosity in all of the deer and antelope tribes which leads them to wait and see what you are like before they run off. When stalking the nobler

antelopes in the thorn veldt I have sometimes been seen by them, and have lain perfectly still. If they had not seen enough of me to excite their alarm, they would often remain gazing at me for several minutes. Sometimes they have recommenced feeding, and I have continued my stalk and shot one.

I will conclude this account of the game shooting on the high veldt by recommending the European sportsman to practise himself at judging distance. The air is so very clear and the ground so open that an object 500 yards off looks no farther than a similar object would in England at 300 yards.

Until the sportsman has become a good judge of distance upon this kind of ground, he cannot expect to make satisfactory shooting. I have seen many new comers from England, India and America try their hand at the game, and they have almost invariably been put out of conceit with themselves. The fact is, the Boers are out and out the best game shots in the world with a rifle, and the sooner a new comer condescends to watch them and learn their methods of sport, the sooner he begins to enjoy himself.

The Boers, although a brave and self-reliant race, are very averse to war, for the reason that war to them means a *levée en masse* upon the population. They have to take their waggons and sometimes their families with them on the war-path. In any case it means that three-fourths of the able-bodied male population have to take the field, thus only leaving a very few to look after the families and the sheep and cattle.

No Boer, therefore, will gratuitously provoke or enter upon war unless he is absolutely compelled to. Their whole national history is one unceasing record of

struggles with ferocious savage nations or with us. They have always exhibited singular courage and tenacity, and have in small handfuls, when only armed with obsolete muzzle-loading rifles, achieved more brilliant successes than we have with trained troops, artillery, breech-loaders and machine guns.

They have this in their favour, *viz.*, they understand the nature of the country and the tactics of their enemies, and are individually fine shots and good horsemen. They have a firm belief in the ever presence of the Supreme Being and His control over all events; and, therefore, they enter upon heavy risks with a calmness which is neither founded upon conceit or consciousness of brute courage.

In warfare they carefully avoid exposing themselves, and take every advantage of cover, unless it becomes absolutely necessary to storm. In that case, Boers have, when called upon, displayed as much daring as any men.

Their usual method of warfare is to make full use of horse as well as of rifle. Their great mobility gives them the option of giving or refusing action. In this country men can ride about anywhere. The Boers generally choose favourable ground for attacking. They extend far out of rifle range and surround their foes, then gallop into rifle range, dismount, and leave their horses behind a ridge if possible,—creep up and put in a concentric fire under which infantry and guns are helpless. Cavalry can do nothing with them, for they will not wait to be charged, but are quite willing to engage and destroy cavalry by a Parthian mode of warfare.

Colonial troops raised from Africanders are the only men who could do anything effectual against the Boers.

They have a sort of rough-and-ready organisation under their field-cornets and commandants, and they have the courage that all men possess when they are fighting for their wives, their families, their land, their all. They never do fight excepting for the gravest reasons.

In truth, the Boers are very much pleasanter to meet as friends than as enemies.

They have an objection to Englishmen, not so much individually as nationally, for, rightly or wrongly, they charge us with having constantly persecuted them and misjudged them; with having on more than one occasion deliberately broken solemn treaties, and made their interests the shuttlecock of our policy. Notwithstanding this, they are kindly in their behaviour towards those Englishmen whom they know and understand; but there is a deeply-rooted anti-English Government feeling which will prevent any coalition of all the South African States under the real rule of the English flag.

The Boers, animated by Africanderism (*i.e.*, a sentiment for the land of their birth), will, I have no doubt, confederate with the other South African States; but Downing Street will have to keep its finger out of the pie, or no Boer will consent to approach it.

There is a real national feeling as Afrianders. The people are unselfish, and will therefore value the welfare of the State above the success of any particular fads they may hold. Their Parliaments will probably be deliberative assemblies, and not mere concourses of delegates, and public affairs will be conducted with more honesty and dignity than at present they are in England.

There will be little or no scope for the demagogue. In fact, there is every reason to believe that representa-

tive government in South Africa will be as great a success as in Britain it now threatens to be a failure. There are no class jealousies, there is no desire to tamper with property, or to attack the interests of any section of the community, and traitors who attempted to flagrantly mislead their countrymen would have a hard time of it, though they need not fear being lynched, for Afrianders as a rule are very good-tempered.

If any country deserves the appellation of the garden of the world, surely it is Natal. For there, in a tract not larger than Scotland, exists a variety of scenes, temperatures and products unequalled elsewhere on the face of the globe.

On the coast Nature gives with tropical profusion ; yet there are none of the drawbacks usually obtaining in warm countries, and at midsummer the heat is not oppressive.

The upper tracts are a fine grazing country. Sheep and cattle thrive all the year round, and the soil yields to cultivation almost anything that can be obtained in Europe.

Does a man desire beautiful wooded scenery, let him ride from Durban to Verulam, or from the Noodsberg through the Tongaat to Verulam, and I answer for it he will be satisfied. Does he wish for open plains or for views of mountain ranges, let him go to the Newcastle district, and he will obtain both within sight of the Drakensberg Range.

Does he wish for an even temperature all the year round, let him shift his quarters from Durban to Newcastle with the changes of the season.

In this delightful country, neither heat nor cold oppresses. The air is dry and clear. Fever and liver

complaints are almost unknown, and people with diseased lungs obtain a new lease of life.

Were Natal to be cut adrift from the rest of the world she would hardly feel the loss, for she contains within her own borders everything that can be desired, including minerals.

To any man weary of the turmoil of existence and desiring to pass the rest of his days in health and tranquillity, I would say: "*Dulce est desipere* in Natal". He will do it as comfortably on £600 a year as he would elsewhere on £2000.

A large Caffre population exists. They are a most interesting people. Brave, honest, courteous and kindly, with plenty of fun and character.

Their instincts are opposed to sustained labour. They go out to work for six months or thereabouts and then return to their kraals.

Thanks to the influence of that remarkable family, the Shepstones, they have been ruled with singular wisdom and common-sense. The success of native policy in Natal is a tribute to the practical ability of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Had we been Americans we should probably have started with some beautiful theories about the progress of the human race—have told the Caffres that they were men and brothers—have given them the electoral franchise—have improved them in a hurry, destroyed their tribal institutions, rooted up their customs and vested interests, and, generally speaking, turned them topsyturvy—have presented them each with a copy of the New Testament in Zulu (without marginal exposition), a tall hat, a pair of boots and a Gladstonian collar—have robbed them of their land—have thrown open (in de-

ference to the dignity of man) the trade in spirits and firearms—and have finally exterminated them.

But the Natal Government have carefully steered clear of faddism. They have refused to destroy the old native institutions before the people were ready to adopt new modes of life and thought. They respected all that the natives valued, in so far as it was not contrary to the spirit of right and justice. They left them under their existing tribal organisation; conscientiously put aside large reservations of land for them; governed them through their chiefs, and refused to allow them to be demoralised by the sale of spirits or firearms.

All this time they accustomed them to labour by imposing mild taxation which compelled them to go out and work a little; they took off the rough edge of the native marriage institutions by limiting the amount of dowry to be paid for a wife; they gave facilities for acquisition of land in freehold by such natives as wished to become emancipated from tribal customs, and they countenanced the missionary and schoolmaster in their efforts to give light, and thus mitigate the inevitable deterioration which ensues when savages are brought into contact with civilisation.

It is a great work. It has been wisely conducted, and the next generation will reap the harvest thus sown in a degree which we can hardly at present appreciate.

The sympathies and feelings of the people are essentially English; nor have they as yet developed the sentiment of Africanderism to the same degree as have the peoples of the great republics of the interior. But without imputing to them disloyalty to the land of their origin, it is evident that, sooner or later, like all other colonists, they will naturally become children of their

adopted land. The sooner this comes about, the nearer are the prospects of obliteration of race jealousies, and of confederation throughout South Africa.

There is a considerable Dutch element in Natal, and it includes some of the most intelligent and influential members of the community.

The general level of education, respectability and fitness for conducting government is very much above anything which exists in Europe.

Hospitality is the rule of the country, and the social relations all round are very kindly. By this I do not mean that the state of affairs approximates in any way to the offensive American, "Good morning, stranger; I'm as good as you are and a d—d sight better," style,—but that a mutual civility is observed towards each other by all classes of society, and neither snobbish arrogance on one side, or, on the other, servility flying at times to the opposite extreme of bumptious Radical impertinence, disfigure the relations between man and man as they so painfully do in Britain. The people of Natal are a courteous and sensible democracy. They are polite to all, but they eschew tuft hunting. May they continue to run on the same lines!

At one time Natal afforded excellent mixed shooting, such as I have never seen elsewhere. There was a great variety of birds and ground game, and the sportsman had to carry cartridges loaded with different sizes of shot. For snipe partridges and hares No. 6 shot; for certain kinds of antelope which squat like hares and rise before the gun, *viz.*, oribi, duiker, and stein-buck, buck-shot, about thirty to the ounce, were the best projectiles; and for reed-buck, rooi-rheébuck, and bush-buck I used loupers about twelve to the ounce.

There are also paauw (the large bustard) which is generally shot with the rifle, and koran (a smaller bird of the bustard tribe) which rises before your gun and is killed with shot.

There are two kinds of partridge—the red-wing and the grey-wing.

The red-wing is considerably larger than the English partridge, and derives its name from the colour of the inside of its wings being of a reddish brown. They are shot over pointers. They are a fine strong bird, and get up in a very game way with a great whirring, generally giving their call as they do so. I have seen a covey of young birds rise with such a bustle that they shook the feathers out of themselves, leaving their down floating about in a way suggestive of a family shot that had mauled the whole covey.

A day's shooting at red-wing over good pointers is (bar surroundings) as good fun as a day at grouse or partridge. They are not numerous, however, and a man must be content with a bag of from six to ten brace, and even then must work hard and cut down nearly everything he fires at. Were the vermin destroyed, and the burning of grass during the breeding season avoided, I have no doubt they could be preserved in considerable numbers.

The beauty of sport in Natal, however, consists in the variety of the game.

You start out on horseback with your gun and a couple of pointers. You range the grassy ridges for partridges. Your dogs draw up and stand. You jump off your horse and walk up. A covey rises. You grass a brace of them.

Farther on the dogs begin drawing again in some oldish grass, and carry their heads suspiciously high and

their sterns low. "Toho! steady!" it looks like buck by the way the dogs elevate their heads. You jump off and insert buckshot cartridges instead of small shot. "Hold up, good dog!" and as you advance up jumps an oribi, the most graceful of the antelope tribe. He moves more lightly over the ground than any hare. His mode of progression is by a couple of skips and then a bound in the air. You aim at the back of his head and bowl him over. He is of a red colour, with little straight horns, and weighs perhaps forty or fifty pounds.

You then come to a narrow vley or valley along which runs a small burn fringed with long reeds and coarse grass. Reed-buck or duiker may be expected here. The duiker is a small blue-coloured buck, which has no particular grace of movement, but he is a tough fellow and will carry away a lot of shot.

Presently you approach a likely looking spot; there is broom and bracken mingled with reeds and long grass. "Hallo, the liver dog is drawing again. Steady!" It looks like reed-buck, so you dismount and change your buckshot for charges of loupers. The dogs are very stiff but carry their heads right up. There is a crash in cover, as with a shrill, sharp whistle two beautiful reed-buck, looking as big as donkeys, rush out, and with fairy-like bounds go leaping up the slope of the valley, twitching their large white tails, or rather scuts, as they do so. Bang—bang—down come the pair of them. The buck is still struggling and kicking. "A fine fellow! He must weigh 180 pounds. Bring up the shooting pony, galloch them, and strap them on."

You now come to a marsh. Scape, scape! up gets a snipe, and down he comes to your shot. You walk the marsh and get a few couple of them.

Thus the day wears on, with occasional shots few and far between, but the fun lies mostly in the complete lottery as to what kind of game is going to rise before you.

On your way back in the afternoon you hear the screaming of a koran. You walk up to the spot and putting him up, shoot him. He is a fine bird, as big as a blackcock.

As you near home you have to pass through an old mealie field, and walk up it shooting several quail. The chances are you will on that evening confess that you have had a very enjoyable day's shooting.

The Vaal rheebuck are of a bluish colour, and as a rule do not squat but run about the stony hills. They are difficult to approach, and should be shot with a rifle. There is also a curious little wiry-haired antelope called a klipspringer, which lives amongst the stones.

I have given a sample of a day's sport up country, where the ground is open. Down on the coast there is sport of a different kind, for in the bush you have to use an army of beaters to drive the game up to the guns. The bush-buck (or inkonka) is a fine fellow, weighing as much as a heavy sheep. He is of a dark colour, and has bayonet-shaped horns which you must beware of if he is wounded. The female (called imbabala) is of a redder colour. There is a tiny blue buck (called pité), about the size of a hare.

Wild pigs also form a feature in a bush drive. I remember on one occasion when shooting at an estate on the coast, we had a large number of beaters out. Owing to jealousies we deemed it advisable to keep our Natal Caffres separate from the Amatonga, so they were divided into two bands.

We had a very successful drive, and shot a lot of wild

pigs and antelope which we did not want, and therefore determined to give to the beaters.

The pigs and buck were all gathered together into a heap, and we summoned the beaters in order to make a fair division.

However, one of the Tongas thought he would have his share in good time before the others, so stepping forward he took a pig by the hind foot and began to drag it away. In a moment a Natal Caffre hit him on the head with a knobkerry and sent him head over heels. Everybody made a rush forward in the hopes of getting hold of a pig for his own side, and before you could say Jack Robinson there was a transformation scene in which the hunting party resolved itself into a war party.

It would require the pen of a Homer to describe what occurred. The siege of Troy and the battle of Chevy Chase weren't in it with the battle of the swine. Fiercely raged the tide of war over the corpses of the defunct porkers. Sticks rattled upon thick skulls, and blood and wool flew about freely, until the Amatongas were defeated and the Natal Caffres appropriated the *spolia opima*.

The Caffre is a good fellow, but like the Irishman he thoroughly enjoys an occasional riot.

What struck me most in this incident was that though the natives were all armed with assegais, not a man resorted to the use of any weapon but a stick; and ten minutes after the row was over all animosity was forgotten, for Tongas and Natal Caffres stood peaceably side by side while one of our party acted as an assessor in division of the spoils.

Before concluding this narration of small game shooting, I must give an account of a porcupine hunt in which I took part.

I was staying at an up-country farm. My host informed me that the Caffres had marked down some porcupines in an earth not more than ten minutes' walk from the house, and he proposed that after dinner we should go out with lanterns and assist in killing them. I was only too glad of the opportunity, never having seen this kind of sport before. We set off armed with pitchforks. The Caffres took their assegais and were accompanied by dogs accustomed to porcupine hunting.

On arriving at the earths the dogs at once took up the tracks of the porcupines, and rushed away into the darkness at full cry. We followed as fast as we could. We soon heard them giving tongue in a potato patch, and made our way there with all speed. There was a young moon, but the light was so indistinct that objects were not clearly visible.

There was a noise of barking and worrying, varied by an occasional yelp from one of the dogs.

As we approached I saw the dogs jumping about and heard the grunting note of a porcupine and the silvery rattle of his quills as he shook them and rushed about amidst the dogs, but which was dog and which was porcupine I couldn't exactly make out.

Some of the Caffres had already arrived, and were delivering thrusts with assegais and blows with sticks here and there in the midst of the *mêlée*.

Being anxious to distinguish myself, I dashed in flourishing my pitchfork with a sort of do or die air, but sprang back again in a hurry, as the porcupine made a rush in the direction of my legs.

I caught a glimpse of him,—at least, I thought I did, and so did we all, and we went for him. Coming to

the low guard, I delivered an energetic point with the pitchfork, and transfixed, not the quarry, but a Caffre stable-boy through the calf of the leg. His howls were at once added to the Babel of sounds (I had to give him half-a-sovereign afterwards). Finally the porcupine was killed.

The jowls of the dogs were full of porcupine bristles, a fact which testified to their having done their duty better on this occasion than I did.

In a series of brief sketches like this it is very difficult to give the reader an adequate idea of a country and its people. To appreciate South Africa a man should visit it and travel about. Those who do so will never regret the time thus employed, and if they do not both enjoy themselves and also learn something it will be their own fault, and not that of the pleasantest country on the face of the earth.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STORMING OF SECOCOENI'S.

SECOCOENI, king or head chief of all the Basuto nations to the north-east of the Transvaal, had no particular grievances. He was not taxed. His land was not encroached upon. He dwelt in his fastnesses, untroubled by missionary or trader. Neither rum nor Bibles were causes of irritation to him. Being uncivilised, the Foreign Office was unable to communicate with him officially, and therefore could not possibly get up a strife with him by the usual methods, *i.e.*, diplomatic representations, circular notes, etc., etc. How then did it come to pass that we went to war with him?

It is a simple story. The diamond fields were opened. Native labour was required. The Basutos flocked in thousands to Kimberley. Each Basuto worked until he had acquired enough money to buy a musket and powder and ball, and then, having armed himself, went home. Secocoeni's bosom became inflated with a sense of power. What is the use of weapons unless you can use them upon somebody? His martial ardour was aroused, and he began to fancy himself a sort of little Napoleon. The Boers of the Lydenburg district had much cattle, and they were within easy reach of Secocoeni. Cattle are to be desired. Secocoeni therefore blew his war-horn and raided the cattle. The Boers declared war and sent an expedition against him which failed to reduce him

to submission. We annexed the Transvaal, and having undertaken to protect the people, found ourselves at war with Secocoeni.

We were a very mixed array—a sort of army composed of samples. There were two battalions of British infantry, several corps of Colonial Horse, two guns, and several native contingents wild and tame. By a wild contingent I mean natives whose uniform consists of a piece of leather about the size of a decent pocket handkerchief, and a feather stuck in the head, and whose armament is an assegai with perhaps a flint-lock musket in addition. They are purely amateurs, and come for plunder. By a tame contingent, I mean semi-civilised natives, probably clothed and armed with muzzle-loading capping arms, and perhaps also drawing pay from Government.

Their organisation consists in being counted and then told off into a certain number of mobs, who are requested to keep together, and to draw ammunition and rations through the agency of some one leading native who represents his mob, and by courtesy is supposed to command them.

They play a very important part. Their numbers are imposing; but the moral effect of their presence is still greater, for 1000 of them when on the march make so much noise that you feel as if they were 40,000. They draw as much beef rations and as much powder and lead as they can possibly get out of Government. The rations they eat, and the powder and lead they carry away with them on their returning home covered with glory.

They are instructed to march with the muzzles of their weapons pointed up in the air, for the reason that

they are perpetually letting them off by accident ; and this is inconvenient when a number of men are crowded on a narrow path in column of route.

The wild contingents screw up their courage by war dances, and are, therefore, more to be relied upon than their tame congeners.

The tactics of native allies are as follows :

1. To keep out of action if they possibly can.
2. To collect cattle and plunder if there is a victory.
3. To get a good start before anybody else if there is a defeat.
4. On hearing the whistle of a hostile bullet to all throw themselves down, and commence firing in the air with the object of intimidating the enemy and preventing their nearer approach.
5. To advance in the direction of the rear with unanimity and celerity at each favourable opportunity.

As a rule the tame contingents are more skilful at the last-mentioned manœuvre than are the wild ones, for they generally get a minute or two clear start of the wild ones if there is a homeward movement to be executed.

The Colonial Horse are a useful body of men for this kind of warfare (more especially the Afrikaner element amongst them). As a rule, good horsemen, good shots and individually brave, they fight well under leaders whom they trust. Given plenty of ammunition, a free hand and not too much liquor, they make it unpleasant for the enemy. Their courage and patriotism are stimulated by the prospect of capturing the enemy's cattle and thus earning prize-money.

The principal function of artillery in this kind of warfare is to stick fast in every mud-hole, and to be the

chief incumbrance. It has a moral effect upon the enemy until they have discovered that it only makes a noise and does no harm.

The British infantry—brave, steady, obedient, whether they trust their leaders or no, whether victory or defeat be their lot,—are the backbone of the army. As regards actual hostilities in this sort of warfare, they seem as much out of place as a convocation of bishops would be on the stage of a London music-hall. If there was a disaster we know they would stand, and thus give us a chance of rallying upon them. The thought gives us comfort.

They are dressed in a conspicuous uniform, and have from time immemorial been subjected to the varying caprices of persons with a mania for tailoring. Their helmets are so shaped that they cannot lie down to fire a shot without the helmet tipping over upon the nose and spoiling the aim. Their rifles are not adapted to them in length or bend of stock, and are sighted by contract. The pull of the triggers is so hard as to make good shooting under exciting circumstances well nigh impossible. The majority of the locks are out of order, *i.e.*, if you nurse them you will find in most cases a perceptible drag on the trigger before the lock is released; but that matters not—at each inspection of arms the barrels are peeped into, and if they are bright the arm is deemed serviceable.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the British soldier has generally managed to make a good fight of it when called upon to do so.

We were commanded by Sir Garnet (now Lord) Wolseley. Our object was to conquer Secocoeni, the head chief of the Basutos. He dwelt in terrible fast-

nesses, and two expeditions had already been foiled in their operations against him ; but we had confidence in our commander, for he had done all things well that were ever committed to him, and we had a sort of feeling that he would do this business well also. He was just the kind of leader that colonists like. He was not—

A leader over-skilled with warlike lore,
Crammed full of Aldershot and nothing more ;

but he knew how to adapt himself to the varying conditions of varying kinds of warfare. He was not above taking the advice of the colonial leaders. In his despatches he did justice to all men who served under him. Where he ruled, there were no aggravating orders and countermanding of orders when the book came round. We felt that he knew what he was about himself, and accordingly we too felt confident that all would go well, or that, at the very least, our energies would not be misdirected.

Our column was to advance from Fort Weeber. Another column, commanded by Colonel Bushman, was to advance from Leydenburg. It consisted of a company or two of infantry and 7000 Amaswazi warriors, under Captain Norman McLeod, of Dunveggan.

These formidable warriors totally differed from our other native allies. They were of Zulu race, though they had never submitted to the power of the Zulu king. They disdained firearms and trusted to the use of cold steel, and their animosity towards Secocoeni was increased by the fact that some years previously one of their regiments had been surrounded and annihilated by the Basutos. They were armed with shield and spear.

Let not the reader imagine for one moment that I underrate hand-to-hand weapons. On the contrary,

it appears to me that improvements in small arms, artillery, and machine guns have led us to dangerously underestimate the value of the hand-to-hand weapon as a factor in warfare. Experience in South Africa and the Soudan will have been wasted unless it has inculcated one great lesson, *viz.*, that a brave enemy armed with cold steel and the impetuous courage that is fostered by having to rely on that alone, can compel the best troops to go into formation to resist their onrush, and that had the Zulus or Arabs only had the sense not to rush at our formations, but to surround them and pour in a concentric musketry fire we should have met with terrible disasters.

The excessive penetration and flatness of trajectory of modern weapons would be a positive disadvantage if a brave enemy well armed with hand-to-hand weapons managed to get in amongst us. Say, for instance, that a quarter of an hour before daybreak a division of the enemy, thus armed, managed to interpose themselves between two bodies of our own troops. All they would have to do would be to lie down and let us exterminate ourselves by a cross fire. History repeats itself, and the sword and spear are not dead.

McLeod brought the Amaswazi up from Swaziland—no light task, for an Amaswazi army has no commissariat. They rely upon Providence and the enemy for provisions. Until they meet the enemy they are always hungry, and like hungry men are always more or less unmanageable. If you do not believe it, ask the wives of hungry men. Under McLeod's leadership they marched through Leydenburg without sacking the town, a thing which reflects high credit upon their commander.

Both these columns were to meet at Secocoeni's town. Ours was to attack it from the front, and Bushman's from the rear.

The town itself was built along the slope of a range of precipitous rocky hills, in which were numerous caves. The enemy, if driven out of the town, would take refuge in the caves, from which they would open fire upon the invaders.

In the plain before the town was a small hill, full of caves and breastworks of stone. It was a sort of out-work in advance of the main position. It was called the fighting kopje. No one could advance to attack the town without being exposed to fire from the fighting kopje; and it therefore became necessary to mask the fighting kopje by surrounding it and keeping up a fire upon it with a portion of the force, while the remainder of the force attacked and burnt the town. The Amaswazi were to mount the range of hills from the other side, and driving the Basutos from their cover on the summit, were to descend the face of the hills and take the town in reverse. After the capture of the town the fighting kopje would have to be stormed, and then the whole thing would be over.

I will pass over the events which transpired on our advance towards Secocoeni's. Suffice it to say that our advanced guard, without waiting for the arrival of the main body, attacked and burnt a native town which lay to the right of our line of advance, and might have threatened our communications had we passed it and left it undestroyed.

After the affair was over we assembled the captives in the plain. They were chiefly women and children. A painful incident impressed itself upon my memory.

Caffre women carry young children upon their backs. The children hang round their necks and pass their legs round on each side of their mother's body.

There was a poor woman with a little thing of perhaps two years of age upon her back. During the fight it was impossible always to distinguish men from women; indeed, the Basutos, knowing our aversion to fire in the direction of women, used sometimes to take advantage of it by placing their women behind them.

The child I mentioned was a pretty little thing with large dark eyes like a mouse, and I was horrified to see that it had received a bullet through the thigh, though, fortunately, the bone was not broken. It did not seem to feel much pain, for it stared carelessly round, and from time to time would touch the dreadful wound with its finger. But the tears of the poor mother were painful to behold. May I never see such another sight! Heaven forgive us for the violence we do each other!

Trooper W——, a man difficult to manage on pay day when there was a canteen within five miles, but a lion in the field, with his horny fist rubbed away something which appeared to have got into his eye, and, without even using a single expletive, handed his water-bottle containing *aqua pura* qualified with commissariat rum to the poor woman, saying as he did so: "Here, take a sup of this".

It was meant kindly. Honest W——, my heart went out to you; and if I could have got access to the adjutant's *escritoire* at that moment, numerous entries of drunk and disorderly, resisting the guard, breaking out of barracks, etc., etc., would have been erased from a certain defaulter's sheet.

I went about a hundred yards away from the main

body, and lay down under a bush to avoid the rays of the sun. One of the enemy's riflemen made an uncommonly good shot from a distance of at least eight hundred yards. The bullet whizzed close to my cheek and cut up the dust behind me. It became apparent that safety lay in proximity to the main body, for as they were guarding a crowd of captives, the enemy were afraid to fire upon them lest they should kill their own people, so I rejoined the crowd again without delay.

We shot a number of the enemy in this fight. Our commandant, who led the advanced guard, accepted a somewhat heavy responsibility in attacking this position without support, for it was within a short distance of Secocoeni's town where the main body of the enemy were concentrated, and it was easy for the enemy to obtain large reinforcements, which in such broken ground would have overwhelmed us.

Indeed, before the fight was concluded reinforcements began to come up by a mountain path, but so quick had been the movements of our commandant that the whole thing was over before the enemy's reinforcements could get into action, and they arrived just in time to see columns of smoke rising from the burning villages in the great valley like steam from a cauldron. The enemy fought well, particularly a chief with a white shield whom Grant shot. Unfortunately, after the affair was over, our sergeant-major saw a kaross lying in the mouth of a cave, and, being desirous of obtaining it, he stooped down to seize it and drag it out. He was shot dead in the act by a Basuto concealed within the cave.

I was informed that a party of engineers went up there and discovered another small outlet to the cave, into which they dropped a heavy charge of gun-cotton,

and that the explosion blew a dog and a lot of skins out of the main entrance of the cave. If so, the people within must all have perished.

To revert. The reader may consider the use of gun-cotton to be inhuman. If the reader had possessed cattle and these cattle had been stolen by the Basutos; if he had attacked the Basutos and had been peppered by them from behind rocks and breastworks, and when he had carried the position found that they had run to earth—I think the reader would have said: “By all means bring a few waggon-loads of gun-cotton, melinite, ecrasite, bellite, dynamite and concentrated essence of hell-fire—stuff it into the holes—set a light to it, and blow them all to blazes!”

It is one thing to sit in an easy-chair and lay down the law as to what you think ought or ought not to be done in warfare, and quite another thing to have to suffer and be still. War really means driving your enemy on his knees for mercy, and it is no use pretending that it is anything else.

If cant is to rule the roast, then let the nations of Europe interdict shells, torpedoes, and mines.

To resume. We arrived before Secocoeni's town. Bushman's column never actually effected a junction with ours, for it was some miles away on the other side of the hills. The general, however, rode round and interviewed Colonel Bushman, to concert with him measures for a simultaneous attack upon the enemy from both sides of the position. I commanded the general's escort on this occasion. I met Campbell, of Shipka Pass fame, a fine fellow, of magnificent physique. He was one of McLeod's officers in charge of the Amaswazi. He was in high spirits at the prospect of fighting, and asked me if I

would have a drink ready for him at our camp when the affair was all over. I laughingly assented, but I little knew that already the shadow of death hung over the poor fellow. He was killed in the assault next morning.

On the eve of a great engagement there is no man for whom I have greater sympathy than for the general. Upon his shoulders lies the responsibility for the success of the whole affair. Any man can fight unless he be an abject cur, and, putting aside the risk to his personality, can fully enjoy the scene as he would a drama enacted before him; but the general carries a heavy load, *atra cura post sedet Imperatorem*—and he needs not only implicit obedience to his orders, but also heartfelt loyalty and support from every officer and man who serves under him.

My idea of the spirit that should animate an army is that they should keenly sympathise with their general in the heavy strain he has to endure, not only as representing their sovereign and country, but also as a man. Should he make an error of judgment, let the soldier be silent and sympathetic. Should the army be defeated, let the soldier die fighting valiantly in the rear-guard; but let no thought of reproach or mistrust be directed towards his chief. Let his general's fame be to him as that of his own father, and I warrant he will be a good and faithful soldier.

Let this feeling be the normal one towards all in command, but more especially towards those who display a regard for the welfare and comfort of those who serve under them. In speaking of responsibility, I must remind the reader that there are two distinct kinds of responsibility—the one for all operations which take place under immediate control of the commander, and the

other for those operations which have been delegated, and for the proper execution of which the chief commander has no other guarantee than faith in the ability of his subordinate to carry out instructions in general, and to skilfully meet any unforeseen exigencies which may arise. The latter class of responsibilities are by far the most wearing. Therefore, as he trots past you, let your loyalty go out to him from a full heart,—yes, from all you who shoulder a musket. He has not time and opportunity to nod to each of you; but he bears the heaviest part of the burden of all of you, and if he be a brave and good soldier, as he generally is, he cares for all of you. His life to him is nothing. He is the living embodiment of your collective hopes and wishes, and he has no desire save your welfare, and no hope but to lead you to victory. God save the general means—God save the Queen—God save my dear country—God save me.

True, he has his rewards, and certainly he deserves them; but the prospect of reward does not influence him. The greatest, the best, and the bravest are ever the simplest in that respect.

The evening before the assault we were speculating as to the plan of attack, and examining the kopje, the town, and the face of the hill with field glasses, in order as much as might be to make ourselves acquainted with the nature of the ground.

Basutos generally build their towns on places more adapted for monkeys than for men to live in. I know nothing more awkward or trying to the nerves than attacking a Basuto stronghold. You do not see your enemy, but the whistling of the bullets round you makes it painfully apparent that the enemy see you. You are peppered from rocks and bushes, from huts, from breast-

works of stone, and from the mouth of caves. As you advance you have the unpleasant feeling that each step may bring you under fire of some concealed cave, and that the next moment you may collapse dead from a shot fired by some reptile of whom you have not even had a glimpse. You may take cover and think yourself secure from the enemy in your front, but a shot fired from a flank whizzes past your ear and shows that you are in view of other foes.

These reflections are very unpleasant, and towards a Basuto I have always felt an unchristian sentiment of hatred, which as a rule I do not entertain towards other foes. In fact, I have experienced satisfaction in looking at the corpses of dead Basutos, and have congratulated myself that they at any rate were incapable of giving me further annoyance.

Basutos, of course, have a right to defend themselves just like other folk, and are wise to do it in their own way ; but really they are most provoking.

An enemy who comes out to face you ; whom you see before you ; who fights, it may be stubbornly, does not excite in your breast one tithe of the animosity that a concealed foe does. When you are ordered to advance against a visible foe the first few bullets are disagreeable ; but when the fire gets hot all unpleasant feeling vanishes, and you experience no further inconvenience.

I certainly did not enjoy the prospect of to-morrow's storming. A witty friend observed casually that the enemy's position looked a deuced deal prettier on the map than it did through the field glasses, a sentiment in which I fully concurred.

We were roused long before daybreak, and paraded in silence. The breaking of day is the most unpleasant

time for fighting. You are not comfortable. You have not shaved, tubbed, and had a good breakfast preparatory to going into the next world.

I can well understand the feeling that prompted the Athenians to comb their locks and beautify themselves before the immortal stand they made at Thermopylæ.

My witty friend observed that the general was really too bad, and that before they hanged a man they gave him a good breakfast ; whereas we were to be shot on a cup of coffee and a biscuit.

This was an insubordinate remark to which I did not deign to reply.

Let no man tell me that the stomach is not a great factor in fighting. Were I ever to go out with a professed duellist, do you think I would go out in the nasty damp chilly morning, with my courage down in the soles of my boots? Not a bit of it. Dinner at 8 P.M., a pint of champagne, a couple of glasses of Burgundy, a whisky and soda and a cigar, evening prayers ; and then, if it is my duty to face him, bring on your duellist and see if I don't cook his goose.

Talk about the glory of war ! It is all very fine when you are drawn up in line and the general rides up after keeping you waiting for an hour (why do generals and royal highnesses always keep you waiting?). "See the conquering hero comes"—general salute,—break into column and march past. Bump, bump, bump goes the big drum. You feel all alive—big, as one might say, and are ready to engage in personal conflict with the devil if required to do so. But be chilly, sleepy and hungry at four in the morning, and the guilt seems to have been rubbed off the image of the war-god.

However, a truce to reflections.

Our duty was to carry some ridges on our right, that is to say on the left of the enemy's position. We were to be supported by a native contingent. Where they went to I don't know, but we never saw them again until the affair was all over. We extended and went at the ridge smartly. The enemy blazed away in our direction, and we blazed away in their direction, but as it was dark we didn't do each other much damage. We carried the position, and changing direction to the left moved on along the ridge until we were within rifle range of the town.

It now dawned, and with daylight the enemy began peppering us from another more elevated ridge which commanded our position, so we took cover amongst the boulders of rock which were strewn about.

As the sun rose the spectacle opened to our view was really very fine. The cracking of rifles made a continuous pealing which was echoed back from the hills. Some colonial troops were coming along the face of the hill upon the enemy's other flank, and were rolling them up as they did so.

Round the detached hill or fighting kopje down in the plain were the infantry and artillery, which kept up a desultory fire in answer to the fire from the kopje.

The Amaswazi had not yet begun to show up, and we began anxiously to scan the top of the hill, for we momentarily expected their appearance over the brow.

McLeod was not a man to let the grass grow under his feet; but the Amaswazi had to come a considerable distance over the hill before they got into action; and as savages will never move to the attack until there is light enough to distinguish friend from foe, we could hardly expect them upon the scene just yet.

The enemy's bullets began to fly about rather unpleasantly, for they had got the range now and began to make themselves objectionable. I was comfortably seated behind a big boulder, taking a peep over now and then.

One of our men about five yards from me lower down the face of the hill called out, "I say, mister, don't you think you had better come down out of that?"

I replied, "What for?"

He said, "Well, I think it is healthier down here where I am."

"Why so?"

"Well, there is a Basuto out there (pointing to the left as he spoke) who is getting ready to take a shot at you."

At that instant a ball whizzed close to my ear, and I became aware that this Basuto was in a position to enfilade my stone, so I took the man's advice and moved to healthier quarters.

At last we began to hear a few dropping shots on the top of the hill. A few minutes later the fire became general along the top, and we saw the Basutos running back from the crest, and now waving plumes and shields began to appear. Soon, like a huge irregular semi-circle, the Amaswazi came into full view, driving the Basutos down the hill before them.

The ground was very broken and the resistance obstinate, but they continued their steady advance. The commandant now ordered an advance against the town, for he desired the honour of capturing the king's own kraal.

I must here make a digression. I had once been sent by Colonel Clarke on an embassy to the Amaswazi king.

On our arrival at the king's kraal we were received by a very handsome, amiable young chief, named Bomvan. It was his duty to look after us, to arrange an interview with the king, to present us with a bullock and with beer, and generally speaking to make himself agreeable to us. This he did most thoroughly. He was of a fair complexion for a Caffre, and had a remarkably musical soft voice and pleasing manners. On our leaving I parted from him with regret, and little thought under what strange circumstances we were to meet again.

To continue. We rushed down and carried the king's kraal. The bullets fired from caves in the mountain were whistling about us like hail. As I ran up to the king's hut I saw a strange sight. There, before the door of the royal hut, was the keeper of the king's hut lying dead on his face, with both arms extended, and a stream of dark blood which welled from a gash in his side trickled across the pavement.

Backwards and forwards over his prostrate form strode an Amaswazi warrior with a huge shield and a bloody assegai. He was shouting his isibongo (war song), and as he sang he stamped his feet, flourished his assegai, and writhed his body from head to foot till his plumes shook and his ornaments rattled. Heedless was he of the fire from the caves—of our presence—of all, save that he was triumphing over the corpse of his enemy. He reminded me of a fierce but beautiful panther as he strode and shouted in his delirium of warlike ecstasy.

As he turned, to my utter astonishment I beheld the features of my friend, the gentle, courteous, refined Bomvan. No transformation could have been more complete.

I said: "Bomvan, get under cover, you fool, you will be shot directly".

As he recognised me his eyes softened, the blood mania vanished, and in his old pleasant voice he said : " Ah, is that you? We are well met here ; see—I killed him—you bear witness that I was the first man at the door of the king's hut." So saying, he stepped with me behind the cover of a hut, and we chatted for a few minutes.

If H. N. and good, kind, old A. W. S. be still alive, as indeed I hope they are, let them testify to this incident.

For the first time in my life I experienced a wish that I had been of simple and not of gentle birth. An order had been issued that all plunder was to be pooled and subsequently divided amongst the force.

The king's kraal contained treasures of ivory, karosses, etc., etc., which was very tempting, not merely from their intrinsic value, but from their peculiar suitability as souvenirs of this day of battle. This was one of the occasions on which it was decidedly unpleasant to be strictly honest.

The town was now completely in our possession, and in a few minutes more was wreathed in flames.

We sounded the retire, and returned in Indian file across the plain, taking care to make a *détour* round the fighting kopje. As we were passing it I was walking beside one of our men, who suddenly sat down without warning. A bullet fired from the kopje had perforated the calf of his leg.

We now joined the troops who had encircled the kopje, extended and lay down to await further orders.

A number of Amaswazi came up now and sat down in a little hollow near us.

The seven-pounder shells seemed to have no effect whatever upon the stone breastworks of the kopje.

The general rode up and began to give directions about the storming. I carefully watched his face as he sat on horseback, and by its expression I could not see that he was even conscious of the fact that he was being fired at from the kopje. At last the arrangements were completed. The infantry opened a heavy independent fire for a short time, and then a rocket went up, and we rushed forward to storm the position.

They peppered us from the breastworks and heaved over long-handled assegais at us; but they made shocking bad practice, for we got up close to the foot of the kopje and lay down there without having suffered much loss.

Close under the kopje we were safe enough, for they could not depress their rifles sufficiently to hit us.

The Amaswazi now rushed up and joined us, and we were further reinforced by some infantry.

The advance was sounded, and we went up the face of the kopje, clambering over the breastworks and winding our way up amongst the big rocks, shooting such of the enemy as had not time to escape into the caves. We lost a few men by shots fired from the caves, but we did not suffer nearly as much as I expected we should. As I was ascending I came to a big rock, and had the option of passing either to the right or the left of it. It was fortunate that I did neither.

The sergeant-major passed round the left of it, and got knocked over by a charge of slugs in the jaw, and an Amaswazi warrior going to the right of the rock fell dead with a ball through his body.

Considering the locality most unhealthy, I made a *détour* to avoid it altogether.

While we were struggling up the kopje, I felt a hand

laid lightly on my shoulder and I moved aside in answer to a polite request. A certain gallant cavalry officer passed me and ran up the kopje, as unconcernedly as though he were going up the steps of a club. I believe he was the first man on the top, and I am glad to say was not hurt.

We now held the position, and the most dreadful part of the play began. The engineers came up and threw heavy charges of gun-cotton into the mouths of the caves. The ground shook with each terrific report, and I even managed to pity the feelings of the wretched Basutos in the caves.

I heard of a gallant thing done by one of the enemy. He deliberately removed the burning fuzes from two successive charges of gun-cotton. The suspicion of the engineers being aroused, they shortened the fuze of the third charge with the result that it exploded while the brave Basuto was endeavouring to remove it. I heard this story, but cannot vouch for the truth of it.

A day or two afterwards when the whole affair was over, I entered the caves to observe the effect of the gun-cotton. Huge rocks had been split and rent about as though they were mere bricks. I saw a ghastly spectacle. It was the corpse of a Basuto flattened out. He had been lying on a flat rock watching the mouth of the cave, to fire at anyone who attempted to enter. An explosion had split another huge boulder, and a portion of it had fallen upon him, squashing him flat. His head and one arm and shoulder were protruding.

We lost a few valuable officers and men in this affair, but the Amaswazi suffered most heavily. I was informed that in this and other fights they lost seven hundred killed.

The native allies whose duty it was to have assisted in the storming, went off on a cruise of their own to steal cattle. They captured a large number, and were returning with them in high glee, when they met some Amaswazi warriors.

"What have you been doing?" asked the Amaswazi.

"We have been collecting cattle."

"Were you not in the fight?"

"No."

"Friends, these are very nice cattle, so we will go halves."

To this the native allies objected, so the Amaswazi cut the matter short by attacking them and capturing all the cattle. It served the native allies right.

These Amaswazi were curious fellows. They had not yet had enough of fighting, so about a couple of thousand of them went off to Umsoet's stronghold, and after a terrific fight, in which they were twice repulsed, they captured it. Of those who returned about every other man was wounded; but they were as happy as sandboys, having had plenty of bloodshed and having captured plenty of booty.

They do not care for gold or valuables. They prefer iron pots, knives, hoes, blankets, or anything of that sort.

I speak the Zulu language, of which the Amaswazi tongue is only a dialect, not differing more than the dialect of a broad Scot from that of a Londoner. There are a few idiomatic phrases peculiar to the Amaswazi, but one picks these up in a very short time.

I had the following conversation with a Swazi warrior:—

"Have you enjoyed yourself?"

"Yes, it is delightful."

"What luck have you had?"

Holding up three fingers of his hand, he replied: "I have killed three, one was a warrior, one an old woman, and the third a lad. I suppose we shall now go on and harry the Zoutpansberg and Waterberg."

"Certainly not; we are not at war with them, we are only fighting with the Basutos of Matshila."

"The English general is a lion. I shall certainly come again next season."

"We are not going to do the same sort of thing next season; we only make war when we have a just grievance."

"Dear me, what a very curious people the English are!"

Other things I saw and heard which to relate would be a mere pandering to a morbid taste for the dreadful. Suffice it to say, that where you are compelled to employ savages as allies you cannot entirely prevent them from acting as savages always do.

Yet these same ruthless savages are in civil life hospitable, honest, kindly, and law abiding. The strange contradictions in their character are merely the resultant of their surroundings and of the conditions under which their race has been evolved.

The garrison of the fighting kopje had not yet surrendered, so we put a strong picket on the kopje and surrounded it with riflemen. Some of them made attempts to escape at night, but were nearly all shot down. The next day they surrendered.

The day afterwards we received an order for one squadron to go in pursuit of the king, who had escaped from the town and had taken refuge in a stronghold

somewhere on the plateau on the top of the range of mountains.

We went up a narrow precipitous path, leading our horses in Indian file, and having gained the top of the range went on, and in about a couple of hours reached a small deserted Basuto village, where we halted. We found McLeod here with a body of Swazis. About a rifle-shot distance from this village was a cleft in the hills, which appeared to have been made by volcanic disturbance. Precipitous cliffs rose on each side, and the bottom was strewn with huge boulders, over which we made our way with difficulty. The king was supposed to have run to ground in a cave somewhere in this gorge. He could not escape, for the keen Skyeman had surrounded the place with a chain of warriors and had thus boxed the king up safely.

We now entered the gorge and drew it. In the middle was a little level patch of ground, where we discovered a still smouldering fire, and a lion skin kaross lying on the ground, proof conclusive that the king himself had nearly been surprised, and had only just had time to take refuge in a cave, leaving his kaross behind him in his hurry.

We discovered the mouth of the cave and mounted a picket over it. Captain Brook, of the 94th, now came up with a company of infantry. During that night one or two of the enemy managed to sneak out by some other concealed mouth of the cave and tried to break through the cordon of sentries, but one of them was shot and the rest had to run to ground again.

There was an assemblage of captives, most of them being women. These poor creatures had a sort of dazed look, as though they did not fully realise that they had fallen into kind hands, and that their safety was now

assured. Most of them had lost relatives, fathers, brothers, husbands or sons in the fighting. I do not think that the affections or the sensibilities of the savages are as highly developed as those of civilised folk, but they do feel. The difference between their nature and ours is more one of degree than of kind.

On the faces of some of them was stamped an expression of apathetic grief. The terrible scenes through which they had passed seemed to have exhausted their capacity for realising suffering.

Some men are sceptical as to the common element which binds humanity of every race and class together ; but had such a one seen the trusting joyful look of gratitude which came as a swift response to the least word kindly spoken (even though they understood it not), or to the least sympathetic sign one gave them, his heart would instantly have converted his intellect.

Perhaps some one reading these lines may wish that he had been there to extend kindly help to those wrecked ones. Are there no others in the streets of our great cities at this very moment ready to repay a hundredfold by wealth of gratitude the slightest tokens of good-will exhibited towards suffering brothers? What do we strive for continually? Gold, is it? Fame, is it? Pleasure, is it? The treasure we seek we miss daily, for it is in the hearts of our fellow-creatures. Yes, heaven and earth may pass away, but kindness never.

The following day the king surrendered. When I saw the miserable, feeble, broken-down old man, I could hardly realise that this was indeed the great Secocoeni, whose ambition had for so long perturbed the country. We put him in a sort of stretcher or hammock, and escorted him down to the main camp.

After this we went on a four days' raid to collect the enemy's cattle, and had to travel over the most fearful country that men ever attempted to penetrate on horse-back. We had to lead our horses up and down precipitous defiles by narrow paths, and my horse's hocks were completely skinned by sliding down over rocks and stones. Had we been attacked in some of these passes we must have abandoned our horses or else have been cut to pieces.

We captured a large number of cattle, and returned to camp completely done up by our exertions.

All resistance was now over, and the only thing remaining to be done was to accept the submission of the outlying chiefs and to get out of the country as fast as we could, for the Amaswazi were difficult to manage and wanted to spread themselves over the country to make war on their own account.

Thus was achieved the conquest of Secocoeni over obstacles that had hitherto been deemed almost insurmountable. Not a hitch had occurred—not an operation had failed of complete success, no order once issued had ever been countermanded. The whole thing went off with as much smoothness as the successive acts of a play that has been running for a hundred nights, and everything was concluded on the date predicted by the general.

It may be that he also learned a thing or two, and that the daybreak storming of Secocoeni's town may have been the object lesson which suggested the arrangements for the daybreak storming of the Egyptian lines at Tel el Kebir.

The campaign was as well planned and conducted as it could possibly have been; and when the general next takes the field in his country's service may I be there to see and to bear a hand!

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIEGE OF MARABASTADT.

THE Boers of the Transvaal had sent two deputations to England representing the grievance under which they suffered by the violation of the Sand River treaty and the annexation of their country. Our rule had conferred numerous benefits upon them. Land had gone up in value. Security prevailed. Capital was coming into the country. The insubordinate native tribes within the Transvaal territory had been reduced to subjection, and the power of the Zulu country had been for ever broken.

Notwithstanding all these benefits, the Boers of the Transvaal, with a reprehensible perversity of spirit inherited from their Calvinistic ancestors, actually preferred freedom with its drawbacks, to the blessings of our rule with its advantages ; and they had the audacity to inform us that unless their representations were listened to they would positively make war upon us, and strive to inculcate by the use of carnal weapons those views which they had failed to successfully communicate to us by an appeal to intelligence and sense of fairplay.

They went further. They held that the great mass of the people of England were more honest than those who governed them, and that, whether defeated or successful, the spectacle of a people sacrificing their all in the defence of their liberties would arouse in England such a

feeling that the Government would be compelled to give way to the storm of popular indignation.

Paul Kruger, the leader of this national movement, was a born ruler of men. Had he lived in Europe there is little doubt but that he would have been one of the men of the age. He, too, saw that in South Africa there was a strong element of Africanderism which if once aroused would command respect even in Downing Street. He knew he could count upon the cordial co-operation of the Free State, and that in the old colony, nay, in the streets of Capetown itself, were thousands who would rather cut off their right hand than see Africanderism stamped upon and erased in the Transvaal by the paw of the British lion.

I may here observe that but for the wisdom of President Brand, the Free State would have rushed into the conflict, and a fire would have been lighted in South Africa the consequences of which no man could have foretold.

The Boers conversed frankly about the coming strife. On its being represented to them that the power of England was such that they could not hope to make successful resistance, they replied that they might be defeated—probably they would be—that they had determined to abandon their farms, houses and property, and evacuate the country, rather than submit to our rule ; that they had committed their cause to the Ruler of all events, and, therefore, that the prospect of success or failure in no way agitated their minds.

Now, a Boer takes a long time to make up his mind about anything, but once having done so nothing can shake him in his opinion. You might as well preach at a milestone.

Their very calmness, instead of being read as an indication of terrible obstinacy of purpose, was construed into lack of zeal on behalf of their opinions.

Their formidable fighting qualities were also underrated by those who, being themselves unskilled with horse and rifle, could not see the immense advantages conferred upon guerilla troops by the introduction of long-range breech-loading rifles.

The hour of conflict arrived. The Boers attacked and destroyed the wing of a British regiment on the march, and in a few days cooped up every British force in the Transvaal within fortifications.

The only chance of salvation lay in being relieved by a column from Natal. The Boers assembled a force upon their frontiers to resist the advance of this column.

The strategical fate of the campaign depended entirely upon the events at Lang's Neck, and the most sensible thing would have been to suspend hostilities throughout the country by an understanding that a certain number of Boers should remain encamped before each British detachment, as being the number of men requisite in warfare to blockade that detachment. Had this been done and had Britishers and Boers entered each other's lines, chatted and smoked their pipes while the conflicts were going on at Lang's Neck, the result would have been precisely the same as it was after some months of aimless skirmishing and fighting.

However, as the Boers wished to prevent our garrisons from getting provisions, they blockaded them ; and as our garrisons wished to worry the Boers and prevent them from sending reinforcements to their force at Lang's Neck, they made sorties, and otherwise conducted themselves in such a way as to necessitate the Boers

keeping a considerable force round each garrison to watch it.

On hearing the first rumour that hostilities had begun I saddled my horse and rode off to Marabastadt, and offered my services to Major Brooke, commanding a detachment of the 94th stationed at that place.

On my way thither I met a party of about half a dozen mounted Boers, two of whom were personally known to me.

After the usual good-day we lighted up our pipes and conversed on various indifferent subjects. They knew perfectly well that I was going to join the British force, and I knew equally well that they were going to concentrate with a view to commencing hostilities against us. However, mutual civility was the order of the day.

"Mynheer, where are you going to?" asked one.

"To bring home my washing from Marabastadt," I replied.

The Boer grinned politely, but added:—

"Almighty! twenty miles is a long way to go for washing."

"Yes, but I am also going to hunt, and perhaps I might be going to be married for all you know" (I said this in order to suggest an answer to my next question, for I didn't wish the Boer to say that he was going to fight against us, for such an admission might have thrown cold water upon our amicable relations). "And where are you going?"

"Mynheer, I am going to hunt."

This was all I wanted to know. They were going to fight. So I said good-day and rode on.

I had not gone ten yards before a Boer called out to me, so I stopped and asked him what he wanted.

"Mynheer, give my best compliments to Major Brooke," said he.

"I will," I answered, and rode on.

This was the Boer's polite way of letting me understand that he knew perfectly well where I was going.

I found Major Brooke in a particularly cheerful mood. The prospect of impending conflict increased his natural geniality of disposition, and his eyes twinkled with humorous contentment as he walked about waving a fly flapper, giving directions to his men, who were intrenching and making all preparations for a siege.

Every now and then another volunteer would come in and proffer his services, and as Brooke beheld his food for powder accumulate so did a more and more benevolent expression settle upon his countenance.

Could he only have mounted all his force, I think he would have sent a note to the Boer commandant to tell him to get ready, and have then ridden out with the whole posse to attack him.

The fort at Marabastadt was a square work, consisting of a deep ditch and a high bank. The parapet was lined with sandbags, so arranged as to form loopholes through which to fire at the enemy. The lines consisted of circular huts in the form of a street, with rows of huts on each side. They were without the fort and were raked by the fire of the fort. The canteen was loop-holed and turned into an outwork, and it was assigned to the volunteers. The detachment of Hottentot mounted police under Mr. Thompson built a work for themselves. These were all connected with the fort by sunken ways. Roughly speaking, the works were in the shape of a cross. The fort was at the intersection of the timbers. The long leg represented the lines.

The left arm was the canteen, and the work occupied by the detachment of police was the right arm. Thus the outlying works were all covered by the fire from the fort. One of the huts in the lines was utilised as a hospital.

For several days our time was fully occupied in intrenching, sandbagging, setting wire entanglements, cutting sub-ways, etc., etc.

One day while we were working away Brooke walked round to see how we were getting on. After he passed, a man observed : " He don't look 'appy ".

" Why not ? " asked another.

" He's afraid the enemy won't attack him and that he will have all this trouble for nothink."

However, our gallant commander's hopes of strife were destined to be shortly realised. He was just the very man to command us. A force which by the nature of things has to stand on the defensive is more liable to depression of spirits than a force which can expend its energies by going in search of the enemy ; and our commander's cheery disposition had an excellent effect upon everybody.

When there was, so to say, a half-holiday, he would get up a cricket match, or tilting on horseback with brooms instead of lances.

The canteen was the most tranquil scene of contentment in our disturbed country, for there a daily issue of spirits was made, and over the counter drinks could be obtained for coin of the realm. The volunteers (as is only right under the circumstances) drank both in civil and military capacity. They absorbed quite twice as much per head as did the troops, and were proportionately happy. Moreover, we dwelt in full view of the wine,

beer, and spirituous liquor. We felt that the enemy must first pass over our corpses before they could endanger the safety of these soothing stores, and that to us in particular was entrusted the double honour of defending and consuming them.

Alas, they came to an end before the siege did.

From time to time we heard rumours that the Boers had concentrated, that they were winding up their martial ardour by indulgence in pious exercises, that they were going to invade us, etc. But we heard the last so often that we began to doubt whether they would ever really come to the scratch.

However, we received definite information that they were encamped in laager about seven miles off, on a road which led straight from the fort to their camp.

Major Brooke (I suppose), feeling it his duty to keep in touch with them, and thus prevent them from detaching men to operate against our forces elsewhere, determined to bring on hostilities.

Accordingly, one day, about a couple of hours before sunrise, the Hottentot police under Thompson and Bates went out to engage them and draw them on.

We, the volunteers, made a *détour* and occupied a little hill about half a mile on the right of the road by which the police went out towards the Boer laager. The idea was that if the police were defeated and driven back along the road, we were to issue from the little hill and, galloping to the road, form a support upon which they could rally.

The Boers are naturally suspicious of anything which looks like an ambuscade or flank movement, and this arrangement would be pretty certain to check their pursuit. We reached the little hill before daybreak. At

sunrise we could see the police skirmishing about in the direction of the Boer laager.

At this moment some of the volunteers saw some cattle, and being seized with a fever of appropriation rode off to gather them. I remained with S—— and R—— and C——, thinking that to leave the hill at such a time might frustrate the very object for which we were sent ; and I was right in my conjecture. While the rest were away in search of the cattle, we heard the cracking of rifles, and soon saw that the police were hotly engaged. The grass was all burnt off in that direction, and we could see the puffs of dust rise as the bullets struck the ground.

Soon we saw the police in full retreat, some empty saddles with stirrups swinging as the horses rushed along showed that the Boer fire had told its tale. They were in full flight, with the Boers in hot pursuit, every now and then jumping off to take a shot. Thompson and Bates were doing their duty bravely, and were riding in rear of the fugitives, calling upon them to halt, but nothing would have stopped them unless it had been a wall ten feet high and lined with broken bottles.

Our men who had ridden off to collect the cattle now came galloping back in a great hurry, and were arriving one by one, with their horses completely blown by their exertions.

Seeing that if we waited for the rest to come up it would be too late to aid the fugitives by a flank movement, S——, R——, C—— and myself set off and galloped across at a tangent towards the road ; but I fancy some of the fugitives mistook us for Boers who had out-flanked them and were trying to cut them off, for they sat down on their horses and rode like men. John Gilpin's famous

ride was nothing to it. Our movement, however, had the desired effect of creating a diversion and causing the Boers to halt and open fire upon us.

We pulled up, jumped off our horses and fired a couple of rounds apiece ; but as more Boers came up the fire was getting hotter and hotter, the fugitives had now obtained a good start, and there was no further object to be gained by delay, so we too remounted and retired in hot haste.

The Boers, being suspicious of a trap, followed us no further, but contented themselves with firing shots as long as we were in sight.

Our skirmish had the desired effect, *viz.*, of convincing the Boers that they could not weaken themselves by detaching a portion of their force to aid in the siege of Pretoria or the defence of Lang's Neck.

I say this advisedly, lest the reader should imagine that our commander wantonly brought on hostilities without adequate motive.

The native commissioner at Klipdam had two smooth-bored iron guns with which he used to fire salutes on great occasions.

We now heard that the Boers had taken possession of these guns, and were putting them in order with a view to employ them for the purpose of reducing our fort.

Rumour said that they were casting cannon-balls of lead or hammered iron ; and we in our turn made more extensive preparations than we should have made against mere rifle fire.

The horses of the police were every morning knee haltered, and let out to feed on grass, under charge of two armed men. They were not permitted to wander far from the fort lest they should be captured by the enemy.

One morning I went down as usual to the little river about 400 yards below the fort to bathe. I had just dried myself and got into my shirt, when I heard the crack of a rifle and subsequently a regular peal of firing. Gathering up my clothing I made my way to the fort in a manner characterised more by rapidity than by dignity, and completed my toilet under cover.

The enemy had done a very smart and bold thing. The Boer commandant in person, accompanied by one or two more of them, had galloped down, and exposing themselves to the full fire of the fort (that is to say, I suppose, they came within about 400 yards), had captured and driven off the police horses. How they managed to do so without being shot I can hardly make out. The whole thing was a surprise, and probably our men could not get to their rifles until the enemy were nearly out of range. We still had some few horses left, *viz.*, those which were fed in the empty huts. Mine was one of them.

Every morning we sent out a mounted patrol to reconnoitre the village of Marabastadt, lest any of the enemy should be concealed there.

One day the patrol was met by a volley from a party of the enemy concealed behind some houses, and one of our men was struck by two bullets and killed. The patrol retired; and now the enemy opened a smart fire from behind houses and from ditches, to which we replied. This continued for about a couple of hours, until the enemy found it so hot that they evacuated Marabastadt and retired in haste.

About 400 yards from the fort and on the side opposite to that on which the village lay, was a ridge of stones from which an enemy could annoy the fort.

Accordingly, in order to anticipate the enemy, we built a small circular work capable of containing about twenty men upon the site of these stones. This work was about a couple of hundred yards beyond the end of the street of huts which constituted the lines.

It consisted merely of a ditch with the soil thrown inwards. Inside was a little banquette on which to kneel when firing through the loopholes.

The soil just here consisted of a sort of shale or pudding stone, and was not particularly well adapted to resist artillery, for a shot passing through it would have the effect of sending stones flying about.

There was about 700 yards from this little work a kopje, or hill covered with rocks. The Boers occupied this, and mounting the guns in natural embrasures formed by the rocks prepared to open fire.

It was that day above all others sacred to sweet concord and harmony in the Isle of Erin—the day dedicated to Saint Patrick—when a loud boom, followed by the humming of a cannon-shot in its passage through the air, announced that the Boers had at last opened fire upon the outwork.

All the afternoon the fire continued, but the practice was indifferent, and the balls generally flew too high and went bounding and ricochetting away over the plain.

However, it excited us and kept away melancholy. I never saw our commander look so cheerful. He was positively radiant.

That night I went up to the outwork with the relief. It consisted partly of men of the 94th and partly of volunteers.

We made ourselves as comfortable as we could under the circumstances, but the prospect of being pounded

by guns all day long on the morrow does not conduce to sound rest.

During the night we heard a faint clicking sound, as though of stones being brought into contact with each other. It appeared to proceed from a point about 150 or 200 yards distant. We felt sure that the enemy were erecting some sort of shelter whence their riflemen could annoy us. Surely enough, at break of day we saw that they had constructed a wall of stones loosely piled up, with loopholes in it, from which they opened fire at us. Being under cover we cared nothing for their fire, and replied smartly to it, with such effect that they appeared to have been driven from their loopholes, and for the time ceased firing.

We were now waiting for the moment when the guns should open upon us. There are men who aver that they are inaccessible to the feeling of fear. I can only say that I frankly confess I am not of such mould ; and I think that if most men spoke the absolute truth they would own to experiencing unpleasant sensations, especially while awaiting the fire of guns when they themselves are standing behind a breastwork capable of being penetrated by the said guns.

To experience the feeling of physical fear is not in itself shameful. It does not follow that because the frame is pervaded by a feeling of awe, and by a sort of sinking sensation, that the soul which inhabits that frame will be less resolute in compelling it to do that which it is its duty to do under the circumstances.

Why it is I know not, but artillery fire has a peculiar effect upon most men. The loud report, the rushing screaming sound of the shot have a demoralising influence ; and there are few men, however brave, who can

avoid ducking their heads to the first few shot or shell that pass over them. There is nothing that unsteadies young troops more than artillery fire.

We waited the first gun-shot in dead silence.

The *modus operandi* of loading and discharging was as follows :—

The enemy had blankets hung before the embrasures, thereby concealing the muzzles of the guns. When the guns were loaded, elevated and aimed correctly, they let fall the blankets, and applying a hot poker to the touch-holes discharged them. We peeped through the loop-holes and kept a sharp look-out. The instant we saw a puff of smoke, we all turned *vice versâ* and threw ourselves down.

But to revert. We were awaiting the first round. I did not want to run away, but if the reader had volunteered and had earnestly begged to take my place in the work I might have consented under pressure, provided the major had given me a certificate in his own handwriting and signed by himself to the effect that I was not afraid, —which, by the way, I certainly was.

I happened not to be peeping through a loophole just at the instant that a loud boom struck upon my expectant ear, accompanied by a cry of “Look out!” from our men, who were on the alert. With an agility unsurpassed by any acrobat who tumbles for the public edification at a guinea a night, I made myself horizontal.

There was a rushing sound, accompanied by a crash and a cloud of dust, as a shot flew through the work, and, striking the wall on the farther side, fell back spent on the floor.

They had led off with a good shot. “All right,” “All right,” “I am all right,” came from numerous voices ; but

one poor fellow, a sergeant of the 94th, lay extended on the ground, while a slight quiver permeated his frame. In a few moments it was all over with him. The shot had dislodged a stone from the face of the work, which had struck him on the breast, shattering his frame, and thus giving him a rapid passport into the middle state.

We rushed up to him and lifted his head for an instant, but it was manifest that he had met his fate.

We were too crowded in the work, so half of us went into the ditch outside.

Let not the reader imagine that we went there for comfort. The instant that two square inches of the crown of our heads appeared above the level of the ground we got a reminder in the shape of a rifle bullet from the wall behind which the enemy's riflemen were ensconced.

However, our fellows inside the work kept on pelting away at the enemy's loopholes, and managed to keep them fairly quiet. There was a tree growing on one side of the wall, from behind which the riflemen were annoying us. One of the enemy climbed this tree, with a view of getting a more commanding position. He kept his body on the farther side of the trunk so that we could not kill him. He became very troublesome, and his performances nearly converted me to the views of the Society of Friends. I wished he were a Quaker and not a Boer.

After all, how much happier men would be if they never fought excepting in canteens!

We were obliged to open a hot fire on the tree, with the result that we made it too warm for him, and he soon descended again.

All day long the fire of the guns continued, but they

never made another shot as good as the first one ; and no one else was hurt, though we had some very narrow squeaks from rifle bullets.

The continued strain was very wearing upon the nerves ; and, talk about time hanging heavily, I never experienced such a long day in my life. I feel sure that I became a year older during that twelve hours.

The cramped position, too, was a nuisance. Had it not been for the witticisms and mercurial temperament of an Irish soldier who was squatted next to me, should have been a prey to melancholy.

Irishmen may be obstructives in the House of Commons, but they are jewels in the field.

On the other side of this Irishman was an English soldier, and during the lulls of the firing they held sweet converse under difficulties. It ran something in this line :—

“I wish I had a bloomin’ ’arf pint. Mike, have you never a fill of bacca about you?”

“I have—here ye are—enjoy it. Maybe ye’ll be perched on a cloud smoking away among the saints in glory before long, av if it’s allowed in thim parts.”

They then began conversing about a certain music-hall at some place where they had once been stationed. The Irishman observed that it was “a place for real enjoyment and the hoight of foine living”.

The Englishman replied : “Yes, what I likes about that bloomin’ place is that there ain’t no bloomin’ affectation, no introductions nor the like of that ; when you sees a young woman, you goes up and ketches hold of her and says, ‘Ow dye do, Polly?’ and there you are, you see.”

The Irishman incautiously lifted his head for a moment. Whiz came a bullet past his face.

“ Mike, that was very nearly being a case of a brass nose and a pension for you,” observed his English comrade in arms.

With the recklessness of his race, the Irishman exposed his head and shoulders, levelled his rifle and fired a shot in return, saying : “ Be jabbers ! here’s at ye ; take that, ye blackgyard ”.

When the cannon-shot struck the face of the work a shower of flat stones and earth would slide down into the ditch on the top of us. We utilised some of the flat stones by putting them up on the edge of the ditch, so that we could peep up without danger of being shot through the brain. Several of these stones were smashed into flinders by bullets. In that ditch I ate what was unquestionably the most uncomfortable luncheon I ever had in my life.

Each time the enemy hoisted up the blankets before they reloaded their guns we peppered away at the blankets ; but as we should have fired away all our ammunition had we continued this, we were compelled to occasionally cease our fire. This enabled the enemy to complete their arrangements, and at last the blankets would fall and the guns be again discharged.

Even Great Eastern railway trains do finally arrive ; and so at last over us, wearied with continued excitement, did merciful Night finally cast her veil.

An order came from our commander to dismantle the work, evacuate it, and fall back on the fort. This we did, under cover of darkness, without molestation from the enemy.

May I never experience such another day !

On the ensuing day and for many days afterwards the enemy kept up a game of long bowls, firing at the

fort and surrounding works, but the range was too long for their guns, and we did not experience much inconvenience. However, one shot went crashing through our peaceful little home, the canteen, and another perforated the hospital hut where poor Sergeant McGonigal, wounded in the cavalry engagement, and a wounded soldier of the 94th were lying.

The enemy now began a long-range rifle-fire, with the object of letting their bullets drop into the fort. They wounded a man by this fire. To provide against it we had to construct screens, or what are technically termed curtains.

It is generally supposed that the British infantry officer knows nothing excepting the routine work of his particular branch. It is by no means so ; for Major Brooke had as nice a notion of rough-and-ready engineering work as any man need have, and met each difficulty as it arose by some acute arrangement. How he managed it I don't quite know ; for I never saw him peering into engineering books, so I suppose he was born with a genius for meeting difficulties and overcoming them.

He seemed to be everywhere at once, and the sight of his dapper form and pleasant face kept up the spirits of everybody.

I fancy the only thing that troubled him was not being able to get at the enemy.

The enemy after a time ceased to fire with the guns ; and there was a lull for a few days.

The siege was getting monotonous. We were entirely cut off from the outside world, and knew nothing of what was going on. We felt sure that we should remain in ignorance of all until probably a relieving column appeared, or news came of the utter defeat of the Boers

at Lang's Neck and the complete subjugation of the country. The wildest imagination could hardly have conjured up a picture of the news we ultimately did receive.

Sunday was always a day of truce. The Boers are stern Calvinists, and, like the people of Scotland, observe Sunday strictly.

We sent away a mail by a native messenger, who was to convey it to Delagoa Bay ; but what became of that mail I know not, for the letter I wrote never reached its destination. Probably the family matters therein referred to were duly pondered over by the Boer commandant and his staff.

The lull in the artillery fire was only a preparation for a storm in another quarter. One morning we saw that the guns had been removed from the kopje and had been mounted in an intrenchment on the other side, *viz.*, in the direction of the village. The range was about 800 yards, and from the new position the whole fort and outworks were more exposed to fire than they had been from the kopje.

They made bad practice, however. Occasionally a shot would perforate the houses in the lines, but no men were killed or wounded by the fire.

A shot went through the canteen one day, but we had surrounded it with sacks full of earth, and as long as we were sitting down below the level of the top of these sacks we were perfectly safe.

The battery was in a tempting position, and I think our commander contemplated making a sortie by night, and, coming round in rear of it, capturing it at the point of the bayonet.

The Boers had some idea that we might attempt this,

and had a number of shot guns ready loaded with slugs, which for night firing at close ranges are more effective than bullets.

Apparently they became disappointed with the effect of the fire of the guns, and removed them to the top of a hill about a mile off. From that point they could certainly deliver a plunging fire upon the fort ; but the range was too great, and they could not even hit the fort.

One day there was loud cheering from the Boer camp, and a deputation of them came up, accompanying a messenger from the Government at Pretoria who bore a despatch announcing that hostilities were over ; that the British had agreed to give back the Transvaal to the Boer Government ; that the country would be evacuated by us in three months, and that our force was to march down to Pretoria at once.

It is difficult to describe the disgust and despondency that pervaded our garrison. Had a shot never been fired at all, had the country been given back to the Boers before hostilities commenced, we could have understood it. But to yield up the country after being well thrashed all round was more than we could reconcile with any previously accepted canons of British procedure.

We were on good terms with our late enemies, and employed some of them to convey our stores in their waggons to Pretoria.

The Boers have their country, and I hear that they are administering it justly and wisely. Extensive gold fields have been discovered, and their treasury is full.

There has been a great influx of Europeans, and British capital. The Boers have given their assent to any foreigner obtaining the electoral franchise, provided

that he has been domiciled in the country for a certain time and will swear allegiance to the Transvaal Government.

A great future awaits the country. Ultimately there will be a confederation of South African States, and I think the Transvaal and Free State will join, provided that such confederation is not under the British flag. In another fifty years the people of South Africa will be united in the bond and sentiment of Africanderism, and the sad records of strife between Britishers and Dutch will be blotted out for ever from their historic pages.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LUCKY KILL.

I WAS seated in the court, which was crowded with natives. The hour was ten A.M., and the rays of a Borneo sun were already sufficiently powerful to necessitate the half closing of shutters in order to keep out the glare.

Before me stood Sergeant Gurdet Singh, of the constabulary. He was an intelligent looking Sikh.

"Well, sergeant, what do you want?"

"When will sahib interview the native chiefs?"

"At three P.M."

"When will sahib inspect kit?"

"Four P.M."

"When are the men to begin firing their annual course?"

"To-morrow morning at six A.M. See to the targets; put back those inefficient men for another week's position drill."

"When will sahib go on circuit?"

"The day after to-morrow."

Gurdet Singh saluted, and turning about left the court.

"Proceed with the case. Now, witness, you are a very stupid fellow. What is your religious persuasion?"

"Islam, tuan."

"Do you understand the nature of an oath?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"I swear——"

"Yes, and so shall I soon unless you brighten up. Who ought you to fear more than any one in court?"

With a look of modest hesitation the witness, after scratching himself, replied: "When I am dead I shall fear the Almighty most of all, but when I am in court I fear the magistrate most".

There was a look of horror on the faces of pious Mahometans at hearing this blasphemy. Again Gurdet Singh stepped up and saluted.

"What is it, sergeant?"

"Natives have come in to see you."

"Can't see them, tell them to wait until I am disengaged."

"They have brought in news of elephants."

"Oh—ah—yes. Well, it is a pity to keep them waiting. Show them in."

Three Sulu natives were ushered in, and duly reported that a troop of elephants had destroyed their granary of rice on the Bahan River; that the elephants had pulled off the roof, and having eaten as much rice as they could, had scattered and trampled the remainder, and had then gone off in the direction of the Kayu River.

"Gurdet Singh!"

"Yes, sahib."

"Have two boats made ready at once, with sails and paddles. Tell off eight Dyaks to accompany me. My orderly will come also. Let them take three days' rations. Tell my servant to pack up a few things. I start in an hour."

"Where is sahib going to?" I fancied I saw a twinkle in his eye as he asked this question.

"To look for those elephants."

"And the kit inspection, sahib?"

"Will be next Monday."

"And musketry?"

"Oh, next Tuesday."

"And when will sahib interview the native chiefs?"

"Catch them and keep them until I return, but feed them in the meantime."

"And when will sahib go on circuit?"

"Oh, when circumstances admit of it. This case is adjourned *sine die*. Clear the court, sergeant, and go away yourself and get those boats ready. By the way, give a dollar each to those men who brought in the information about elephants. They have performed a public duty, and deserve well of their country."

An hour later I was all ready for a start. Coming out on the verandah I saw a crowd of tame Dyaks (*i.e.*, not constabulary but civilian Dyaks), all armed with their parangs or short heavy swords, awaiting me.

As I approached them their faces brightened up like those of schoolboys on the announcement of an extra half-holiday.

Their spokesman said: "We hear that the tuan is going on a journey".

"Well, what if I am?"

"We should like to go with the tuan."

"But I don't want you."

"Oh, but we should like to go."

"I tell you I don't want you."

"We shall not be in the way."

"I will not give you anything to eat."

"We don't want anything to eat, we can carry our own food, and when that is done we can eat the wild fruit."

"Now, look here ; you fancy I am going on a war expedition, and you would like to accompany me to assist in slicing off heads, but I assure you I am only going hunting."

"Ah tuan, we thought perhaps you might intend to make war upon those evil-minded Bajows. If so, we should have liked to help you. Hunting is nice, but war is nicer."

"I promise you this, if I go on a war expedition I will let you know beforehand. Will that satisfy you ?"

"Yes, thank you, tuan."

The Dyaks are the most interesting race in the East. They are small, something like the Ghoorkas, but are brave, faithful and honest. They are excellent men in the jungle, and also thoroughly understand the management of boats. They are an amusing people, and have plenty of character. They dearly love fighting, and would sooner go with a war party than go to a wedding any day. They have impetuous courage, and are very good at hand-to-hand fighting, but they cannot be disciplined in the same way that Sikhs and Pathans can.

The taking of heads sounds rather barbarous to European ears, but it is a custom amongst them to collect the heads of their enemies as trophies of war, and it is very difficult to break them of it. *Apropos* of this I must relate an anecdote of Sergeant Bungin.

The reader must not suppose that he in any way resembled the gorgeous creature arrayed in scarlet and stripes, whose manly form causes the bosom of the nursemaid to thrill with emotion.

To him the mysteries of squad company and battalion drill were a sealed book. Bungin was appreciated for

his qualities of courage, honesty and intelligence, and was generally placed in charge of some out-station up a river.

Periodically he used to come down on a visit to headquarters, to make his report, draw pay, obtain fresh ammunition, etc. He was a curious figure, a thorough child of the jungle; and he would walk into his commanding officer's quarters with a twinkle in his keen little eyes, and salute him with an air as though to say: "Yes, you command me; but a cat may look at a king".

Like all his race he had a brave heart, and knew the meaning of the word duty.

Bungin was once in charge of a solitary station up a river, and had two privates under him. One day a party of savages from the interior appeared at the station. Bungin, knowing that resistance would be of no avail against such superior numbers, went out to interview them. There was a how-d'ye-do all round, and then Bungin asked them why they had honoured him with this visit.

They replied: "We are on an expedition with the object of collecting heads. We require two Malay heads, two heads of Sikhs, or natives of India, and two heads of Europeans."

In an instant a scheme flashed through Bungin's ready-witted brain. He replied: "Ah, collecting heads—a noble sentiment—I collect myself, and am delighted to meet any who have sympathetic tastes. I think I can see my way to assisting you, and will try to obtain the heads. But this Government is eccentric. It has an objection to the innocent recreation of collecting heads, so we must be very careful. Meet me

here at this very spot to-morrow night when the moon rises, and I will see what can be done for you."

The savages retired into the jungle, thoroughly satisfied.

Bungin had a few spare muskets in store. A little lower down the river some civilian Dyaks were engaged in collecting india-rubber and jungle produce.

That night Bungin took a canoe and paddled off to visit these Dyaks, and proposed that they should come with him to the station and give the savages a warm reception. The Dyaks joyfully acceded, for what Dyak will ever neglect an invitation to a war party? They returned with Bungin, and he issued muskets to them all.

The following night at the hour arranged the savages emerged from the jungle and gave the preconcerted signal, to which Bungin replied. The savages advanced up to the station. A volley of musketry rang forth, and with a triumphant howl, out rushed Bungin and his valiant crew, drawn parangs in hand, and utterly routed the amazed savages, killing a number of them and pursuing the rest into the jungle. Bungin afterwards came down and reported the occurrence, bringing with him (so I have heard it stated) the skulls of the enemy as vouchers.

He was afterwards given sole charge of the Penungah Station and district. He was far up in the interior. He managed matters with singular tact and ability. Nobody interfered with him, for the reason that nobody understood anything about the place. I am sorry to say that he was at last killed in the performance of duty.

But to revert to our story. I went down to the shore, and a few minutes later was lying at full length in a

prahu, or native boat, which four Dyaks were propelling with swift strokes of their paddles. Over me was an awning of mats woven out of palm leaves, and I was as comfortable as I should have been in a first-class carriage.

I estimated that it would take us four hours paddling to reach the mouth of the Kayu River. The direction in which the elephants were reported to have gone would most likely bring them to the Kayu River, and it was probable that they might follow the bank, lingering from time to time to feed and to bathe as they went along. I intended to ascend the river, examining the banks for spoor. If I failed to find their tracks I contemplated making a cut across country in a direction at right angles to the line which I supposed they had taken, and thus cross their path and follow it up until I came upon the elephants.

When we got out a little distance the breeze freshened, and our two boats were soon skimming along at four or five knots under sail.

In another three hours we reached the embouchure of the Kayu, and crossing the bar entered the river, which was here bordered by mangrove swamps. The flood-tide was running up strongly, and so far overcame the power of the stream as to give us almost dead water.

After paddling for an hour in this manner we got out of the region of mangrove into a belt of nipa palms, whose broad fronds in places met across the river and necessitated our hacking them away in order to allow the boats to pass.

In another hour or so we emerged from the nipas, and now the banks were clad with jungle, in some parts very dense, but generally speaking a man could find his way

through it on foot anywhere. Huge trees rose out of the jungle and towered above the underwood. The luxuriant growth of tropical vegetation is almost inconceivable to a European who has never seen it. Nature seems to revel in illimitable power of production. The great trees are clothed with parasites, which run all over them and hang in festoons from every bough. It is needless to say that in a jungle of this kind it would be quite impossible to use a horse. Indeed, one is fortunate if one can see game at fifty yards distance in any given direction.

There was plenty of life. Huge bats the size of sea-gulls flopped about over the boats. Troops of monkeys chattered and howled amongst the branches, or jumped from bough to bough with a loud swishing sound. Borneo is *par excellence* the country of monkeys. Every now and then a wild pig would stare at the boat with astonishment, and then giving a grunt would trot away. Here and there on the banks were small patches devoid of timber, and clothed with grass or bracken. I saw a stag or two as we paddled along, but not wishing to disturb elephants did not fire. Sometimes we stopped and landed to seek for spoor ; but, though there were plenty of old elephant tracks, there was nothing more recent than tracks made at the time of the last full moon.

In this country, all sorts of game get on the move about two days before the full moon until two days after, and the same thing happens at the time of the young moon. At these periods the game emerge from their haunts in the jungle and travel to the rivers and to distant feeding grounds. It is, therefore, advisable for the sportsman to select these times of the moon for his hunting expeditions.

On coming round a bend of the river I saw a timbadau bull, and was tempted to fire, but refrained. The timbadau are a species of wild cattle. The male is of a dark chocolate colour (almost black), with a white nose, a white stern and white legs. In conformation he somewhat resembles the "bos gaurus," or bison of India. The female is red, with white nose, stern and legs. They are reported to be dangerous; but though I have shot many of them, I have never seen one show fight, and I fancy the danger incurred in hunting them is inconsiderable. Their beef is almost uneatable. I suppose this is due to their feeding on bitter leaves in the jungle.

We continued to ascend the river until it was nearly dark. I began to fear that the elephants could not have come in this direction at all, so I ordered the boats to pull into shore and make fast.

We set to work to clear away small bush, and camp down for the night. The Dyaks are very ingenious at this kind of work. They will make you a bedstead, a table, and a chair in ten minutes, and then put a roof over the whole. They cut sticks, having one end sharpened and a fork at the other. They use these for up-rights, driving the sharp end into the ground. Crosspieces are fixed across from fork to fork, and then withes are used as longitudinals, the whole being lashed together firmly with strips of bark.

In the evening the life of the jungle seems to wake up. Pigeons whiz about overhead as they fly to roost. A peculiar kind of insect which lives in the bark of trees begins to make a shrill chattering noise, and if there are any flying foxes about, they soar from tree to tree. They are in reality a species of large squirrel which has a skin or membrane connecting its fore and hind legs.

It jumps from a tree, and spreading out its legs is thus sustained by the membrane. I have seen it shoot across from one tree to another over an intervening space of at least 150 yards. The point of arrival is necessarily a little lower than the point of departure, but so slight is the angle of descent, that the impression given is that the creature travels through the air horizontally.

With the darkness the noises of the night cease.

I sat down to my solitary meal of tinned provisions and coffee, and, after a quiet pipe, gave my express and my heavy double No. 8 bore a coating of vaseline, and then lay down to rest, so that I might be ready for the hard day's work that awaited us on the morrow.

Morning and evening in the tropics are the pleasantest times of the day. In the morning especially Nature looks its best. There is a freshness in the air. The wondrous vegetation glittering under a heavy load of dew suggests fairy-land, and the best transformation scene on a London stage seemed tawdry when compared with this beautiful river, which, like a path of silver, wound its way amid glorious masses of tropical foliage. What a blessing it is that one can occasionally get face to face with Nature! She complains not at her votaries paying homage in shirt-sleeves, and untrimmed by a razor.

After a hasty plunge in the river and a light breakfast we set off in search of the elephants.

I directed our course almost at right angles to the direction of the river, thinking thereby that if the elephants had come anywhere in this direction I must cross their spoor.

Occasionally a pig trotted across us, or a deer would give a shrill bark and bound away, but we hardly noticed

them, for when the heart is set on elephants all minor sporting temptations become insignificant.

I carried my double express, and my gun-bearer followed me, carrying my heavy double barrel No. 8 smooth bore, loaded with eight drachms of powder and a two-ounce spherical ball, hardened with tin, in each barrel.

Progress through the jungle is tedious work. A Dyak walked before me, lopping away branches with his parang. Now and then we came to fallen trunks of trees, over which we had to clamber, or else make a détour to pass them, and in other places we were constantly tripping over rattans and creepers of various kinds.

To my mind the elephant is an exceedingly easy animal to kill, if you only go close enough to him and are not afraid of him. However, if you do make a mess of it and are charged by an elephant in a tropical jungle it may be very awkward, for you stand in danger of being tripped up or caught fast by the creepers. The elephant can run straight through jungle which is impenetrable to a man. It is therefore dangerous work. On the other hand, there are generally large trees about, round which a man can dodge an elephant, if he is able to reach a tree in time.

The leeches are the greatest nuisance. They are especially voracious after a shower of rain. They adhere to the leaves and wave their tails about. If you happen to touch one he instantly leaves the leaf and clings to you.

I used invariably to wear putties tightly wound round my legs, two pairs of thick socks, and to tie strings round my coat at the wrists in order to prevent the leeches ascending my arms. Notwithstanding these

precautions, I have on returning from a day's hunting in the jungle stripped myself and found more than thirty leeches upon me gorged with blood. They get down your neck, into your boots, under your armpits, and, in fact, all over you, excepting in your hair.

We went on and on, but could see no recent tracks of elephant. At about eleven A.M. we had to begin making use of the pocket compass, for the sun being nearly overhead was no longer of any use as a guide to us in our course.

Shortly after one I halted for a rest. It was certain that the elephants had not come anywhere in this direction, so it seemed to me probable that they had made a sweep round to the southward, and returned in the direction whence they had originally come.

It was, however, possible that we had made too wide a cast, and that they were within the ground we had traversed, so I determined to return by another route. I intended to strike the river at a point considerably below our encampment, and then to ascend it until we reached home ; so, setting the new course by the compass, we started back. The heat was intense, and took all the energy out of us. Our want of success depressed our spirits, and we stumbled along, taking hardly any notice of spoor. I had very faint hopes of falling in with elephants, and merely followed the hunter's maxim, "Never say die".

It was a little after three, and I judged that we must be not very far from the river, when suddenly the leading Dyak gave a whistle and pointed to the ground. On going up my heart gave a bound, for there were the quite fresh tracks of elephants. There were only two of them, a bull of large size and a cow.

In a moment our fatigue and depression vanished, and we felt fit to go another twenty miles.

By the direction of their tracks it seemed as though they had come from the river. They did not belong to the troop we were in search of, but had probably crossed over from the other side of the river.

We followed their spoor, and in less than a quarter of an hour came to a mud hole, where they had bathed. The mud had not yet settled down, and the water was still of a pea-soup colour. The banks were covered with wet mud and water.

By the traces it was evident that they had lingered here for some time, and we now felt sure they were close ahead.

One has to exercise judgment and caution in approaching a pair of elephants—male and female, for at certain periods the male is excessively dangerous if interfered with.

It is as well to make sure that you are firing at the male, for at the periods above referred to, should you fire at the female first and wound her, it is extremely likely that you may at once be charged by the male. If he charges, she will probably charge also.

Now, one man—one tree to dodge round—and two elephants at the man, is not fair play.

If you fire at the male only, in all probability the female will take to flight. In dense jungle it is sometimes exceedingly difficult to distinguish the male from the female, as the tusks are often obscured by bush and branches.

The troops of elephants generally consist of females, calves, and elephants which have not yet reached maturity. They are not dangerous as a rule, excepting during the season when the wild fruit is ripe. At that

time they seem to be affected by a sort of madness, and often kill people wantonly.

The spoor now began to descend a gentle slope, and we heard the noise of frogs and water-insects, by which we guessed that we were approaching a marsh or swamp. A few minutes later, the blue sky appeared before us, and we saw that we were nearing the edge of the jungle. At last we debouched on a large swamp covered with nipa palms and long grass and rushes.

"Hist!" said my gun bearer. "Don't you hear them?"

The noise of swishing and cracking was distinctly audible, and we now knew that the elephants were feeding in the swamp, and were not more than 300 yards from us at the present moment.

They had entered the swamp by a sort of well-beaten path which was evidently much used by elephants, and there was a chance of their emerging again by the same path.

The ground looked very dangerous. There was not a tree in it which could save a man from an angry elephant. They had also gone somewhat down wind, so if we followed them, they would know of our approach and might take to flight before we could get a shot. There was a great deal of mud and water, and if a man were charged he would have a very poor chance unless he killed the elephant stone dead, for to run about would be almost impossible.

After a consultation, I told one Dyak to remain at this spot and to climb a tree in order to get a better view of the movements of the giant game. If they showed any intention of leaving the swamp by the path by which they had entered it, he was to recall us by giving a peculiar whistle.

I took the rest of the men with me, and turned to the left, going along the edge of the swamp. I went for about 300 yards, and then entered the swamp.

My design was to get round the elephants and approach them from below the wind. I did not want to make too much noise, nor was it fair to expose the Dyaks to unusual danger, so I told them to remain. My orderly, however, insisted on accompanying me, so I gave him the express rifle loaded with solid conical, telling him to use it if there was a charge made, and that when we got near the elephants, I would go in front and fire at them, while he was to remain behind and take care of himself. I took the heavy double No. 8 bore, and put six spare cartridges into my left breast-pocket.

It was difficult work plunging in this swamp, and I almost wished we had never entered it. At last we came to a muddy, stagnant lagoon, which looked impassable. However, my orderly, laying down the express rifle and ammunition bag, slipped into it and began wading across. The water soon rose to his armpits, and, seeing that it was impassable, I recalled him to the bank.

The only thing now to be done was to retrace our steps and await events. Just as we were rejoining our party, I heard a call note from the Dyak whom we had left on the look-out at the spot where the elephants had first entered the swamp.

I set off as hard as I could run in his direction, swishing through bushes and jumping over roots and binders. I tripped up and came down a burster, but was up again in a moment. As I was running, I heard the plash, plash of an elephant wading through the swamp. It was evidently coming out of the swamp by the same path it had entered it by, and it was a question whether

I could gain the path before the elephant had passed by. I dashed on, encumbered as I was by the heavy gun, and reached the path just as the huge elephant, between nine and ten feet high, was emerging from the swamp. It was the bull. His long tusks gleamed before me as he approached me, dangling his trunk and flapping his ears. My hand was shaking with excitement and exhaustion, but there was not a moment to be lost, for he was twelve paces from me and was nearing me at every stride ; so I swung up the heavy gun to my shoulder, and covering his forehead fired. I did not wait to observe the result of my shot, but threw myself down to one side of the path. The next instant I heard my orderly's voice shouting: "He is down, tuan! He is down." And rising again there I saw him lying stone dead before me. He had fallen at just eleven yards from the muzzle of the gun. His feet now make excellent footstools, and his tusks, each four feet nine inches in length, adorn our house as trophies. He fell with his knees doubled up under him, and was lying on the ground in the attitude a horse or a cow would assume if sleeping lying down. I lay on my back for five minutes to recover breath, and then rose. I was dreadfully thirsty, and emptied the water bottle, after which I climbed upon his back and sat there smoking a most satisfactory pipe of triumph. Moments like these amply repay the sportsman for all the hardship, fatigue and exposure he has undergone, and success is all the sweeter when it follows upon the heels of hard work and despondency. I would say to all hunters: "Never mind if you are unlucky, go on, luck will come sooner or later". What became of the cow, I know not. Probably, having heard the shot, she made her exit from the swamp by another route.

The female of the Oriental elephant does not carry tusks, and it is advisable not to shoot her unless you come so suddenly upon her as to necessitate killing her to ensure your own safety. I was once following elephants, and on passing round the trunk of a great tree came suddenly upon a female elephant within eight yards of me. She saw me at the same moment I saw her, and I shot her instantly.

We now set to work to cut out the tusks with axes. Should any one ever shoot an elephant and be unprovided with an axe, it is as well to know that if he revisits the carcase in a week's time he can withdraw the tusks from the skull without the least difficulty.

I wanted the fore-feet also. This was a tedious business, for we had to cut the elephant to pieces to get at his feet, which were doubled under him. The Dyaks then tied rattans round them, and having cut a circular mark round the ankles by following the lines of the rattans with a knife, they then hacked off the feet.

Having got out the tusks and cut off the fore-feet we started for camp in thorough good-humour. We reached the river and skirted it. It made considerable bends, and we could see a long way along the banks. It was sundown, the hour at which the game came down to drink. My orderly pointed out a stag to me. He was on the same bank as ourselves at about 200 yards distance, and was stepping down to drink. His horns were laid back, and as I aimed he twitched his tail and took a step forward which brought him to the very brink of the water. The setting sun must have dazzled me, and have caused me to take the foresight a little too full, for as I fired he collapsed and fell into the river, but began struggling about, and on finishing

him off and getting him to shore I found I had fired too high, just grazing him on the shoulders, and thus paralysing him by the shock.

That night in camp I set to work to prepare the fore-feet of the elephant. We extracted as much of the flesh and the bones as we could, and then washed the feet in the river.

I then painted them internally with arsenical soap, and the Dyaks inserted a circular framework of hoops of wood cut from a pliant kind of bough. Having thus got the feet into the shape of footstools I carried them with me on my return to the Residency on the following day. I then made my Dyaks build a sort of elevated gridiron out of sticks. Upon this I placed the feet, soles upwards, and had smouldering fires of damp wood kept up under them for four days. The smoke of the wood and the heat of the sun combined had now stiffened the feet sufficiently to enable me to remove the framework from the interior. Care must be taken not to burn the feet.

I was now enabled to cut away the remaining portions of flesh and small bones from the interior of the toes. I then washed them with a solution of carbolic and water in equal proportions, and exposed them to the sun for a few days, after which I could kick them about like a football. On my return to England Rowland Ward did the rest.

But perhaps some reader may ask : "What became of the case in court, of the native chiefs, of the musketry, and of the circuit?"

As for the case. The defendant had to marry the plaintiff, and they lived together happily ever afterwards. The native chiefs were interviewed, and having relieved

their minds by talking for three hours, and having delivered themselves of more sensible statements than are usually heard in the House of Commons during the same period of time, went away thoroughly content. The musketry course was fired; it was better than that of most militia regiments. And I went on circuit. Justice and the quality which drops like the gentle dew from heaven were dispensed to John Chinaman with cheapness and despatch.

These matters had certainly been delayed, but they all came out well in the washing. Meanwhile, the country had been rid of an elephant, but it was not one of those which did the mischief.

CHAPTER IX.

MY BIG TUSKER.

ONE evening I was descending a river in a prahu. It was very pleasant work. Two Dyaks were seated in the bows propelling the boat by noiseless strokes, for it was my wish to avoid disturbing any game which might be coming down to drink. Another Dyak in the stern steered the boat with his paddle. I was seated in the centre of the boat cross-legged, upon a sort of little half deck which I had constructed for shooting purposes, and beside me lay my elephant gun and my express rifle, the former by Holland and the latter a perfect masterpiece by James Lang.

A sportsman will easily understand why I had this little deck constructed. Say, for instance, that you are seated upon the athwart ship plank which is ordinarily used as a seat in boats. To begin with, your feet are always in the bilge water, and you have no table upon which to lay your rifles, ammunition, pipe, tobacco, matches, etc.

Moreover, if you are a right-handed and right-eyed man, you can fire to the left with ease, but you cannot fire to the right without turning your whole body round facing the right bank of the river, and it is difficult to do this in an ordinary boat. If you have a little deck constructed you can spin your body round in any direction, and can thus in a moment find the most comfortable

position in which to fire at any object. I used always to fire in the sitting position, *viz.*, my legs spread out, my feet planted on the deck, and my knees raised with both my elbows fixed upon them.

The boatmen should be instructed to drop their paddles softly into the water upon a true edge, and to remove them without a splash. The boat should be trimmed on an even keel. On coming within range of game, the boatmen should be told to make one rather long stroke just to give the boat steerage way, and then to cease paddling and remain absolutely still until you have fired, for the least rocking of the boat is enough to spoil your shot. These apparently trivial details are essential to success in river shooting. Many a head of game have I shot in this way, and, therefore, have some right to give advice in the matter.

A prahu, like a canoe, has no keel, and therefore is disturbed by the least movement. For a variety of reasons, unnecessary to quote here, they are far more useful than any kind of European built boat for this sort of work.

It was a lovely evening, and the jungle was alive with animal and bird life. The river made sharp twists, and each time we swept round one of these our expectancy was wound up to the highest pitch, for every turn revealed fresh beauties in the way of long still pools reflecting the giant tropical vegetation as though in a mirror, and every new vista afforded an additional prospect of seeing game.

The worst of these rivers is that you may ascend one with ease, and find no obstacle which cannot be cleared away in a minute or two by a few strokes of a Dyak parang; but on descending again you may find the river

blocked up by some enormous tree which has fallen across from bank to bank. In cases of this kind, it is sometimes necessary to make a portage, *viz.*, to unload your boats, cut a number of rollers, make a wooden capstan and a rope of twisted bark, and thus haul your boats up the bank, and lower them into the water on the other side of the obstacle.

I remember on one occasion when ascending a river we came to a giant fallen trunk, about 150 feet in length and averaging about five feet in diameter. It had fallen across the river and served as a footbridge.

There was room for our boats to pass underneath without removing the awnings. While we were up the river the heavy rains at the sources caused a flood. On our return journey we found that the river having risen the trunk was half covered with water. It was equally impossible to pass beneath it or above it. We could not afford to wait a week for the flood to abate, so we had to make a portage.

Perhaps some one may ask: "Why not cut the trunk in half?" This appears to be a sensible question, but I would advise the querist to attempt to cut in half a horizontal tree five feet in diameter, the lower half of which is immersed in a swift flowing current, and he will discover where the difficulty lies.

As we descended the river, we gradually got into the tide way. The vegetation altered. There were fewer trees and more palms. The river became uninteresting. The tide was at its lowest, and on each bank a belt of about five feet of dense black mud was visible. The mosquitoes and sandflies began to annoy us too.

Occasionally we saw young crocodiles a few inches long basking in the mud, and they would rush splutter-

ing into the river as soon as we neared them. The Borneo waters abound with these horrid saurians, which grow to a very large size, sometimes attaining nearly thirty feet in length. Many people are killed by them. When hungry they will even take a man out of a boat. This, however, is easily done, for the steersman of a prahu sits perched upon the stern in the very way to tempt a crocodile.

The Government give rewards for their destruction, and many crocodile skulls are brought in, but somehow or other their numbers do not seem to decrease much. The best way to catch them is to sharpen both ends of a stick about a foot long, and fasten a line round the middle. A crocodile will bite an ordinary rope in half, so the portion of line nearest the bait is made of several small strands. These get between his teeth, and he is in consequence unable to sever them. The piece of wood, which performs the office of a hook, is baited with meat and is thrown into the river. A bladder or float is attached to the other end of the line.

The crocodile feeds more by night than by day. He swallows the meat and swims off. Next morning the natives examine the pool or river and soon discover the float upon the surface of the water. They attach a long line to the float and begin to haul. As soon as the line is drawn taut the sharpened stick turns crosswise, and thus the crocodile is fast hooked. He is then dragged out of the water and despatched by spear thrusts and cuts from the kriss or parang.

There is a popular fallacy that the crocodile can only live in fresh water. I have seen them make excursions a considerable distance into the sea, and people are often killed by them in salt water.

I remember on one occasion in my district, three young natives were fishing in a prahu. It was in an estuary of the sea, though the water was not more than three or four feet deep. They were casting hand-nets.

The two men who escaped related to me that the third man called out: "Help me! I have enclosed a big fish in my net". They went towards him, but as they did so a great crocodile seized the young fellow and pulled him out of the boat. They never saw him again. He must have thrown his net over the crocodile, and have felt its weight just as the crocodile was going at him.

For the benefit of the geological reader I will state that the rivers bring down a quantity of detritus and deposit it to seaward. At last this rises above the level of the sea and forms banks. Then the birds and the winds bring seeds of vegetation, and these banks become clothed with mangrove or nipa palm. Thus the land is continually extending seaward. This may be an erroneous theory, but it seems to be the only one which accounts for the facts.

The mangrove flourishes nearest to the coast, and will only grow where its roots are actually covered by salt water at high tide, and the nipa palm takes the place of the mangrove a little higher up stream where the highest tide fails to overflow the banks.

The river here made some very sharp turns like an S. Suddenly one of my Dyaks ceased paddling and pointed to the bank inquiringly. I listened and heard a swishing sound amongst the nipas, as though of some large animal on the feed. The timbadau do not come down so far as the region of nipas, so I guessed that it must be either elephant or rhinoceros. We swiftly paddled to shore, and making fast our boat to an overhanging bough of a tree,

managed to haul ourselves up by the knotted roots which here formed the upper part of the bank. The rifles were handed up, and we were all ready for sport. A Dyak whispered to me, that whatever it was, we had it at a great advantage, for it was in a loop of the river. That is to say, it was practically on an isthmus of which we occupied the neck. It was now low tide, and the animal would not dare to jump into the water and swim, because it would be unable to get through the deep belt of mud and mount the farther bank. I could see that the neck of the isthmus was not more than sixty or seventy yards wide at this point, so that as the animal was bound to break back we were certain to get a shot. Dangerous game when cooped up like this, sometimes behave in a peculiar manner, and go for you if you are anywhere near their path of exit. In this case, there would certainly be no golden bridge for a flying enemy, therefore it became advisable to look out for squalls.

The other boat had come up now, and its occupants had mounted the bank also.

When I started on this expedition my Dyak orderly was sick, and I had brought a Pathan with me to act in his place. I handed the Pathan my express rifle loaded with hardened solid conical, telling him to support me in event of danger, and I instructed the Dyaks to take to the river if necessary. Leaving a couple of men to look after the boats, I took up my No. 8 bore and we went in search of our quarry.

The ground here was fairly open for jungle. There was long coarse grass everywhere, and clumps of nipas and isolated small trees were scattered about; but in most parts I could manage to see for about sixty or seventy yards.

We still heard the swishing, and went cautiously in the direction of the sound. It proceeded from a clump of nipas rather thicker than ordinary, and we entered them. The swishing ceased for a moment. We skirted the clump of nipas and peered amongst them without seeing anything. Suddenly we heard a trampling and snorting, and some large beast broke away and rushed off on the other side in the direction of the bend. There was a cry of "Rhinoceros!" and we started off in full chase. At last I pulled up. I could not see him, but I knew he must be somewhere before us in the bend.

Again I heard a galloping and snorting noise, but this time coming towards us. He had discovered that there was no exit, and was breaking back in our direction. I got a glimpse of him about seventy yards off. He was coming in our direction, but would pass about twenty or thirty yards to our right, so I set off running to the right, and gained the shelter of a small tree, behind which I stood. I aimed straight at his chest, but when within fifteen yards he saw me and made a swerve which would cause him to pass between myself and my natives. As he passed I gave him a heavy shot in the lungs. The Pathan who had my express loosed it off, missing him clean, and sending the bullet whizzing across past me within a couple of feet of my head. The rhinoceros thundered on, and I gave him another heavy shot, raking forward, just as he was disappearing.

The Pathan was profuse in his apologies for having fired across at me. I was his father, his mother and all his relatives rolled into one. The pull off of the rifle was much lighter than the military arm to which he was accustomed. The rifle went off sooner than he expected. It was also so long in the stock that he could

not aim well with it. He was torn with grief at having sent a bullet in the direction of the sahib. He thought the rhinoceros was coming straight at the sahib. It only swerved at the last moment. He had fired with a view of aiding the sahib. He shoot the sahib, indeed! not he, if he had a hundred lives he would sacrifice them all cheerfully for the sahib's sake.

We now followed upon the spoor and found copious traces of blood, and about 400 yards farther on came upon him lying dead. He was a fine animal, but his horn was not to be compared with the horns of the African rhinoceri.

We had to camp down for the night upon the bank, and resume our journey in the following morning.

In this climate, unlike South Africa, the sportsman should neglect nothing to promote his health and comfort. Let me recommend him to take with him an iron fold-up camp bedstead (one of those which fits into a sack); also a cork mattress and plenty of waterproof sheets, for they are always useful. As for medicine, let him keep his liver working correctly and take five grains of quinine daily, and he will be all right.

With the kind permission of the reader I will here digress in order to relate a somewhat unpleasant adventure which once befell me in ascending a river.

I was bound partly on an errand of exploration but took my sporting rifles with me as there was always a chance of coming across game.

The sun had already set, and in a few minutes more it would be dark. My men were paddling as hard as they could to reach our camping ground for the night, and in consequence were making a good deal of noise and splashing with each stroke. Having given up all

expectation of sport for the day, I had just put on a light pair of canvas slippers in lieu of my heavy shooting boots, when we heard an elephant give an appalling trumpet call from the right bank of the river, about a hundred yards higher up stream.

We instantly pulled in to the bank. I grasped my heavy elephant gun and sprang on shore, followed by my Dyaks.

At this point of the river the jungle was very bad going. As you went forward, one step would be on a hard tussock and the next would be in mud a foot deep. The vegetation consisted of palms, and the ground was overrun by prickly weeds and binders. Moreover, there were no trees about which could save a man from a charge.

As we approached the elephants I heard a bull giving an ominous grumble. This sound somewhat resembles the rolling of peas on a drum head. Perhaps some may not understand the simile. I will liken it, therefore, to stage thunder. It is a deep bass purring or growling, and is supposed to be an indication that the elephant is in an evil humour. I believe he produces the sound by putting the tip of his trunk near the ground and exhaling blasts of air.

This elephant varied the performance by an occasional noise resembling a rush of steam, as though a locomotive was clearing its cylinders before starting on its journey. He was evidently irritated by our approach, and had no idea of decamping without giving battle.

It was now so dark that in the shade of the jungle I could not see my foresight distinctly, and I did not feel exactly comfortable. One of my Dyaks added to my uneasiness by saying: "There are two of them, a

male and a female. Be very careful, sir, and kill the bull with the first shot, for he is very angry and will certainly show fight. This is a bad place. He will knock down these palm trees like grass, so run away the instant you have fired. Perhaps it would be wiser not to go near him, sir."

Any person using language calculated to intimidate troops in the face of the enemy is liable to the penalty of death; and I was not pleased with the Dyak, more especially as his words aggravated the want of confidence in myself which I already felt. However, here I was—I had come out with the intention of shooting—and there was the elephant, so I was bound to go ahead as a matter of sportsmanlike duty.

We advanced. As we approached him he gave another savage trumpet call. My Dyaks began to betray the inherent fault of this gallant race. They became excited, and some of them rushed forward to get a view of the elephants. I had some difficulty in getting over the ground, as I was in danger of losing my slippers in the dense mud, and my ankles being bare got badly scratched by the prickly vegetation.

We were going parallel to the river and at about fifteen yards from its bank. Suddenly there was another appalling trumpet call, this time with an element of shriek in it, and I heard a rustling amongst the jungle about forty yards to our front. The sound approached us, and I knew that the giant was not going to wait to be attacked but was coming to look us up.

One of my Dyaks who had gone on ahead came rushing back with a look of alarm on his face. He never stopped, but passed me at full speed, making for the boat which was lower down stream. Two splashes in

the water announced that two more Dyaks had sought safety by taking headers into the river.

My folly in having approached this elephant in a dim light and on such dangerous ground now became painfully apparent to my own mind ; but there is no use in crying over spilt milk. There was not a moment to be lost. I was quite unable to run about in my present condition, and the river seemed to be the best position for giving battle in ; so I made for the bank as fast as I could, threw off my cartridge bag, and cocking both barrels came to the ready position. I determined not to fire at all unless obliged to, and in that event I contemplated throwing down my gun and leaping into the river.

Behind me I heard a noise of splashing and rattling of paddles, accompanied by the voices of the Dyaks in the boat crying out : " Look sharp and shove off, for he is coming down stream and will smash the boat if he sees it".

In a few moments more at about ten yards from me the jungle parted and a huge bull elephant stalked out, with his head elevated in the air, his trunk curled up, and his ears extended. On seeing me he halted and extended his trunk straight out at me. I levelled my gun upwards at him, and there we stood face to face without a movement on either side. I could hardly see the bead of my foresight. His head was so raised that I could not get the forehead shot, so I levelled my gun at his mouth, though it would have been almost hopeless to expect to kill him by a shot in the mouth. Had he given the least movement forward I should have fired instantly, and then, dropping the gun, have jumped into the river. This was perhaps one of the most trying

moments in my life, and in dreams produced by indigestion that elephant still plays a prominent part. At last he gave a blast, and wheeling round went back in the direction whence he had come. He was evidently in a sort of "Come on, I am ready for you" mood, but did not wish to commence hostilities unless provoked. It is needless to say that I felt very thankful at the result.

The part I played was not a particularly brilliant one, still I think that any fair-minded man will acquit me of poltroonery, for after all a man comes out to kill the game and not to be killed by them. The conditions too were distinctly unequal. I could not have killed him as he stood in that position with head elevated, and he certainly would have killed me unless I had jumped into the river after firing. I should have escaped, but then a fine animal would have been wounded for no reasonable end. He might also have taken it into his head to smash my elephant gun.

I regretted the loss of his tusks, for they were a good pair, and projected quite three feet and a half from the jaw.

We heard the elephants moving away in the jungle. The main object, however, of this chapter is to describe the manner in which I killed my largest tusker, so I must crave the reader's pardon for these digressions.

I had long heard of an immense elephant, and had seen his spoor, but had never succeeded in coming across him. That elephant came between me and my night's rest. I was always dreaming of him ; but somehow or other, in these visions, the lock of the rifle seemed to be out of order, or something intervened to prevent the realisation of my desire to kill him. I became

gloomy and despondent whenever I thought of him, and I went on an expedition with the sole object of meeting him and slaying him.

I had ascended the Kayu River, and had encamped where there was a clearing upon which stood an old house. A certain company was formed some years ago to prospect for gold upon the Segama River. The Segama itself was unnavigable owing to the numerous rapids, and the best mode of access to the upper waters of the Segama was to ascend the Kayu River as far as it was navigable, and thence to make a road through the jungle to the upper waters of the Segama. This the Gold Company had done, and the house I encamped in was their old abandoned depôt upon the Kayu, at the point where they commenced to make their road across country to the Segama.

The moon was at the full that night and there had been a good deal of rain, so there was every prospect of sport ; for elephants move about at the time of the full moon, more especially if the weather has been rainy. My design was to proceed along the road for five or six miles from the river, as thereby I should be sure to see the tracks of any elephants which had travelled parallel to the river.

I sent for my Dyak spoorer and had a confabulation.

“ Shall we get sport to-morrow ? ”

“ Yes, tuan, the moon is full ; there has been rain, and I heard a certain bird calling this evening. It may be that we shall come across the big elephant.”

“ What on earth do you mean about your bird ? ”

“ Whenever that bird gives its note it always presages success. The last time I went out hunting with the tuan,

and ran a thorn into my foot, and was obliged to remain in camp, the day the tuan killed that elephant, I knew he had killed, for I heard that bird. I said to the people in camp: 'The tuan has killed an elephant. He will come home carrying its tusks, see if I am not right;' and sure enough you returned successful. Besides, I have made quite sure of success. I am going with you to-morrow. I have brought my charms with me, see, here they are, all tied round my waist; so we cannot fail to be successful. The corporal also had a dream last night in which he saw an elephant, and that is a sure sign of success. Ah, he is a wonderful man that corporal!"

"Was it a tusker that he saw in his dream?"

"I am not sure, tuan; I do not know. I will ask him. But the corporal has the gift of second sight. At Padas, during the war, the corporal had a dream that Privates So-and-so and So-and-so would have ill-fortune on the next day. A reconnaissance in force was ordered, and these two privates were told off for the duty. They knew that a cloud hung over them, for the corporal had announced his dream, but they were true Dyaks and brave men. They preferred death to shame, so they directed a certain disposition to be made of their property and of pay which was due to them, and they went forth to do their duty. One of them got a suda (a sharpened bamboo stake) through his foot, and the other was shot in the behind. Neither was killed; but you see that disaster happened to them both, just as the corporal had predicted. Ah, he is a wonderful man! Undoubtedly he is inspired."

The Dyaks have no religious faith, and no idea of the Supreme Being or of worship, but they are great believers in dreams and omens, and have implicit faith in charms.

Mission teaching has a peculiar effect upon the mind of Dyaks. I do not think they are able to grasp it quite so well as they can the simple though very partial and imperfect creed of the Mahometans. I once had a mission Dyak amongst my men, and one night heard him reading out a chapter from one of the Gospels for the benefit of the other Dyaks. It was the sublime account given of the trial before Pilate, and the denial of St. Peter. I speak with reverence, but this was what I actually heard:—

“Read us something from the book,” said one.

“Yes, yes,” cried others; “it is very interesting, and you are very learned to be able to read; just like a white man you are, but you would not make a good sergeant for all that.”

He commenced to read, getting very slowly over the stones. Every now and then the Dyaks would make comments, when it came to the words, “the cock crew,” one Dyak said: “What o’clock was that?”

This started a debate at once. One Dyak said: “Day-break”.

“No, you fool,” said another; “the cock crows two and three times.”

At last one very stupid, heavy-looking Dyak who seldom spoke thought he ought to make a remark, so he asked the question: “Who did the cock belong to?”

“It belonged to Pontius Pilate,” said one.

“It belonged to the maidservant,” said another.

“It belonged to the neighbours,” said a third.

“It belonged to the Government,” said a fourth.

“It belonged to nobody, but was only a cock that walked about stealing what it could, like the Malay fowls,” said a fifth.

At last there was a cry of: "Never mind who it belonged to; go on—go on".

There was an animated discussion on St. Peter's conduct. "He was a coward," said one, "and he didn't know how to use his parang. I cut people's heads off; I don't cut ears off."

"No, he wasn't a coward to deny," said another. "We all know that in private life it is shameful to tell an untruth; but in this case it was like war, and he was justified in telling an untruth, for the truth would have done no good to anybody."

"He was a fool," said another. "Why did he come at all if he was going to tell an untruth? He had better have run away like the others did."

The next morning we took the field prepared to camp out for the night if necessary. A havresack contained my food and my whisky. A waterproof sheet contained my blanket pillow and a spare shirt in case I got wet. Let no one who hunts in the jungle forget to take a Maignen's filter with him, and some salt. When a leech fastens upon you, touch him with salt and he will drop off, and the wound will leave no irritation; but if you pull off a leech, the wound will smart, and perhaps inflame considerably.

Shortly after leaving camp we crossed the fresh spoor of a cow elephant with a calf accompanying it, but as I was in search of tuskers we passed on. After going for about two miles my spoorer gave an exclamation of joy and surprise, and halted, at the same time pointing to an immense spoor, quite fresh, which we recognised at once as that of the great elephant which had so often evaded us and of which we were now in search.

He had passed during the night time, and was direct-

ing his course towards the sea and generally parallel to the river.

It is difficult for any one who is not a sportsman to realise the thrill of pleasure which one experiences on striking fresh spoor of giant game. The reflection that not long ago the monster was walking over the very spot, rouses all the faculties, and vague anticipation is transformed into keen excitement. All is animation. "It is him sure enough." "He is going down to the swamps." "He passed here not five hours ago," were the remarks which rapidly fell from our lips.

The start of joy the sportsman feels when with the telescope he descries the outlines of the dun deer is feeble when compared with the awesome emotion aroused by recognition of the fresh tracks of a monster elephant.

The element of danger adds a zest to the pursuit. Before the monster will lie dead at one's feet many an anxious moment will pass, and the breath is drawn hard as one contemplates the grave potentialities of the situation. It may be that one well-placed shot will lay him low, or it may be that fierce charges will have to be met before the match is played out. In the background is the gloomy possibility of a sad procession returning to camp, bearing the disfigured corpse of one who will never draw trigger again, and across the memory flit shadows of hunting days with disastrous terminations.

But away with dull care and nervous apprehension. May the day be far distant when men of British race will give up the chase, and wrap themselves in the cotton-wool of over-prudence; for then the booming of artillery will be to them no longer a stirring appeal to get forward and do their duty, but only a knell of death and doom.

To my mind the very essence of sport lies in having to do all the work oneself, and for this reason I have never been able to conceive how certain forms of Indian sport in which elephants and a large number of beaters are employed, can for an instant be compared with African sport, for in the latter the hunter has to find his game, follow it up, and kill it, all off his own bat as the saying goes.

But to continue our story. The elephant was directing his course towards the sea and generally parallel to the river. We followed up the spoor. At first it led amongst some small stony hills, over which he had travelled in a bee line without stopping to feed ; but it descended into the plain again, where the ground was soft and the task of spooring was easy.

It was an open question whether we should succeed in coming up with him that day. If he was making a distant point, he might travel for fifty miles without stopping, but if he was going to some favourite feeding ground only a few miles off we were pretty sure to come up with him.

While tracking him, we came upon two rhinoceri who were having a bath in a mud hole. They jumped up and went off with a tremendous scurry, but I did not fire for I feared to disturb the elephant. At last we came to where the elephant had lingered for some time to feed, and here his tracks wandered about in a zigzag way all over the place. Farther on, we came to a huge pile of droppings which showed that he had rested here for some hours. The spoor now perceptibly freshened, and I felt pretty sure we should come up with him that day. About three P.M. we came to where he had bathed. He had again lingered here. In another half-hour we came

to a large swamp. The spoor led into it. It was curious ground. There were a number of little tussocks or islands, whichever you may choose to call them, each about the size of a room, with channels of deep mud separating them from each other. These channels were narrow, so that we could generally find a spot where we could spring from one island to another. The intervening mud was rather soft, and would have taken a man over the ankles had he tried, to walk in it. The islands had banks three or four feet high, which overhung in places. The swamp reminded me somewhat of a peat bog, with this difference, *viz.*, that it was overgrown with clumps of long grass reeds and palms. Between the line where the jungle ceased and the swamp commenced was an open strip about fifty yards in width which bordered the swamp. Along this one could see for 200 or 300 yards, for there was hardly any vegetation upon it. We spoorred the elephant into the swamp, and at last it became evident that he had joined several other elephants, for there were tracks which wandered about everywhere.

This was embarrassing; but we could always distinguish the track of the solitary bull we were following, for it greatly exceeded any of the other tracks in size. I was, however, annoyed that he had joined other elephants, as it might spoil our stalk.

At last we heard a noise of crackling branches, and knew the elephants were feeding.

We went straight towards the sound. I saw an elephant about forty yards away, but it was turned from me, and it was not the large bull that I was in pursuit of. I made a detour to avoid giving alarm to this elephant, and in so doing suddenly saw my huge friend. His head was raised, and his long white tusks were

gleaming before my very eyes, and I said to myself : "They are mine already".

I sat down to take my shot. He was about forty yards off and was broadside on, but was in such a thick clump of nipas that I could only see his head when he raised it to feed. He raised his head again, and was still for a moment as he stuffed a bundle of palm leaves into his mouth. Just then I covered him between the eye and the ear and fired. I did not see the effect of the shot, for the smoke obscured my vision, but the spoorer called out: "He is down".

Now the Oriental elephant will always come down if struck in the head, anywhere near the right place, by a two-ounce ball propelled by eight drachms of powder ; but unless he is shot through the brain he will get up again.

I saw the nipas swaying and shaking where he had fallen, and knew he was not dead. He now began screaming like a pig, and I dreaded he would get up again and make off in the opposite direction without giving me another chance. Excited as I was, I cast prudence to the winds, and dashed forward to try and get up to him before he should recover. There was no time to find a way from island to island, so I jumped into the mud and plunging through it tried to make a bee line towards the elephant. My heavy gun was open at the breech. I had extracted the empty shell, and was in the act of fumbling for another cartridge as I ran forward when I heard an ominous crashing and then a squeal, and the next instant the nipas parted and I saw the monster coming straight in my direction with trunk curled up and mouth open. There had been no time to insert another cartridge in the right chamber of my gun, and I had

shut the breech again, thus only having my left barrel available. I threw up the gun and gave him a heavy shot on the chest when he was within fifteen yards of me, and dropping the gun threw myself under the bank of the island on my left hand. I can't tell you what I felt like. I felt like nothing. There was no use in feeling like anything. I did what I could, *viz.*, lay there covered with mud from head to foot—that was all.

Fortunately for me, the shot in the chest was a sickener, and the great brute wheeled off at right angles and thundered on through the swamp.

I jumped up, took the mud out of the muzzles of my gun with my finger and ran on loading as I went. My Dyak corporal hauled me up on an island and said: "Run back hard, sir, he is returning to the jungle and is making a *détour*; you can cut him off if you are quick about it". I heard him crashing and plunging as he went through the swamp. He was making a quarter circle round us to try and regain the jungle, and I saw that I could cut the chord of the arc and thus get a shot at him as he was crossing the open space which separated the swamp from the jungle.

We ran on helter-skelter, the corporal being of the greatest assistance to me, and we got back to the edge of the swamp just in time, for as we reached it he came out of the swamp about a hundred yards off and went past us, giving a good broadside shot. As he did so, I gave him both barrels heavily behind the shoulder. I afterwards found the two bullet holes within a few inches of each other.

He shrunk to each shot, and I knew he had got it very severely. However, he went on.

I was quite exhausted with excitement and exertion

and required a short rest and a pull at the whisky to restore my nerves to their normal condition, but the confounded fellow who carried the whisky had run away when I fired and the elephant began to scream. He was not a Dyak but a Malay, "and behaved according," as the saying goes. Some of the Dyaks went off to look for him, and we soon heard them shouting in the jungle. Meanwhile the corporal spent the time usefully in scraping the mud off me with the blunt edge of his parang.

At last the truant returned, and, in reply to copious abuse, said he had got lost in the jungle.

We now went to the spot where I had given the elephant the last two shots, and followed up the spoor. There was a great deal of blood issuing from the wounds behind the shoulder, for it discoloured the leaves of the bushes which he brushed with his flank, and wherever he had halted there was a pool of blood on the path.

The mere fact of an elephant making halts after he has been shot is a sure sign that he has been heavily hit, as otherwise he will probably go fifty miles without stopping.

We spored on and on for about four miles, the spoor trending for the most part up hill.

There was a shower of rain and, I was in a torture of anxiety lest the rain should come on heavily and wash out the tracks. The shower set the leeches on the *qui vive*, and in a few minutes we were covered with them; but the excitement I was in about this magnificent elephant made me heedless of the leech bites.

At last the spoor began to descend into a very nasty, dangerous-looking, thickly-bushed gully, at the foot of which I could hear water running.

It was probable that the dying elephant, rendered thirsty by loss of blood, was making for this stream, and the chances were that he would make a stand there.

I did not think it fair to expose my people to unnecessary danger, though they wanted to accompany me, so told them to remain behind, while I descended into the gully with my spoorer.

The Dyak corporal took out his keen parang and began feeling the edge of it.

"What are you going to do?" I inquired of him.

"I am going to follow the tuan."

"Well, but you can't do anything to help me with that parang of yours."

"Oh yes, tuan. If he comes at us, I know the tuan will not miss him, but if anything happened I could cut off his trunk with my parang." And the gallant fellow added: "If anything happened to the tuan and I was not present, it would be *malu* (i.e., shame) upon me".

So I allowed him to accompany me. We descended slowly over great fallen trunks of trees and down banks over which the elephant had slid, scoring the soil heavily with his footmarks as he had slipped down them.

At last we reached the bottom of the gully, and came to a rivulet. He had halted in the bed of the rivulet for some minutes and had been squirting water all over himself, for it was splashed about on the bank. He had crossed; so we, too, waded through.

The spoor now went along the bed of the rivulet for about 200 yards. We followed up, with every sense on the *qui vive*.

At last, just as we came over the brow of a little hollow, to my joy, there before me lay the huge elephant quite dead.

He was in a perfectly natural position, just as though he had lain down and gone to sleep.

His tusks measured five feet ten and a half inches in length, and were of pure yellow ivory with a shade of pink tinge in it. I have them now. As he lay there it was impossible to measure him, but he must have been at least ten feet in height, and his bulk was enormous.

I travelled by the light of the moon and reached camp very late that night, getting severely scratched by bushes. On my arrival, I stripped off everything, and searched for leeches. They were all over me; but who cares for minor inconveniences of this kind when he is blessed by the consciousness of having that day killed the record bull elephant of the country? I was thoroughly happy. Had a Rothschild offered me all his money in exchange for the satisfaction of killing my elephant, I really believe I should have declined to accede to his proposition.

Sound and sweet are the hunter's slumbers after a day such as this; and his very waking is joyous, for it is laden with the consciousness of recent success.

CHAPTER X.

A TALE OF THREE ELEPHANTS.

THE reader will be pretty well tired of stories of shooting elephants; but there is one which I must relate, though it did not end up with the killing of a tusker.

At certain times of the year the elephants are exceedingly dangerous. When the wild fruit is ripe they come down to the banks of the rivers, where it grows in greater abundance than it does in the depths of the jungle. It seems to have a peculiar effect upon them, and to arouse their combativeness. I remember in particular an instance of their malicious behaviour under these conditions.

It was on the Upper Kinabatangan, and I will relate what occurred just as it was told to me by the natives who gave me the story.

Two natives wished to make a journey by a jungle path. They were carrying some food and personal effects in wallets which were strapped to their shoulders.

Some natives who had lately travelled by the very same path endeavoured to dissuade them, saying that a troop of elephants frequented the tract of jungle which the path traversed, and that the demeanour of the elephants was so threatening as to render it advisable to make a *détour* and thus avoid the danger of meeting them.

The two natives, however, were in a hurry, and made light of these warnings.

Next morning they set out, and travelled for some distance. They then heard the trumpeting of elephants a little way before them. One of them hesitated to proceed, but his scruples were overridden by the other native, and they went on.

All was silent again. At last the native who was leading pointed to an elephant calf not twenty yards from the road, and continued his course ; but the other native, being seized by some sort of qualm, halted and disburdened himself of his pack.

The native who had preceded him had only gone on about fifty yards along the path, which was here very straight, and was still in view of his companion, when an elephant gave a shriek from the jungle on the right-hand side of the path. It was answered by several shrieks from the left of the path, and soon from all quarters elephants came bearing down upon the unfortunate man.

His companion, who was about fifty yards behind, did not wait to see the result, but took to his heels. The last he saw of the other native was that he was trying to get rid of the pack upon his shoulders.

As he never turned up, a party went out the next day to look for him. His corpse was discovered trampled quite flat, and even the pack he was carrying had been demolished by the elephants.

But to proceed to my story. It was the season of ripe fruit. A certain troop of elephants had done some damage to natives on the Bahan River. I had previously sought for them, but they had eluded me. I had offered a private reward for information which should lead to my killing any of the said elephants.

One day some Dyaks came across from the Kayu River in a prahu, reporting that they had seen the spoor

of a troop of elephants on the right bank, so I set off at once and arrived at my camping ground on the same night.

Next day I made a wide cast across country and struck the spoor of four elephants. After following it for some hours it trended towards the river again, and at last I came to where they had all bathed in the river. After bathing they had ascended the river, feeding as they went.

It was about three in the afternoon when we came upon them. We were on their tracks which led along the banks, and were making our way through a sort of thicket, when we heard an elephant give an alarming squall, or trumpet call, about fifty yards to our front. This was followed by a perfect chorus of trumpeting from the others.

On this occasion I was accompanied by natives who were unaccustomed to elephants, and they became demoralised and rushed back in alarm, crying out to me: "Run, sir, they are coming".

The bush here at the water's edge was very dense, and we were approaching the elephants down wind, so I deemed it folly to proceed. However, the jungle about fifty yards from the water's edge was more open. There were large trees scattered about, and wherever you get large timber you have fairly open ground.

So I went back about a hundred yards, and making a move to the right went round, intending to approach the elephants from the land side and thus get them between myself and the river.

It was necessary to advance with caution, for they were evidently intoxicated with wild fruit, and had no intention of running away without first showing fight.

In approaching elephants which have turned rusty, it is as well to remember that every troop has a leader, and that the rest will, in all probability, follow the movements of that leader. If he be vindictive you ought to shoot him first, as thereby the troop is left without a commander and will most likely take to flight.

The trunks of the trees here were large enough to enable a man to successfully dodge an elephant; but I did not want them all to come at once, so I stole forward on tiptoe, dodging from trunk to trunk, wishing all the time that I was comfortably perched on one of the trees at about twenty feet from the ground.

At last I saw a grey mass before me at the edge of the thicket which bordered the river, and on looking more narrowly descried the form of an old cow elephant. She gave a trumpet call which set the others shrieking again. I could not see them, for they were in the thicket.

She was evidently the leader of the gang, and was giving the cue to the rest of them. She was standing broadside on, with her head in the direction we had originally approached them from, and with extended ears and one forefoot slightly advanced appeared to be on the look-out for anything advancing from that quarter.

She was about sixty yards off. I determined if possible to shoot her, but wished to make quite sure of her in order to avoid disagreeables. There was a big cottonwood tree about thirty yards nearer to her, so moving quietly sideways until the tree was in a line between myself and her head, I advanced swiftly forward under cover of the tree.

On reaching it I peered round the trunk. There she

was, trumpeting viciously and shuffling her forefeet in an ominous way. I sat down, covered her between the eye and the ear, and dropped her dead with a two-ounce ball.

There was a chorus of shrieks from the thicket and a sound of crashing branches, and out came an elephant, going full speed in the direction of my right front.

Jumping out of the smoke of my first barrel I covered him on the temple and fired, bowling him over like a rabbit.

The natives had not followed me, so I was without a second gun.

Hearing the other two elephants crashing through the bush, as though to make a *détour* round my right, I ran forward, reloading the heavy gun as I did so and passing within ten yards of the second elephant. The elephants broke cover and went away. They were disappearing in the jungle about eighty yards off just as I finished loading and had closed the breech of my gun, so I took a hasty snap shot at the croup of a retreating elephant, and at once brought him down in a sitting position with a broken spine.

To have three elephants down with three cartridges is very satisfactory work.

The elephant with the broken spine was struggling and trumpeting, so I gave him the remaining barrel to keep him quiet, and in so doing committed a great error.

I heard a shriek behind me, and on turning round, saw the second elephant I had dropped rising again to his legs and rocking about like a horse with the staggers. I realised at once that he was not shot through the brain, and that unless I gave him another shot he would recover

himself and make off, so I hastily opened the breech of my gun and endeavoured to reload. I was using green cases, which had been considerably exposed to damp, and they had swelled. I succeeded in withdrawing the empty shell in the right barrel about a quarter of an inch but could get it no farther. Meanwhile the elephant was screaming furiously, and having spun himself round in my direction extended his trunk towards me.

My gun was for the moment useless, and, as discretion is the better part of valour, I thought it was fully time to be off. I bolted for the nearest large tree. The elephant recovered himself and went away crashing through the jungle, and I was left standing there with the bare satisfaction of having dropped three elephants and only secured two of them.

The natives now came up, and after extracting the shells from my gun, I went up and gave the broken-backed elephant another shot in the head, which settled him.

The moral of this story is, in damp climates use brass shells. It was very exciting work while it lasted, but I have no desire whatever for a repetition of the performance.

On my way home, when not a mile from the camp, I had a very pretty double shot.

We were approaching a sort of glade or open patch of two or three acres in extent which adjoined the river. It was a favourite spot for deer and wild cattle in the evenings, for the grass was sweet, and the bank of the river sloped gradually down to the water's edge over a clean belt of sand and stones. About this glade were scattered patches of long brackens, and in amongst them was a kind of grass which the game loved.

I had seen spoor of wild cattle about, so I halted my people in the jungle before we emerged, and taking my express rifle went forward to reconnoitre.

Whether it was that I was tired or careless I know not, for my eye failed in its duty on this occasion. I was walking along the edge of the glade when casting my eyes to the left I started, for there was a wild bull not forty yards off, feeding quietly with his head almost towards me. I aimed at his collar and fired. At the same moment there was a rumbling, swishing sound, and I realised that a troop of them were galloping across me to gain the cover of the jungle. I only caught fleeting glimpses of them as they sped amongst the brackens, so I waited until they crossed the open strip which encircled the glade and separated it from the jungle. As they rushed across it I covered another well forward and fired. He rolled over at once and lay there without a kick. On looking back at the first one I had fired at, I saw that he too had dropped dead on the spot.

I left two natives to encamp at the place in order to drive away the wild pigs from the carcasses. *Apropos* of the wild pigs, I must relate an incident so extraordinary that but for the fact that I made it known at once and that the witnesses are still living I should fear to be put down as a romancer.

I was going up a river in a prahu, and, being anxious to shoot something for my people, was on the look-out for game.

I saw something moving amidst the brackens which fringed the right bank about sixty yards higher up stream, and catching a glimpse of something dark, took it to be a deer.

I fired a shot at hazard into the brackens where I saw

them shaking, and to my astonishment immediately afterwards saw a large wild pig trotting along the bank in the direction of our prahu.

He was bleeding from the jaws, the hollow ball from my express having gone through his cheeks.

When he reached a point on the bank opposite to our prahu he halted, and eyeing us for a moment, gave a grunt and plunged into the river to swim out to us. He came up on the right bow. A Dyak pushed him off with his paddle and the pig drifted down stream with the current past the prahu.

To my amazement he came swimming up stream and tried to board us on the left quarter. I cocked the left barrel of my rifle, thinking he might put his feet on the gunwale and capsize us, for we were rather crank ; but one of my Dyaks drew out his parang and leaning over, gave him a cut which half severed his head from his body, and he went floating down stream.

I have often heard of the pugnacity of the wild pig upon occasion, but I should never have believed such a thing as this unless I had witnessed it.

But to return to the subject of the beef of wild cattle. Next morning I sent up a boat from the camp to bring the beef, which the natives seemed to appreciate, though I did not like it. Most natives have a capacity for stowing away quantities of beef when they get the opportunity, and also of going a long time without food when food is not to be had.

I remember on one occasion going on an expedition with the deputy governor. Our provisions ran out. The men had to work terribly hard in dragging boats over stones and rapids. They went for a day and a half upon one sardine apiece which we gave them, and then

they settled down to a hearty dinner upon boiled fern tops.

But the natives of Borneo are not equal to the Caffres in this respect. A Caffre can eat more when he gets the opportunity, and can go longer without food when it is necessary, than any man I have ever seen.

I have given instances of successful days of hunting. Sometimes, however, one makes a mess of it as I am about to relate.

I had hunted all day until about three in the afternoon without success, and was thinking of returning home when we struck the spoor of a particularly fine bull elephant. We followed up, and in about half an hour the spoor freshened to such an extent that we knew he could not be far in front of us.

A tree had been blown down lately, and its leaves were yet green and loaded with berries. Just as we were passing this tree (it was only about twenty yards to our left) my attention was attracted to a grating noise proceeding from amongst the boughs of the fallen tree; and on looking to my left I started, for there was a huge bull elephant feeding upon the said tree. I could not see his head, for it was buried amongst the boughs and leaves of the tree, but the grating noise was produced by the motion of his jaws, and I could hear the flapping of his ears as he tossed his head about in the act of feeding.

I beckoned to my men to make themselves scarce, and walked up on tiptoe. It was very awkward. I wished to kill him with a single shot, but as his head was invisible I did not know how to manage it.

A shot from a large-bored gun planted behind the shoulder will do the business, but it does not drop him at once. If I shot him behind the shoulder, it might eventu-

ally kill him, but he might kill me first, for there were no trees about of sufficient size to protect a man. Now and then as he tossed his head I got a glimpse of his ears as he shook them. I determined to chance the shot at his temple, guessing the spot the next time I saw his ear. I knew that if I hit him anywhere about the head he would come down, but if he was not shot in the brain he would get up again. My design was to drop him by a shot somewhere in front of the ear and thus bring him on to his knees and stupefy him, and then to give him the second barrel in the crease behind his shoulder.

Accordingly I presented my gun and, waiting until I saw his ear move, fired through the leaves about a foot in front of it.

He fell on his knees, but it had been raining, and the air was so heavily laden with damp that the cloud of smoke produced by my discharge hung in front of me, obscuring everything for a few seconds, and I had to wait until it had partly dissipated. The smoke was dispersing. I levelled again to give him the second barrel behind the shoulder, and was in the act of pressing the trigger when there was a deafening report close to my ear, and another cloud of smoke obscured everything.

The Dyak who carried the express rifle had run up behind me, and placing the muzzle close to my cheek had fired it off at the elephant with a view of aiding me to kill it. Of course I could not see at all to fire my second barrel; and as it is a dangerous thing to stand in a cloud of smoke beside a wounded elephant that is getting to its legs, I had to bolt without firing the second barrel. The elephant escaped.

My disgust can be better imagined than described.

There were no words in plain Saxon that could do justice to my feelings on this occasion, and I sat down in such deep despondency that I had not even heart enough to give the Dyak my opinion of him.

He explained that he thought the elephant was killed when it fell on its knees, and that he only fired by way of helping to finish it off.

I told him to get out of my sight, and not to let me see him or hear his voice for the rest of the day.

That evening I was in about as morose a mood as it is possible for a man to be in, and I had to exercise self-control to prevent myself from venting my ill-temper upon my people.

After all though, if sportsmen never had a misfortune, if they brought everything to bag, the pleasure of sport would be gone.

In parts of North Borneo there is very fair deer shooting to be had. The natives continually worry the deer with dogs, spears, and nets ; and unless some steps are taken to preserve them in a short time they will disappear, or become so scarce as to render it not worth while to go out after them. It would be very easy for the Government to make small reservations where their officers could occasionally enjoy a good day's sport ; but they neglect all representations made to them on this subject. An occasional day's sport varies the monotony of existence in a dull out-of-the-way station, and the Government make a grievous error in thus neglecting the interests of their officers. Strangers, too, would come for the purpose of shooting, and would carry away with them some general knowledge of the country and its capabilities which might have the effect of attracting

capital. The Government seem to be blind to this, and do no more than grasp at the immediate dollar.

There was a place within easy reach of Kudat. It was much frequented by deer and wild cattle. A couple of hours' rowing on a flood-tide sufficed to reach it. As many as four or five deer could be shot there in an afternoon, and there was a small house in which sportsmen could encamp for the night.

Natives continually persecute the game there; and many of them have obtained guns, so that before long there will be no game to persecute.

In a country of dense jungles it is very difficult to get sport. Game exists in the jungles, but the hardships incurred in getting at it deter most sportsmen. There are no opportunities of stalking, excepting when the game emerge from cover morning and evening to feed in the clearings. It is impossible to use a horse. Even if the nobler varieties of game existed in large numbers, the conditions under which they would have to be pursued are such as to rob sport of three-fourths of its charms.

South Africa is, or rather was, *facile princeps* the paradise of sportsmen; for there the climate and the nature of the country all aided in enabling one to pursue sport under the pleasantest conditions. But South Africa is nearly shot out; and the next generation will have the bare satisfaction of reading accounts of the great game which, like Fenimore Cooper's heroic Indians, once were, but are no more.

M313049