AETAT 32

CHAPTER V.

AFRICA.

1846–1847. AGE 28–29.

SECOND EXPEDITION (WITH CAPTAIN FRANK VARDON). EXPLORATION OF COURSE OF LIMPOPO, AND DISCOVERY OF RIVER MOKOLWÉ.

Gunpowder permit—Six weeks' sport on Mariqué River—An elephant-hunt of twenty-three hours—Captain Frank Vardon, 'the most perfect fellow-traveller'—Enormous herds of buffaloes and elephants—'That must be a lie'—A liberal proposal—Tsétsé fly; *post-mortem* appearance of victims—*Rhinoster Oswellii*—White rhinoceros tosses Oswell and his horse—A gallant vengeance—Oswell tossed by a keitloa—Return to India.

THE experience gained in the preceding season made the laying in of fresh supplies an easy task. When it was accomplished he bought half a dozen horses to fill up gaps, and halting at Graham's Town, applied for and was granted a gunpowder permit.

'*March* 12, 1846.

'Permission is hereby granted to William Cotton Oswell, Esquire, to purchase and convey across the Land Boundaries of the Colony, for his own private use, One Hundred and Fifteen Pounds of Gunpowder. This Gentleman will proceed on his journey with two wagons and six Musquets.

'By Command of His Honour,

'THE LIEUT.-GOVERNOR.'

One hundred and fifteen pounds of powder for one gun and a seven months' expedition would seem an enormous allowance, but the event proved he had by no means over-estimated his requirements.

By the middle of April he was on his way to the Mariqué River, a small tributary of the Limpopo, intending to shoot down it to its junction, and then explore the main stream as far as he was able. The number of animals was really incredible. He was out every day and all day, and sometimes all night. 'On one occasion,' he notes, 'John and I had a very long ride after a herd of elephants we never came up with; we started at 8 a.m. and only reached the wagons again next day at 7 a.m.' Five or six weeks passed thus, when one morning before he left camp, a Kafir came in with a letter fastened in a cleft stick from a Captain Frank Vardon, of the 25th Madras Native Infantry, who, hearing that an Englishman was within a short distance, proposed to join parties and shoot together.

CAPTAIN FRANK VARDON.

'The most perfect fellow-traveller.'

'I had been one whole season and part of another at the work and I thought that a newcomer, of whom I knew nothing, might not be the most desirable of companions; he would very likely wish to stop when I wished to go on, and *vice versâ,* and I sent an answer in this spirit, but, thanks be praised, I repented my churlishness in an hour after the departure of the messenger, and wrote a second letter begging Captain Vardon to ignore the first, pardon my selfishness, and join me as soon as possible; and to the end of my life I shall rejoice that I

did so, for in three days the finest fellow and best comrade a man ever had made his appearance. . . . I will not attempt to describe him. Let every man picture for himself the most perfect fellow-traveller he can imagine, and that's Frank; brightest, bravest-hearted of men, with the most unselfish of dispositions, totally ignorant of jealousy, the light of the camp fires, the most trustworthy of mates; a better sportsman and a better shot than myself at all kinds of game save elephants, and only a little behindhand in that, because he was a heavy weight and poorly armed with a single-barrelled rifle. Yet he was always rejoicing in my success and making light of his own disappointments—and this man I had all but missed!'

The buffaloes were in immense herds along the Mariqué:

'One bright moonlight night the report of the gun awakened the whole forest to the left of us into life, unheard, unseen, before. I rode up to the edge. It was a mass of struggling buffaloes jammed together. The outside ones startled by the shot, and having got sight of our party, bore back upon the main body; hoof and horn, horn and hoof rattled one against another, and for some distance I rode parallel with a heaving stream of wild life. I cannot pretend with any accuracy to guess their numbers, but there must have been thousands, for they were packed together, like the pictures of American bison, and any number of braves might have crossed over their backs.'

Elephants, too, were in such large herds that he halted a week or ten days and shot all day long, and had the ivory as it was brought in piled up under his wagons.

One morning there appeared two wagons on the

opposite side of the river. Seven or eight of their occupants, Boers, crossed the stream and had a friendly chat, coffee and tobacco, with the travellers: when all of a sudden one of them caught sight of the ivory under the wagon. They all got up to look at it.

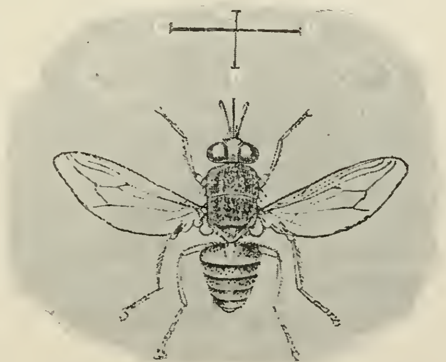
'"Where did it come from? Who shot it?" "I did," replied I, "and during the last few days." "Alone?" "Yes, alone." "That must be a lie—a poor lean fellow like you could never have shot such a splendid lot of tusks." They appealed to my drivers for the truth, and when we returned to our coffee-pot made the astonishingly liberal proposal that I should join and shoot with them and take half the ivory killed by the whole party. They were in earnest, and I had the greatest difficulty in getting off, but I have reason to believe it was through the account of these Boers and of another party I met at Livingstone's station, that I received a most courteous message from Pretorius, who was then their chief, that he hoped I would visit Mahalisberg, and that I should find a hearty welcome through Boer-land.

'They had a wholesome dread of traders who for ivory might supply the natives with muskets and ammunition, and thus render them recalcitrant, and they had found out I didn't and wouldn't trade; indeed the story among them was that on a native bringing a tusk to my wagon for sale, I threatened to shoot him then and there!'

Whilst they were on the low Siloquana Hills, the travellers first made acquaintance with the *tsétsé* (*Glossina morsitans*):

'A dusky-grey, long-winged, vicious-looking fly, barred on the back with *striæ*, about the size of the fly you

so often see on dogs in summer. Small as he is, two to three will kill your largest ox or your strongest horse; for the poison introduced by the proboscis is zymotic. The victims sicken in a few days; the sub-lingual glands and muscles thicken, the eyes weep, the hollow above them fills up, a defluxion runs from the nostrils, the coat stares, emaciation is rapid and extreme, and in a period varying from a fortnight to three months, death inevitably ensues. We examined about twenty of our beasts after death, and the appearances were similar in all—flesh flaccid and offensive, fat, if any remained, like yellow water, membrane between skin and flesh suffused with lymph, and puffy, stomach and intestines healthy, heart and liver, and occasionally lungs diseased. The heart in particular attracted our attention. It was no longer a firm muscle, but flabby, like flesh steeped in water, blood gelatinous and scanty—the largest ox not yielding more than 18 pints. Moreover, it has entirely lost its colouring property, the hands when plunged into it coming out without stain. All domesticated animals are affected save the ass and the goat, and the calf as long as it sucks. Man and all the wild animals are proof against the poison. The fly infests particular spots, from which it *never* shifts. The natives herd their cattle at a distance from its haunts, and should they in changing their posts be obliged to pass through tracts of country in which it exists, they choose a moonlight



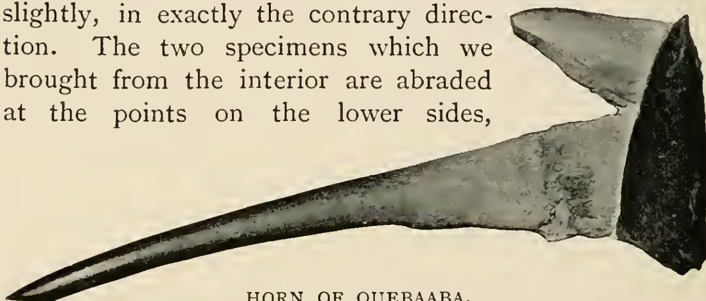
TSÉTSÉ FLY (HIGHLY MAGNIFIED).

A B, actual length of body; C D, span of wings.

winter's night, as during the nights of the cold season it does not bite.'

It was on the banks of the Mokolwé, an important tributary of the Limpopo discovered by Oswell and Vardon, that the former first met with and killed the *quebaaba* :

'This beast resembles the white rhinoceros (*Rh. simus*), except in the formation of the horn, which is longer, much straighter, and curved, though but slightly, in exactly the contrary direction. The two specimens which we brought from the interior are abraded at the points on the lower sides,



HORN OF QUEBAABA.
Length, 43½ inches.

probably from coming in contact with the ground whilst the animal is feeding. When running at speed also, or when alarmed, it carries the head very low, as do likewise the other species, and the horn, then standing nearly straight out from the nose with a trifling curve downwards, may occasionally strike or rub against the inequalities of the ground.

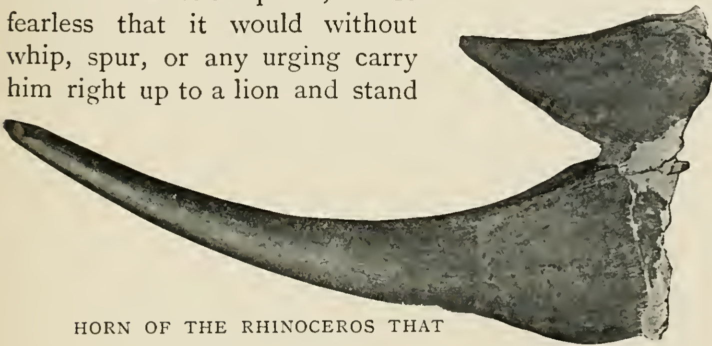
'From the circumstance of the *quebaaba* being found in the same neighbourhood, and from its general resemblance to the white rhinoceros, we at first supposed the peculiarity of the horn to be merely a malformation, but the fact of five having been seen, two of which were shot; of the Bechuana who inhabit the country in which the specimens were obtained, knowing the animal well under a distinct name, and describing it as frequently to be met with, though by no means so common as the other kinds; and of its being unknown to the south of the Tropic

DROVE ITS HORN IN UNDER THE FLANK, THROWING HORSE AND RIDER INTO THE AIR.

though the common white rhinoceros is there found in abundance, caused us to change our opinion and to consider it as certainly a distinct species.'*

During this expedition Oswell had two terrible experiences with rhinoceros. That neither proved fatal is little less than miraculous.

He had one pre-eminently good horse, the very pick of all he ever had in Africa—some hundred and eight—fast and most sweet-tempered, and so fearless that it would without whip, spur, or any urging carry him right up to a lion and stand



HORN OF THE RHINOCEROS THAT KILLED STAEL.
Length, 32 inches.

perfectly motionless within a few feet of the brute whilst its master fired. Returning to camp one evening on Stael, he fired both barrels at a white rhinoceros. Instead of dropping or bolting, it began to walk towards the smoke. He turned his horse only to find a thick bush was against its chest. Before he could free it the rhinoceros drove its horn in under the flank, throwing horse and rider into the air with such terrific force that the point of the horn pierced the saddle. As they fell the stirrup iron scalped his head for four inches in length and breadth. He scrambled to his knees, and saw the horn actually within the bend of his leg. With the energy of self-preservation he sprang to his feet, but tottering a step or two he tripped and came to the ground. The rhinoceros passed within a foot without

* He reverted, however, latterly to his original view.

hurting him. As he rose for the second time his after-rider came up with another gun. Half pulling him from his horse, Oswell mounted it and galloped after and caught the rhinoceros. Wringing the blood from his eyes, and keeping back the piece of scalp with his left hand, he held the gun to his shoulder with his right, and shot the brute dead. Resting for a few moments under a bush he remounted, and rode back to Stael.

'That very morning as I left the wagons I had talked to him affectionately, as a man can talk to a good horse, telling him how when the hunting was over I would make him fat and happy; and I had played with him and he with me. It was with a very sore heart that I put a ball through his head, took the saddle from his back and started wagonwards, walking half the distance, ten miles, and making my after-rider do likewise.'

It would be impossible to conceive anything more characteristic of the man than these last few words. Shaken in body by his terrible fall, in mind by the loss of his favourite horse, severely wounded and bleeding, he yet, as a matter of course, shares the ten-mile tramp home equally with his black servant. When they reached the wagons and explained what had happened, the Kafirs to a man burst into tears.

On the return journey to the Cape he met with the most serious accident of his life. Stalking two rhinoceroses of the *keitloa* variety, he was lying flat and waiting for a side chance. They came within twenty yards of him, but head on, in which position they cannot be killed except at very close quarters, for the horns completely guard the brain, which is small and lies very low in the head. Constant success and impunity in shooting these beasts induced a somewhat rash confidence, and he lay still until he saw that if the nearer of the two forged her own length once more ahead her foot would be on him. He would have shot her up the nostril, but a charging

FIRED BOTH BARRELS; BUT WITH THE SMOKE HE WAS SAILING THROUGH THE AIR.

rhinoceros always makes straight for the smoke of the gun, and he knew that if number one fell, number two, who was within four or five yards of her, would be over him before the smoke cleared. Hoping that his sudden appearance from the ground would startle her and so give him a chance of escape, he sprang up and dashed alongside of her to get her in the rear, his hand being on her as he passed. She immediately gave chase. He was a very fast runner, but in thirty yards she was at his heels. A quick turn saved him for the moment; the race was over in the next. As the horned snout came lapping round his thigh he rested the gun on the long head, and, still running, fired both barrels; but with the smoke he was sailing through the air, and it was not until three hours later that he recovered consciousness, to find a deep gash in his thigh, eight inches long, down to the bone in all its length. The limb stiffened, and, unable to get into the wagon, he made his bed for nearly four weeks under a bush, the rip healing rapidly, covered with a rag kept constantly wet.

As soon as he was sufficiently recovered he hurried down to the Cape, where an official announcement awaited him that in the event of his failing to return to India by a certain date, then two months past, his appointment would be cancelled. He accordingly secured a passage in the next ship.

HORN OF SPECIES OF RHINOCEROS THAT TOSSED OSWELL.

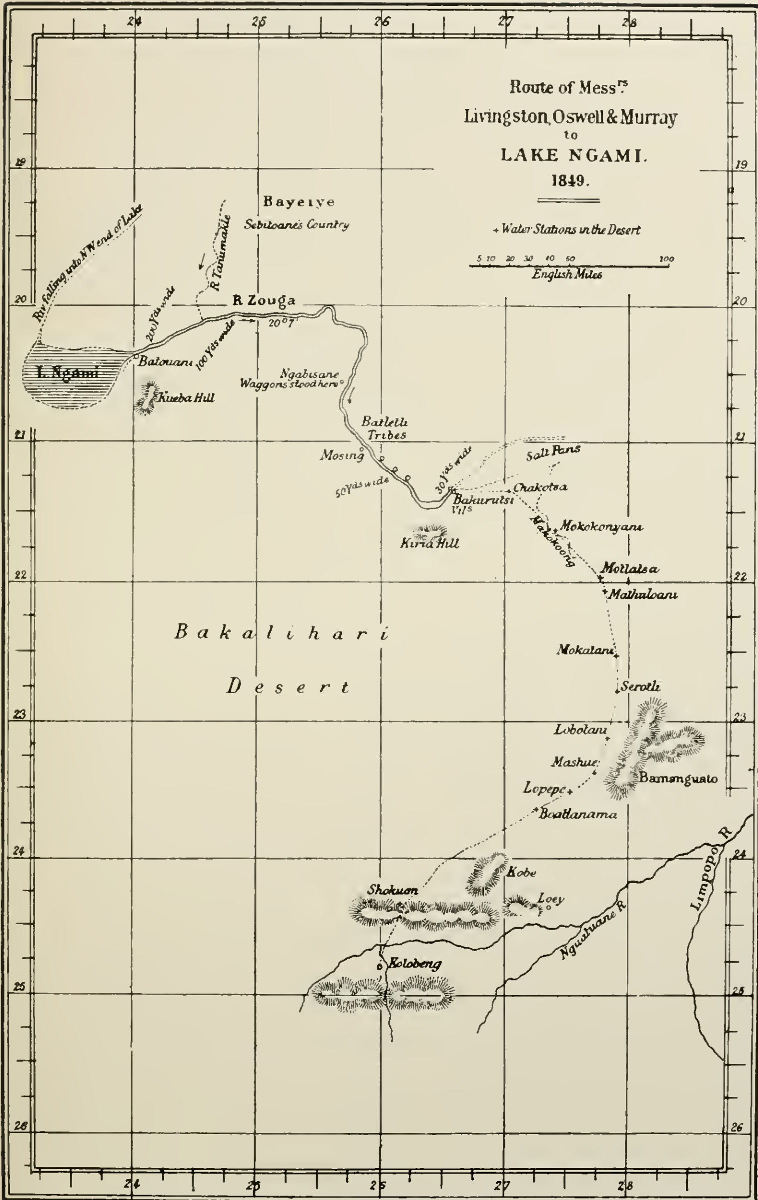
Length, 23½ inches.

short enough, often not more than ten miles; but the work was nevertheless hard from the thickness of the jungle and the heavy sand. In one five and a half mile stage upwards of a hundred trees were cut down, from the size of *my* arm to that of a blacksmith's—the distance took six hours and a half to accomplish. Another heavy sand-rise thickly covered with bush, of about a mile and a half in extent, kept us for two hours. I was on this occasion just ahead of the wagon trying to find the most practicable line, and very often could see nothing but the fore oxen's heads, and knew not by sight where the vehicle might be, till all at once I would behold it tearing its way through the thicket. A small dwarf thorn-bush also caused us no inconsiderable annoyance, tearing the noses and legs of the oxen, and preventing them from pulling together.

'The Noka a Batlatli, Noka a Mampooré, Ngami, Inghabé (for it has all these names), is situated in 20° 19′ S. lat., and about 24° E. long., at an elevation above the sea of 2,825 feet. The latitude you may consider correct. The longitude, in consequence of our having no watch that would go, is merely worked out by courses and distances. The height is an approximation only, as ascertained by one of Newman's barometric thermometers.

'The distance traversed from Kolobeng was six hundred and three miles, measured by a good trocheameter. Kolobeng is about five hundred and seventy miles from Colesberg, or nine hundred from Algoa Bay. Now that we know the "short cuts," we might perhaps make the journey in five hundred and fifty miles. The direct course would be N.W. from Kolobeng, but there is no water for a wagon; men walk it after rains.

'The Batouani have no communication with the Portuguese. The only other large tribe on the Lake, of which I learnt the name, was the Maclumma, of Damara



Route in 1849

descent, I fancy. Sebitoané is said to live on one of the tributaries of the Tamunaklé, which flows into the Zouga. His country is called that of "large trees," or "many waters." He *has* communication with the Portuguese; but through another tribe, *not* direct. Don't you envy me my trip in perspective? The tsétsé is spoken of in particular spots; but as the chief is a kind of Moselekatsé of the west, and very rich in oxen, it cannot, I should suppose, be spread over any large tract.

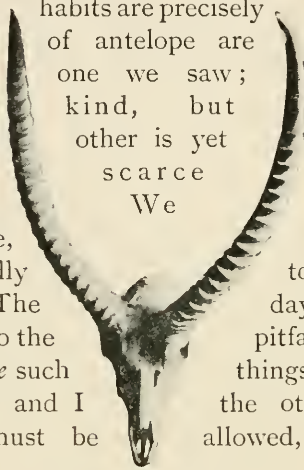
'A few words on the Zouga, its inhabitants, etc., etc., and I have finished. Its course is, as you see, at first nearly E., then S., S.E., N.E., and E.N.E. From two or three days from the Lake it is broad, varying from two hundred to five hundred yards, with flat and rather swampy shores. It then narrows, and flows through high banks of limestone for six days—again opens out, and at its most southern point spreads into a little lake four miles or so across; then divides into two streams, one of which (the most southerly) is said to lose itself in the saltpans to the eastward, while by far the largest branch, on the authority of the natives, runs away N.E. and E.N.E. through the country of the Matabelé. I should mention that all this part of the banks of the river, so far as we saw it, is excessively thickly edged with high reeds, and bears evident marks of inundations. May it not take a bend S.E. and unite with the Limpopo? For the first ten days the banks are very picturesque, the trees (most of them unknown to the Bakuains) magnificent, for Africa; indeed the mochuchong, one bearing an edible fruit, would be a fine specimen of arboreal beauty in any part of the world. Three enormous morlwānahs grow near the town of the Batouani: the largest is upwards of seventy feet in girth; but they are not common. The palmyra is scattered here and there amongst the islands, and on the banks of the Zouga, and is abundant along the Mokokoong (the sand

river of the desert). In appearance it is exactly the same as our Indian ones, but bears a smaller fruit. I have brought some down with me. A tree very like the smaller banian of India grows on the bank of the river. The natives said it had, occasionally, "drops"; but I did not see any. It would seem, however, to have some kindred affinity to the Indian one; for in cases where a branch had been taken and bent downwards, I noticed that it had frequently shot up again. Wild indigo is abundant in places. The Makalakka or Mashūna (I think them to be the same) do really make cloth, and dye it with this blue. Don't you remember our being very sceptical on this point? They use the cotton of two kinds of bushes and one tree—the latter is of inferior quality. The Bakoba are the principal dwellers on the islands and banks of the river, though there are a few scattered Bushmen and Baharootzi kraals towards the lower end, where we struck it. The word Bakoba means slave, and is only applied to them by others, they styling themselves Bayéiyé, that is pre-eminently men. They are fine intelligent fellows, much darker and larger than, and in every respect superior to, the Bechuanas. Their language is distinct, with a click; but *not* Bush. They must come from the Damara side I fancy. They are not by any means confined to the river Zouga, but "fish and float," as Livingstone's letter says, in all the neighbouring waters. Their canoes are but roughly fashioned out of whole trees, and, so that one end can be made to counterbalance the other, they do not care whether they are straight or not. Many of them are quite crooked. Paddling and punting are their only means of progression; sailing is unknown. They live chiefly on fish (that abomination of the southern Bechuanas), which they catch with very neatly made nets, manufactured from a species of wild flax. Their float-ropes are made of a flag, and the small floats on the nets of a kind of reed with

joints, so that, although one may become saturated, the others still remain buoyant. I have pieces of rope, net, twine, hemp or flax, which you shall see some day. To prevent their rotting, the nets are dyed with a tan prepared from the bark of the camel-thorn. The Baharootzi have no canoes or nets, but spear fish with the assegai, standing on rafts made of bundles of reed tied together. The fish are in great abundance, and of immense size, our old Limpopo flathead among the number. The Baharootzi, Bakoba and Bushmen have also another way of providing themselves with food, hardly so unobjectionable in my eyes. From end to end the banks of the Zouga are lined with pit-falls. Eleven of our horses fell in—one only died however; but two of the oxen managed to bury themselves—fortunately we had a few spare ones. We ourselves were all caught—the trader twice or thrice in the morning whilst searching for and opening the holes to prevent mishaps amongst the cattle. They are most artfully concealed; loose sand is sometimes thrown over the covering reeds and grass, and the impressions of animals' feet, together with their dung, placed on the top. They make the game very wild. One animal falls in and alarms the whole herd. They retreat far off, and only return again to drink, and flee. From the elephant to the steinbuck nothing escapes.

'We had hard work enough without much hunting; but I have killed some fine bull elephants. These and buffaloes are abundant — rhinoceroses and other game (except in one or two particular spots) very scarce. Hippopotami are so hunted by the Bakoba, that they hardly ever show themselves. The elephants are a distinct variety from the Limpopo ones; much lower and smaller in body (ten feet is a large bull) but with capital tusks. I saw two quebābas (straight-horned rhinoceroses) and wounded one, but did not bag him. Eight or nine léché fell. Piet (my wagon driver) shot the first,

Livingstone the second, Murray the third. The horns of the léché are very much the same as a male water-buck's, and his habits are precisely similar. Two other species of antelope are mentioned by the natives—one we saw; something of the koodoo kind, but lighter and smaller — the other is yet to be seen. Lions are very scarce along the river and by the lake. We never heard them but once, and at one time used occasionally to let our oxen run loose at night. The day, however, that my horse fell into the pitfall and died, we found there *were* such things. The trader rolled one over, and I the other, rather disgracefully it must be allowed, from a tree; but had we been particular as to our honour, we might as well have left them alone, for we could never have seen them for the bush. I slew two others, and this was the whole of the bag, though I never missed but one chance, and that was from being greedy and trying to make too sure. The only thing like an escape I had was with the first. We had lost the road coming into Kolobeng, and, cantering along through some rocky hills to look for it, I heard a grunt behind me, and, turning round, saw a lion within eight yards of me in full chase, head and tail up. My old hat, torn off by a tree, and a shot fired Parthian-wise satisfied him till I had got fifty yards ahead. I then jumped off, with the intention of loading the empty barrel, and bringing my friend to account. My foot was not clear of the stirrup when he was on me. *This* time I was on the look-out for him, and a lucky shot dropped him amongst some low bushes and masses of rock, about fifteen or twenty yards from where I stood.



HEAD OF LÉCHÉ.

'There is now a great point to be ascertained, namely, whether it be not possible to reach the Portuguese settle-

ments on the Zambezi by an overland route. I hope to do something towards elucidating this, and have therefore made up my mind to leave Cape Town towards the close of the present month. I have letters of introduction to the Portuguese authorities should I happen to fall in with them, and anticipate no danger from the natives. We shall not, in all probability, reach the stations on the Zambezi, but we may be able to prove the possibility of subsequent travellers doing so. Livingstone will accompany me.'

With affectionate promptitude Vardon set about replying to this letter the instant he had finished reading it:

'33, Oxford Terrace,
'Hyde Park,
'*March* 27, 1850.

'My dear Oswell,

'. . . Your long and welcome epistle has gladdened my eyes. Your good uncle sent me the enclosed last night and I have run up to Galton's with it to hand it over to himself *in propriâ personâ*. I shall take care you have your due share of fame in this part of the world, and will put pen to paper for you if need be, and see that you stand right with the Geographical Society, of which, were I you, I would certainly become a member. Steele, I see, has just been proposed as a candidate. I have attended two meetings. . . . On the 8th of April we are to have a South African night again. I shall certainly go, and shall perhaps say some few words for you. I direct this to you at Kolobeng, but when Galton gets there I suppose you will be on the Zambesi drinking coffee with the Portuguese Governor ! ! Mind the fever, that's all ! I hear the coast there is very unhealthy indeed. . . . I hope soon to see the skin and horns of a liché . . . That passage over the Kalahari is an awful affair apparently. Couldn't men go *in advance* to dig out the sand-holes, so that water

would be ready when the oxen arrived? Now that you have pioneered the way it will be much easier for those that follow. Would that I could again try the veldt with you! . . . It was too bad of that old fellow Macqueen saying that Parker had reached the Lake, and now he tells us that the Boers have followed the Limpopo to the sea! And so it is with everything else. If you were to discover an enormous range of snowy mountains he would be sure to declare he knew of them years ago. This is so unfair and ungenerous, that I cannot bear it. I like to see all men reap the benefit of their labours, and so no doubt do you. Can I do anything for you in England? What can I send out to Livingstone? I shall be so glad to give him anything he wants. Would he like any medical books, do you think? Try and find out, there's a good fellow, and tell me, when you write. I believe he does know something of surgery, so he can name what sort of books he wants and I will get them. I jog on in the old way at No. 33, heartily sick of England, and dreaming of South Africa almost every night. I have two lovely rifles, and hope to lay low some specimens of various Indian fauna when I rejoin the gallant 25th next cold weather. The *Times*' City article, 6th of March, tells us there are no hippopotami or crocodiles in the Lake! Such nonsense has got abroad about it, you have no idea. I placed on record your discovery as fairly as I could the moment I saw it dimly alluded to and doubted by the *Athenæum*. I must send you a copy if I can, merely a few lines, but quite enough. I couldn't write more as I had not heard from you, but I determined to put the saddle on the right horse. I shall see Steele and have a chat with him over your letter. Once more farewell, and God bless you. My Mother and all my Brothers desire their kind regards and best wishes,

'Affectionately yours.

'Your letter has made me quite a different man!'

thousands of miles away from a white person she cared for her children, and encouraged the prosecution of the expeditions. To myself she ministered many acts of kindness with a delicacy and consideration which only a woman could exhibit.'

As an instance of her courage he used to relate that during the Ngami journey the wagon in which she was travelling caught fire. There were, as she knew, more than a hundred pounds of powder in it, but she did not stir, contenting herself with calling to her husband, who happened to be near, 'David, David, put it out!'

Against her own inclination, therefore, for her children's sake, and to ease her husband's mind, she acquiesced in the wisdom of the proposal that they should all make their way to the Cape, and that she should thence take her little ones to England by the next ship. But was this practicable? The clothes that served well enough for the wilds of Africa would not be suitable for a voyage with civilized people, and in any case they were few, and nearly worn out. A complete new outfit for the family would, obviously, be imperative; then there was the passage money to be provided, and the missionary's meagre salary for the past year was all spent. He anxiously discussed with his wife the possibility of borrowing sufficient for their requirements on the security of his future income. At length he yielded to his friend's advice not to meet trouble half-way but to defer the consideration of the subject until it became actually necessary, and meanwhile to journey southwards with all speed. 'We return,' he writes, 'as we have hitherto travelled, together, he assisting us in every possible way. May God reward him!'

It had been agreed that a general halt of a few days should be made at Kolobeng, and it was a surprise and a disappointment to the Livingstones that Oswell, without vouchsafing any explanation of his change of mind, expressed his intention of pushing on immediately, alone.

At Colesberg he found awaiting him a letter from his brother, and one of the long friendly chats from Vardon which always gave him such pleasure:

The Rev. E. W. Oswell to W. Cotton Oswell.

'MIDHURST,
'*Aug.* 14, 1851.

'The last report of you was from a letter to Louisa, which we were not a little glad to receive as it had been a long time since we had had any tidings, and the warlike state of South Africa made us, and still makes us, very anxious about you. You seem determined to pursue your object there, and I trust you may succeed, though it keeps you away so long from England. . . . I wish you would write a book and send it to us for our amusement. . . . Had I a permanent residence I should petition you to let us have your African horns, etc., which I believe are in a warehouse at present. I see notice was taken in the newspapers of *your Lake* and the country about it. . . . I sincerely trust your discoveries may tend towards decreasing the Slave Trade.'

Captain Frank Vardon to W. Cotton Oswell.

'KURNOOL,
'*Aug.* 12, 1851.

'Your letter from Motito has just come in and I set to at once to give you a long stave in reply. . . . I have lately heard from Moffat and Livingstone. I am as fond of poor old Africa as ever and my thoughts are constantly on the Limpopo. I can never hear too much of it, that is very certain. . . . When you get this I hope and trust you will have shaken hands with the great Sebitoané; he must be a fine fellow by all accounts. . . . Cumming's

Exhibition still goes on, and Methuen tells me that a black fellow parades up and down in front of it in a leopard skin kaross, to attract visitors ! ! I never thought any of us African wanderers would have come to this. . . . I think I told you that he wrote to me for the skin of the leche you sent me. He offered me various things in exchange for it, but I thought you would prefer its going to the British Museum, where Mr. Gray assured me it should be well set up, and placed in a conspicuous spot. May you soon return to see that it is so. So you have got the skin of another buck. The nakong *must* look a rum un indeed with such long hair. . . . I often think of you and wonder whether you have any of your old servants with you. Where is George ? I should much like to know. Have you Piet or Claas or John ? What did you do in the fishing way ? Did you haul out many more of our huge friends the barbers ? How about the hippopotami ? Have you shot any since we blazed at their noses, with the Boers, on the Limpopo ? What did you bag besides the thirty bull elephants and the two quebaabas ? I am always curious to know the exact bag. I shall look forward with such pleasure to your next letter ; pray mind it is a long one ; it cannot be too full of the wonders of the new land.

'Although you won't give me credit for it, I am really to be depended on in the letter way, and I know no friend for whom I would sooner employ my pen, than yourself. . . . I am only so sorry I have no stirring incidents by flood and field to tell you of. *You* have so much to tell *me*, that *sheets* wouldn't tire me, and even the names of your men and horses would interest me !

'Did you ever fall in with any of the gigantic-horned oxen ? The pair of horns I purchased of Hume hold twenty pints *each*. He didn't know from what country they came. . . . How miserable were my attempts at the elephants. Do you remember my worrying that unhappy old cow to death in the neighbourhood of Lynchituma ? I am a sad spoon

at an elephant, I must confess. I think I could manage one better on foot, as I could then make sure of *hitting* him at any rate, which I am certain I could never do from the saddle. . . . When you go to England you will find Arrowsmith, the map man, well worth knowing, and he will make any corrections in his South African map you tell him. He saw Cumming once or twice, but could get no additional information out of him as to the part of the Limpopo *beyond* where we went. . . . And now when do you think we have a chance, should we both be spared, of meeting again? I fear not for many years to come. . . . But never mind; we will scribble to one another now and then, and have a chat together on paper; and in after years we may perhaps say "Dare is nix spoor." I certainly was the worst Dutch scholar that ever owned a wagon, but I must say I never *tried* to learn, as I had no fancy for Mynheer von Dunk. . . . I so hope Galton will get his large boat to the Lake, but I very much fear he will not. . . .

'I am sure I offended old Macqueen mortally, for I made a speech in front of a very full meeting of the Society one evening and put a fearful extinguisher on his friend Mr. Parker. He will never forgive me, but as you were *all three* absent and there was no one to take up the cudgels for you, I determined to try my luck, and I think I succeeded. I know nothing more illiberal or ungenerous than to take from *absent* parties the credit due to them for any discoveries they may make. You may find out whatever you please, but Macqueen is sure to say he knew of it years ago. I was cruelly disgusted with the old fellow, and so were nearly all the Members. . . . . We shall hear no more of Mr. Parker. I said that Mr. Parker had not been to the Lake, or Mr. *Walker* or Mr. *Barker* either! The old fellow richly deserved it, for the offence is a most unpardonable one. . . . The Earl of Derby you see is dead. What a loss for zoology! If his son only cared as much for animals as Protection, he would have lechés,

nakongs, and I don't know what all, tame at Knowsley. And now farewell. . . . Give me a minute account of your visit to Sebitoané.'

W. Cotton Oswell to Major Frank Vardon.

'Colesberg,
'*Jan.* 14, 1852.

'I will answer your long letter when I have more time, and give you an account of this last journey. In the meanwhile I send you a rough sketch of the country we saw and *heard* of. I wish you to show it to any one you may please, but to allow no one to copy or publish it; I am returning to England next month or in March, but you shall hear from me from the Cape.

'Do you ever see anyone in India who remembers me—Major Fred Cotton, Brooke Cunliffe, Mayne, Nott? If so remember me most kindly. . . . A quebaaba was shot last year, though alas! not by me, with a horn four feet nine inches long.'

On the back of the sketch-map the following notes appear:

'It is not pretended that the accompanying sketch is correct, or even near correctness. The dotted line shows our course, and this we have laid down as well as we were able; let others prove us wrong. The greater part of the whole is on hearsay evidence, but this was as good as such could be, and tested to the best of our ability; it must, of course, be looked upon merely as an approximation to the truth. The courses and directions of the larger rivers together with the names of the people are probably tolerably correct; but for particular bends and exact position of tribes, etc., etc., we do not hold ourselves responsible. In some particular instances, however, remarkable windings as in the Chobé and river of Libabi have been attempted to be shown.

'Tsétsé would appear to be spread in certain parts throughout the whole territory of Sebitoané, though the natives, having learnt the spots to be shunned, manage to rear a large number of cattle.

'Sebitoané's country and that tributary to him is immense, and may be roughly stated to be bounded on the E. by the Bashukolompé R., on the W. by the Chobé, on the north by the Loéma and Lobali, and on the south by the Chobé and river of Secota.

'Portuguese or their immediately bordering tribes were in the habit of trading with the Barotzi before the occupation of the country by Sebitoané. Last year the Mambari, a people apparently subject to the Portuguese, visited him, and purchased some two hundred slaves for cloths and calicoes, etc., etc.

'Portuguese were met in 1850 on the Bashukolompé by Sebitoané's people who were on a cattle-lifting expedition. The Portuguese from whom the Barotzi formerly obtained European goods, from whom too the Mambari came last year, would seem to live W.N.W. of the town of Bi Barotzi.

'The language of the Barotzi and their neighbouring tribes is similar, but very different dialects are spoken by each, all quite distinct from the Sechuana, and more resembling the Macoba and Secoba of the Zougha folk. Our wagons stood at the Chobé on the southern bank; our oxen were driven through to the opposite side, on which there is no tsétsé.

'Livingstone and I rode out to Seshéké on horseback, swimming our horses through the little rivers. We considered the distance about ninety-five or a hundred miles. We were eight days absent, returning on the ninth. Latitude of place where our wagons stood 18° 20′; of Seshéké Town 17° 27′ and about 27° E. longitude. Whole of the country travelled over distressingly flat. Many new trees and flowering bushes.'

Vardon replied to this letter on the day of its receipt:

'. . . Don't you fancy I ever forget you, old fellow, even if you didn't hear from me for the next five years. I never forget an old friend, especially a *shikar* one, who has wandered so far with me and with whom I passed so pleasant a time. I was delighted to hear you had reached Sebitoané. . . . What a river you discovered! and as for the cataract of Mosio-atunya I've been thinking of it ever since! . . . An opening on the West Coast is what you now want. The land journey must be a fearful undertaking, all one's time being consumed in going in and coming out again. But couldn't one go up the Zambesi at certain seasons of the year? You get to the missionaries by sea, and they get you guides, and away you go!! Famous indeed! How I should like to try it with you.'

The Livingstones had not to wait long for the clue to Oswell's action in preceding them:

Journal, March 16, 1852.—'Reach Cape Town. Find our friend Oswell here before us, the outfit ordered, and he presented £50, £20, then £80, £20 = £170, with the remark that as the money had been drawn from the preserves on our estate (elephants) we had as good a right to it as he. God bless and preserve him! . . . the best friend we had in Africa.'*

Just before Oswell set sail for England, in the *Harbinger*, a letter reached him from his brother:

'CLIFFDEN, BONCHURCH,
'ISLE OF WIGHT.

'The mail packet shall take this as an acknowledgment of a few lines received from you dated four months back whilst you were on the Zougha. I was delighted to hear

* Referring to this incident in his 'Missionary Travels,' he says that he had not 'a penny of salary to draw' at that date, and adds that 'the outfit for the half-naked children cost about £200.'

of your welfare and of your having accomplished your object in penetrating to the Zambesi. I could have wished you had given us further details, as your few lines did not satisfy the cravings which so long a silence on your part has excited. I suppose however you were pressed at the time. I do not gather whether you are on your way to the Cape, as you speak of the journey "in advance," without further explanation. I trust however that this is the case, as we have learnt from Mr. Livingstone's letter to the Missionary Society that this is *his* intention. Uncle Ben, I believe, has seen this letter. But I know next to nothing more on the subject. It appears to me that if you wish to have any of the credit of the discovery, and hope that it may lead to anything else, you should represent your share in it to the quarter you may think most desirable. Otherwise, from everyone's ignorance of your proceedings (at home) there is no chance of your benefiting by it. All the notices I have seen of it, have certainly attributed the greatest, if not the sole merit to Mr. Livingstone, and necessarily so, as he alone reports the proceedings. Not that I at all mean he acts unfairly towards you, but only that your silence necessarily brings this about. I hope you will pardon what may appear advice. But I cannot but feel that you would scarcely have undertaken such an arduous enterprise and have gone through so much, without wishing to have a share of the credit, and to be placed in a position, perhaps, where you may be the means of conferring a real benefit to civilization and commerce. Your note to Mr. Macqueen also came to hand; but as yet, no chart has made its appearance. Uncle Ben is *at* them in London about it. But it ought to have been delivered ere this, as it is more than a week ago since the *Hellespont* arrived. I do most sincerely hope that when (if you are) at the Cape, you will come on to England, if only for a visit. The packets make such short work of it now, that this might readily be done, and it is a very long

while that you've been away. . . . Thank God we are all well. I am tolerable, not quite so well perhaps as usual just now. With our united kindest love,

'Ever your most affectionate Brother.'

Edward Oswell was mistaken in his estimate of his brother when he suggests that he 'would scarcely have undertaken such an arduous enterprise and have gone through so much without wishing to have a share of the credit.' Having done the work and undergone the labours, William Oswell was quite content to stand aside and let another enjoy the fruits, and this was characteristic of him through life.

Livingstone, however, made no secret of his indebtedness to his friend and fellow-traveller. Thus in his journal he gratefully acknowledges 'the kind attentions of Mr. Oswell,' and 'his request that we should draw as much money as we should need from him'; to the Geographical Society he mentions that 'all the guides of this expedition were most liberally rewarded by Mr. Oswell'; while to the London Missionary Society he enters frankly into details:

'But for the disinterested kindness of Mr. Oswell we could not have come down to the Cape. He presented supplies for last year's journey worth £40, for that to Sebitoané upwards of £20, also a wagon worth £55. . . . . Most of our oxen are dead, and but for Mr. Oswell's presenting a number worth about £60 we could not have come down to the Cape.'

'Had Mr. Oswell not presented us with £170 since we came here I should have been in a fix. He clothed Mrs. L. and family in a style we never anticipated. This I state in confidence to you; it would offend him to make it public, but it makes me comparatively easy in mind.'

After his eleven years' quiet sojourn in the interior, the unrest and turmoil of the Cape struck Livingstone very

forcibly and provoked the following interesting note in his journal:

'The Cape heart is chafed and irritable. Its rancour and rage are sometimes directed against Earl Grey, or the Hottentots, or the Caffres, or Mr. Montagu, or the Missionaries, or Botha. The blame of everything wrong is hurled everywhere. In the meantime merchants become rich, and England must pay the piper, the natives generally learn to despise us, the follies of Government officials, over which we have no control, teaching the natives their own power. The mass of the people and natives too are stumbling on to developments which God alone can plainly foresee.'

John had, of course, accompanied his master to the Cape, and the time came to say good-bye. Both men were strongly affected. They had shared the perils and privations, the pleasures and excitement, of five stirring years, and were friends in the truest sense:

'I told John in part how I valued his services, and asked him if I could in any way repay my debt of gratitude. I had taught him to read in the Bush, but that was the only good I had ever done him. His answer came after some hesitation. He had heard so much of England that he should like of all things to go with me there. Two days later we were on board ship together. He, as usual, was everything to everybody, helping the steward, attending the sick ladies, nursing the babies, the idol of the sailors, to whom he told stories of bush life, the adored of the nurses; for John with all his virtues was a flirt, the admirer and admired of all womankind.'

END OF VOL. I.

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