



Courtesy Mrs. L. James Talbot

WILLIAM FINAUGHTY, AGE ABOUT 70

THE RECOLLECTIONS
OF
WILLIAM FINAUGHTY

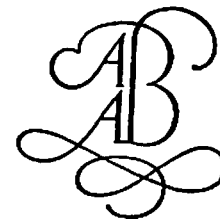
ELEPHANT HUNTER

1864—1875

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

EDWARD C. TABLER



1957

A. A. BALKEMA - CAPE TOWN - AMSTERDAM

The *Recollections* of the elephant hunter William Finaughty, whose name appears frequently in contemporary writings about the South African interior with the phonetic spellings *Finnety* and *Finnity*, were preserved through the efforts of the late George L. Harrison of St. Davids, Pennsylvania. In 1908 Mr. Harrison employed the elder Finaughty's son William for a hunting trip in North-Eastern Rhodesia, and he learned from the son something of the father's exploits. When Mr. Harrison was at Bulawayo in 1913, he found that William Finaughty the elder was living on a farm with one of his married daughters at Sauer Township, about ten miles from Bulawayo. He went to see the old man there and spent about an hour with him. Finaughty gave his visitor an almost complete run of the *Rhodesia Journal*, the numbers of this paper containing the *Recollections* in serial form.

THE FIRST EDITION

When Mr. Harrison returned to the United States he had the first edition of the *Recollections* privately published, at his own expense of course. An octavo volume of 242 pages, it appeared in 1916 in an edition of 250 copies, all of which were bound alike in brown boards with paper labels on spine and front cover. The type was distributed after printing. The imprint is that of the press of the J. B. Lippincott Company, East Washington Square, Philadelphia.

Copies of the first edition were not sold but were presented to friends and other interested people by Mr. Harrison. Among those who received copies were President Theodore Roosevelt, H. Marshall Hole, Abel Chapman, Sir Alfred Pease, R. J. Cunninghame, Denis D. Lyell, Captain Courtney Brocklehurst, Norman B. Smith, W. S. Rainsford, J. G. Millais, H. A. Bryden, Professor J. P. R. Wallis, and Mrs. T. J. Hogarth, daughter of the hunter Thomas Leask. Some copies were lost through enemy action at sea in the First World War. When we consider the small size of the edition, the fact that undoubtedly there has been mortality from other causes, and that most copies are still held by the recipients or their heirs and by collectors, it will be seen that it is a rare book. Twelve copies were given to Messrs. Rowland Ward of London to do with as they pleased, and some of that dozen perhaps found their way into trade channels. Since 1931 I have seen only one copy catalogued for sale by a dealer, and I have learned of another that was bought of a bookseller. Although the first edition was not exhausted till 1945, its rarity and the interesting nature of the book are good reasons for the making of a new edition.

By the same author

THE FAR INTERIOR

Chronicles of pioneering in the Matabele and Mashona Countries

1847—1879

A. A. Balkema 1954

The manuscript of the present edition was prepared from a copy of the first, the text of which is not complete. One of the numbers of the newspaper given Mr. Harrison by Finaughty was missing, and it was not possible at that time to supply the deficiency. This number contained what is Chapter XVII in the second edition. A copy of it, made from the file of the *Rhodesia Journal* in the Central African Archives at Salisbury, was sent by Professor J. P. R. Wallis to Mr. Harrison in 1942. In this way, twenty-six years after publication, the missing chapter was added to the others.

The title of the first edition has been retained, and its text has been followed closely in preparing this new edition. The footnotes are the editor's, and a very few footnotes, either by Mr. Harrison or by R. N. Hall, that in the first edition explained words or phrases in Afrikaans and some peculiar to South African English, have been incorporated into the new notes. It was thought best to present explanatory matter by the editor in this way, in order to save the reader the trouble of continually turning to a body of notes. The footnotes were kept as few and as brief as possible, and it was assumed that most readers will be familiar with Finaughty's times and surroundings.

Perhaps the most difficult task of an editor is to restrain himself. However, the changes that are listed immediately below seemed necessary for the sake of clarity. Native names were changed to familiar spellings; the spellings of botanical and geographical names and the Afrikaans orthography were modernized; a few words were added to the text between square brackets; a few misprints were corrected; and the chapter titles were shortened from the original collections of running headlines to the most important headline in each case, which is usually the leading one. Some spellings of the same word that vary in the original text were regularized, but the punctuation of the original was retained throughout. The text of the present edition is as correct as use of the first edition could make it. Nothing is omitted, and Finaughty's exploits are presented in a form as faithful to the original as possible.

Because the hunter's story was taken down from memory in his old age and thirty-five years after the last episodes recounted, it is not surprising that it is sometimes rambling and that the chronology is awry in places. Dates are corrected in the footnotes wherever possible from other sources, and it should be noted that Chapter XV is out of place, for it belongs in or immediately after Chapter XVIII. Chapter XVII, the missing chapter of the first edition, repeats some of the material of Chapter XIV. The original order of these has been retained nevertheless.

The *Recollections* first appeared as a newspaper serial. Finaughty's story was prepared for publication, from his written notes and verbal reminiscences, by R. N. Hall, editor of *The Rhodesia Journal, A Weekly Newspaper of Rhodesian Information*, which was published at Bulawayo and is defunct. It appeared in Volumes 15, 16, and 17 (1911), the numbers (cited inclusively) being 190 to 207, June 8th to October 5th; 209 to 216, October 19th to December 7th; and 218, December 21st. Hall's preface, besides that written for the first edition by George L. Harrison, are reprinted.

The prose style seems to be a mixture of Finaughty's own phraseology and that of Hall. Many expressions do not fit the mental picture one gets of the old hunter, who was literate, it seems, but who probably was not as great a hand at writing as he was at shooting elephants. The style is repetitious, several words and phrases recurring with monotonous and even annoying regularity to the typist, but it fits this simple tale of adventure well enough.

WILLIAM FINAUGHTY

Facts about the life of Finaughty are scarce, save for those set forth in his book. From it we gather that he was born about 1842 or 1843, probably in the Eastern Province of the Cape Colony. Mr. Harrison, who knew both his sons — William the younger and Harry, the latter named for a brother — states that the elder Finaughty was the son of a deserter from a British regiment stationed at the Cape.

Finaughty in his prime must have been a man of great physical strength and endurance. The muzzle-loading roers of his day gave nearly as much punishment to the shooter as to his quarry, and the stamina required by the pursuit of elephants taxed one's powers. In 1913, when he was about 71 years of age, he was a slightly built, erect old man, about 5' 11" in height, with 'a face like the Duke of Wellington's.' He died in 1917 on the Kafue River in Northern Rhodesia, where his son William had a farm.

One of the most remarkable things about Finaughty was his wonderful memory. He kept no written records of his elephant hunting, and his *Recollections*, which can be verified in many instances from independent sources, were put together by the use of that memory, which was fairly reliable.

From private sources we learn that the old hunter was not always a respecter of the property of others, an attitude that was no doubt engendered by a life without restraint in the veld. In view of some of

his deeds that cannot be narrated here, his abstention from strong drink and from hunting on Sundays is not an adequate counterbalance. As another side light on his character, his son told Mr. Harrison that his father once sold the ivory and feathers of one hunt for about £ 4,000; he then sailed for Australia, where he made a very successful book on the Melbourne Cup, the year *Carbine* won it, but he soon gambled and raced his money away.

Finaughty undoubtedly was one of the best elephant hunters in what is now Southern Rhodesia, and many good ones operated there. The reasons for his success may be found in his fearlessness, his energy and good health, and his excellent horsemanship and shooting. Too, the old muzzle-loading guns were not as great a handicap as one might think. The large-caliber bullets, hardened with tin or type metal, could smash a way almost through an elephant if properly propelled, and one in the right spot behind the shoulder would bring a beast down in a short time. Such a gun probably dealt more shock than a modern small-bore rifle with a high muzzle velocity. Finaughty's favorite hunting ground was the country east of the Shoshong-Matabeleland Road and north of the Shashi River. Elephants were plentiful there, and he seems to have had little competition from other hunters, perhaps because others avoided it owing to real or fancied danger from fly. Although that area was under Matabele domination, there were few inhabitants and it was far enough from Matabeleland proper to prevent supervision and to make it unnecessary to pay the king the usual fee for hunting.

It will be noticed that Finaughty tends to belittle the ability of his white hunting companions.

A count of the elephants he mentions as having killed gives about 500, and his hunting career extended to about five years. For so short a time this was a large bag, and one wonders what number, in the light of his successful methods, he would have killed in ten years. Henry Hartley is credited with killing 1,000 or so elephants during his career of about thirty years, so at the rate Finaughty worked he would have killed 3,000 in the same period. The only men who might be put above Finaughty as more successful elephant hunters of his time and place were George Wood, Jan Viljoen, and Piet Jacobs.

The *Recollections* add very little to our knowledge of the early history of Southern Rhodesia, but they are valuable as giving a picture of a way of life and a time that are gone forever. The life of the professional hunter of other days in South Africa is a fascinating subject, and too few of these men placed their experiences on record.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any study of the life of William Finaughty owes a great deal to the late George L. Harrison. His daughter, Mrs. L. James Talbot, kindly gave access to his private African diaries and permitted use of the photograph of Finaughty, which was taken by her mother. Mrs. Anne S. Cassidy of Philadelphia had the photograph copied, which was a great help.

To Mr. V. W. Hiller, Chief Archivist of the Central African Federation, and Mr. A. R. Taylor of those archives, the editor owes thanks for furnishing information on the *Rhodesia Journal*.

Mr. Roger Summers, Keeper of Antiquities at the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo, and his institution very kindly gave photographs of Finaughty's guns with permission to reproduce them.

ILLUSTRATIONS

William Finaughty	Frontispiece
One of his cannons	Facing page 72

CHAPTER I

MY FIRST TREK

Being a harum-scarum from youth, a good horseman, and a very fair shot, I determined to get into the interior of Africa for the purpose, mostly, of shooting big game.

I left Grahamstown early in 1864, when I was 21 years of age, and came up through the Free State. The game I saw there astonished me so much that I thought it was not requisite to go much further afield. I could never have believed that such a quantity of wild animals would congregate together. As far as the eye could see it was one moving mass, tens of thousands of beautiful wild creatures of many kinds, consisting for the most part of black wildebeest, blesbok, springbok, a sprinkling of ostrich, quagga, and blue wildebeest.

I soon got tired of this kind of sport, however, for one could simply slay as much as one felt inclined to, and eventually made my way down the Vaal River, where I found Mr. E. Chapman, a local trader,¹ on the road with his wagons to the Matabele country.

The chief of the Matabele at that time was Mzilikazi, a brother of the Zulu chief, Tshaka.² Old Mzilikazi had made his way by force through the Transvaal, and taken possession of the country now known as Matabeleland.

Mr. Chapman had already one white man with him, a Mr. W. Francis.³ We were a few days at a place called Kruitfontein (Powder Fountain). Its water at times was undrinkable. We made a start to the Vaal River, which was very full, but we got all the goods over in a boat, and then we tied large logs of dry willow-wood and a couple of casks under the wagons and floated them in that way over the river, the boat in front towing them. It was hard work, and took us just four days. We at once started for Kuruman, a very pretty place. The Rev. Robert Moffat was there, also Mr. John Chapman.⁴ We

¹ Edward Chapman, reared at Kuruman by a resident trader, made his first trading journey to Matabeleland in 1860. He made similar visits there each winter for the following six years. He was not related to the famous interior man James Chapman, and he was a good friend to the missionaries at Inyati during the 1860's.

² It is nowhere else suggested that these two great Bantu rulers were brothers. Mzilikazi was the son of Matshobana, head of a part of the Ndwande tribe in Zululand. Between 1817 and 1825 the son broke away from Tshaka and with his followers established himself in the Transvaal, whence he was driven to Matabeleland by the Voortrekkers in 1837.

³ William C. Francis was for many years a trader in Bechuanaland, and for a time he had a store at Shoshong. He traveled widely in the South African interior, though he seems to have been a merchant only, not a hunter.

⁴ Robert Moffat requires no identification. John Chapman may have been the trader there who was foster father to Edward Chapman.

stopped at Kuruman about a fortnight, and then started on a long, dreary journey, skirting the Kalahari Desert and passing through the Bechuana villages — Jan Massibi,⁵ Kanye, Molepolole and Sechele's. Before us was a stretch of 140 miles, with very doubtful water, but we were very lucky and got water about 20 miles from Sechele's. The roads were very heavy with sand and quite 18 inches deep. We were very lucky again in getting a little muddy water at a place called Boatenwana, although the buffalo had been having a drink during the night and made the water a bit muddy.

After having something to eat, Chapman proposed to try and get a shot at the buffalo. The horses were saddled, and Chapman and boy⁶ and myself followed the spoor a short distance and saw them. The bush being pretty thick we got parted, unluckily, and I managed to shoot a very fat cow.

Chapman nearly got caught by an old bull which he did not see until he had got nearly past him. The buffalo made a rush at Chapman, who started to get away, but, the bush being very thick and a fallen tree across his path, he was checked. He looked back and saw the buffalo close behind him and death staring him in the face. On the spur of the moment he threw his gun at the beast. The weapon caught him on the back, and this distracted his attention from Chapman for a few seconds and gave him a chance of getting away. I went afterwards with Chapman to get his gun.

We stopped the day over to cut up the meat of the cow I had shot. It was good eating, for buffalo is really first-class beef. We started again, and hearing that the pan Selinya,⁷ about 20 miles ahead, had plenty of water, we got there all right, only to be confronted with another stretch of over 40 miles, with no water and very heavy road. We arrived at Shoshong, a very large Bechuana village of about 80,000 inhabitants, with Sekhomo as chief. There were also two missionaries, the Rev. John Mackenzie and the Rev. Roger Price.⁸ It was one of the principal trading stations in the interior on account of three roads meeting — one from Lake Ngami, one from the Zambezi, and the other from the Matabele country. We stayed quite a fortnight here, and the day we trekked away I was quite delighted, for it was absolutely the most filthy place I ever saw. We trekked to the first water, Mhalapshwe, about 20 miles.

⁵ Near Mafeking.

⁶ A native servant of any age.

⁷ Not identified. Perhaps Lephepe. A pan is a large shallow depression that holds rain water.

⁸ These two men of the London Missionary Society were working at Shoshong together at the time. Although the town was then the largest native town south of the Zambezi, Finaughty's estimate of its population is 60,000 higher than the highest one made by anyone else.

Next day Mr. Price and the young chief,⁹ with a lot of followers, came to us and said they were going to shoot some game for meat. We went out together, about six of us, and that day I saw the most glorious sight I ever witnessed. We had scattered out, Mr. Price being on my right, when he came racing along by the side of about 300 to 400 giraffe. It was a wonderful and beautiful sight. It seemed a pity to shoot them, but we bottled up sentiment and got five of them. The meat was put on the wagons, also the skins. Nothing was wasted. That night I had a grilled steak of giraffe, which I thought delicious, and I still think giraffe meat the best of all. With such a store of meat as this there was no fear of starving now.

We left the young chief Khama and Mr. Price, and travelled only in the daytime, on account of lions. After about six days' travelling we came to a place called Seruli, where one could get water by digging the dirt out, and this we had to do. I asked Chapman if he was going on that morning and he replied: 'Yes, as soon as the oxen have had a feed.' I said I would go on along the road, because as a rule I used to walk ahead of the wagons. I started and thought I would get to the next water, Khokwi, about 18 miles ahead. It was a good hard tramp but I got there all right, saw a koodoo near the water and shot it, made a fire and had a feed, and cut off a leg of the buck and hung it up in a tree. I waited but there was no sign of the wagons, and as the day was drawing in I thought I had better go back and pick the wagons up. I walked till my legs ached, but still no wagon, and I wondered what could have happened. At last about midnight, utterly worn out, having walked 36 miles, I arrived at the spot where I started from, and the wagons were still there! They had never started; thought they would wait another day! After that experience I took precious good care never to go on ahead until I had seen the wagons on the move.

Just after I had got to sleep I was aroused by the roar of a lion close to camp. I don't know whether he had been stalking me and was annoyed at losing his supper. Anyway, Chapman called out and asked me if I had heard it and suggested that we go out and get a shot at him.

I said I was ready, but I noticed that he did not go too far from the wagons. At any rate we waited till the lion roared again, and I let drive at the spot where the sound came from. The old lion immediately let out a roar of rage, and started to growl and kick up a most unearthly din. After a time he took himself off, and that was the last we heard of him.

The next morning I saw the wagons moving before I ventured to step on ahead.

⁹ This was the famous Khama, son and heir of Sekhomo. Khama secured his chieftainship finally in 1875 and ruled his tribe well till his death in 1923.

About four miles along the road I noticed a vast number of vultures sitting in the mopane trees. I sauntered over to see what might be the cause of this congregation, and as I approached the vultures flew away. To my amazement, I suddenly came face to face with a lioness! I was considerably startled, but I at once raised my old muzzle-loader, which was always kept loaded, and killed her with one shot. After reloading I walked over to where she lay, and found close to her the remnants of a wildebeest recently killed, but all the flesh had been cleaned off and nothing but the bones remained. I thought to myself that the lioness had been doing herself pretty well, but I was too hungry to take much notice of it, and promptly made up my mind to kindle a fire with a view to enjoying a few grilled marrow bones. Then I got another shock, for as I was picking up a few sticks for this purpose an old male lion calmly stood up right in front of me! He had obviously been within a few yards of me for some minutes, but was too gorged with meat to trouble himself to move till I was almost on top of him.

To say that I dropped the sticks like hot coals, jumped for my gun and pulled the trigger is but faintly to express the celerity of my movements. I hit him fairly, but he bounded away, and I did not follow. I was too hungry.

I lit the fire, and was in the middle of an interesting culinary operation when Chapman came up, and, seeing me roasting the big marrow bones over the flames, burst into a peal of laughter at the idea of a man eating of an animal in the bush when the cause of its death was unknown to him.

In reply, I merely directed his attention to the body of the dead lioness, which he had not previously seen, and also pointed to the blood spoor of the old lion, using my hot marrow bone as a pointer. Chapman quickly stopped laughing at my apparent greenness, and on following up the blood spoor found the old male lion *in extremis*, my bullet having gone through his lungs.

Chapman and I then walked along the road together, waited at midday for the wagons, and had the usual midday meal — a cup of tea and a sardine — and then I went on ahead alone. When I came to the tree where I had previously killed the koodoo and had hung up a leg for the previous evening's meal, I found, as might have been expected, that the vultures had cleared everything but the bones. That night at the water I got a shot at a rhinoceros, but he managed to get away, leaving a blood spoor. We followed it a little way next morning, but as it took us off our route we decided not to follow it up, and pushed on to Maklautsi River, where the usual practice of scraping out the sand to get water for the oxen had to be followed. In due course I will tell of an extraordinary sight I saw at this spot on my return journey.

From this stage we pushed ahead rapidly. Chapman was very keen upon getting along, and though the spoor of all sorts of game, including elephants, was abundant, we did not trouble to go after them. Next day we got to the Tati¹⁰ where Chapman and I, in the course of a stroll, fired simultaneously at an old giraffe bull that we had stalked to within 200 yards. The two bullets together killed him on the spot. He was a lovely animal, fat as butter, the fattest giraffe I have ever seen. With a pleasant recollection of our previous feed of delicate giraffe meat we went forward to cut him up, but to our disgust he smelt so rank that his flesh was absolutely uneatable.¹¹ Robbed in this inglorious manner of an evening meal, we returned to camp and next morning we took Francis to have a look at him. We were treated to an amazing spectacle. There were at least ten to a dozen lions round the carcass, some tearing away at the flesh, others lying down, full to repletion. We watched them for a few seconds and it really was a picture worth looking at. Then Francis fired at one of them, more to frighten them than anything else. I don't know whether he struck the one he aimed at; anyhow they all cleared off.

It took us five days from Tati to reach the entrance to the Matabele country. Here we were stopped by the Matabele guards and our arrival reported from there by messenger. As Chapman had been in before we were not detained at the entrance, as strangers always were until the chief's permission had been received.¹² We were allowed to proceed very slowly, but by the end of July we had arrived at Mzilikazi's kraal, which was then on the Bembesi [River].

He seemed very pleased indeed to see us but he was particularly keen upon knowing whether Francis and I were 'English' and put the question several times. He had a great dislike of Dutchmen and seemed a little suspicious about us, at first. However, we were able thoroughly to satisfy him as to our English antecedents and then all was well.¹³

The old chief was a physical wreck. His lower limbs were paralyzed

¹⁰ The drift of the Tati River. There was no mining town there till 1868, the first year of the gold rush.

¹¹ Old giraffe bulls, because of their pronounced odor, were called 'stink bulls' by the Boer hunters.

¹² Typical of the procedure at the frontier village of Matabeleland, where strangers were detained by the Matabele guardian of the gate, Manyami, till the king learned their business and 'gave them the road.' Three different sites of this outpost, all of them Makalanga villages, are known before 1880. Chapman's arrival there in this year is mentioned in *The Matabele Mission of John and Emily Moffat* (London, 1945), p. 230, but his companions are not named.

¹³ Mzilikazi had been thoroughly whipped and driven from the Transvaal by the 'Dutchmen,' or emigrant republican Boers, hence his fear of them and his close questioning of strange white men. Of course Finaughty, and perhaps Francis also, were not 'English,' but were British Colonials. The description of the black king's physical condition at this time agrees with those by other observers. He was noted for his love of a joke.

and whenever he moved he was carried in an armchair by four strapping wives. He was not a very big man — about 5 ft. 8 in., I should say, but very square-shouldered. He was a good-tempered old chap, in spite of occasional outbursts of violence against his people, and we were continuously having conversation with him, when he would laugh and joke with us in the most genial manner.

It was on the occasion of this visit that I had my first and probably my finest view of the Matabele army in its prime. It was the time of their New Year and a big dance was on, night and day.¹⁴ The warriors, who numbered about 25,000, were all in their war-dress, wearing their plumes and carrying assagais and shields, and they made a wonderful and impressive spectacle. To see thousands of them dancing round the camp fire at night, to listen to their singing and the dull noise of the drums, and to hear the thud of their bare feet on the earth was to get an impression of the might of the Matabele that to a youngster like myself was thrilling in the extreme. It might to some people seem to be dangerous for three white men to be in the midst of this huge army, worked up into a frenzy with the dancing, the beer and the general excitement; but, of course, we were as safe as we would be in Bulawayo to-day. Not one of us gave it the least thought. Once the chief had given us permission to enter the country there was no danger and we walked among the braves with complete confidence.

Just for curiosity Francis and I went round the kraal after the oxen had been slaughtered for the feast and counted 540 beasts lying dead — a very respectable butcher's bill.

Horsesickness was as deadly in those days as now; in fact much more so. Of the 17 horses we brought up with us, 14 died within 30 hours of each other. It was a heavy loss and caused us some amount of inconvenience.

We remained for several months at the royal kraal. We did not occupy any of the huts but took our wagons inside the kraal and slept in them, as we had done throughout the journey. It was a fairly lazy and interesting time for me. Chapman spent his time trading, and managed to secure about 5,000 lbs. of ivory, also a few oxen, sheep and goats. I, having nothing better to do, roamed about shooting small game all of which came in very useful for the pot, while the natives aslo keenly appreciated the many buck I was able to shoot for them. Frequently a commando of young Matabele would come out with me for a day's shooting and we used to have some exciting times together. On several occasions I got more meat than they could carry home.

¹⁴ From Finaughty's account, he was in the country during the winter months only, so he could not have seen at that time the *Inxwala*. However, his description fits that celebration of the first fruits, a quasi-religious ceremony held at harvest time in January or February. His estimate of the number of soldiers present seems too large.

One day some women came in with an exciting story that a herd of elephants had arrived in the mealie lands, had taken complete possession and would not let the women gather in the corn. Mzilikazi at once sent for Chapman and asked him to go and shoot them. Chapman and I mounted our horses, put a boy on the third and after a long ride we came to the lands and there, true enough, were the elephants, who showed no disposition to move. We each got in a shot and killed an elephant apiece. The others immediately cleared into the adjoining bush. Leaving the boy behind we retraced our steps to the wagons, but it was midnight before we arrived and both we as well as the horses were nearly worn out with fatigue.

We hear a good deal nowadays of the problem of the sexes and people often say that in the 'old days' the natives were much more moral than they are to-day. That may be so, but in those days they had a way of dealing with offenders that was not calculated to encourage others to go and do likewise. I was taking a stroll one evening looking for a chance buck, when underneath a large tree I saw a native with his head battered in. I was a bit startled, and wondered what grim tragedy had been enacted.

I happened to glance up into the tree and there, well above my head, were two native women hanging by their necks! I had heard hints of Mzilikazi's methods of dispensing justice and upon making discreet enquiries ascertained the drama of which these three dead bodies were the sequel. It appeared that the women were two of the king's numerous wives. They lived together in one hut, this being the custom so that they could be not only company but a check upon each other's doings. However, in this case the check was ineffective. A native brave had become enamoured of one of the wives and used to visit her at night, the other woman, if she knew, taking no notice.

The amour was discovered at last and Mzilikazi decreed the usual punishment — the woman to be hanged and the man to have his skull smashed with a knobkerrie. The second woman was ordered to be hanged by the side of the guilty wife because she had not reported to Mzilikazi the other's marital misdemeanour! In this crude way the chief kept his wives up to the mark and struck fear into the hearts of his people. While on this subject I may here state that the Matabele women bore a splendid reputation for virtue so far as the white visitors to the country were concerned. Whether they were so among themselves I cannot say, but the punishment above mentioned would appear sufficient to keep them in the straight and narrow path.

Another instance of Mzilikazi's barbarity occurred during our stay. An impi about 2,000 strong had gone out on one of their periodic raids, the weak Mashona being their objective, as usual. They took sufficient oxen to kill on the outward journey, relying upon their successful foray to give them more than sufficient meat for the return.

For once, however, they got the worst of the encounter. The Mashona put up a great fight and beat the Matabele off.

They returned empty handed, and very sick and sorry, after having been away for about a month. Mzilikazi's wrath was appalling. He expressed his disgust in no measured terms and then without giving them any food set them dancing. And he kept them at it for four days and nights without cessation! The only food they had was the little they could pick up from the others who threw scraps of food towards them. It was terrible to see these leg-weary, heart-broken, starving men dancing hour after hour till their eyes drew back into their sockets and delirium crept into their brains. Still they danced on, while the Old Man sat before them and they knew only too well that to stop when he had told them to go on would be to stop forever. It was the most hideous dance of death I ever saw or heard of. It was 'dance or die.'

Francis and I were present when Mzilikazi announced his intention of giving them some food. A few of them were brought in and sat round in a half-moon in front of the chief. Some raw meat was brought in on something like a butcher's tray and the induna told them to eat. One man seized a leg of mutton and bit a huge piece out of it. He was so ravenous that he could not wait to masticate it, but took another mouthful, trying to dispose of the first piece by swallowing it. The lump of raw flesh stuck in his throat and the poor wretch commenced to cough and choke.

'Take the dog away!' said Mzilikazi. They dragged him out of the half-moon, gave him one swinging blow by the side of the ear with a knobkerrie, and he dropped dead.

CHAPTER II

BESIEGED BY LIONS

I have mentioned what a splendid sight the Matabele army presented in its prime. The great herds of cattle were no less inferior in interest. There were enormous numbers, for cattle represented the Matabele idea of wealth, and as Mzilikazi had very strict ideas with regard to the royal prerogative they were not killed off at an excessive rate. As Matabeleland was and is still one of the finest cattle-raising countries in the world, small wonder that the herds originally brought in from Zululand had multiplied in an unprecedented manner.¹

The cattle had been distributed between the various kraals, in charge of the respective indunas, and it was a picture to see them going out each morning in charge of the herds, or returning at nightfall to the kraals. Although there would be two or three colours in each kraal yet when went out to graze each colour would be kept separate, and as the cattle had been separated in this way from the time they were calves, they sorted themselves out almost of their own accord. To see a great herd of blacks or of reds marching off to the grazing grounds was to witness a picture that we do not see in these days.

Speaking of oxen reminds me of an extraordinary sight I saw, and illustrates the vast number of Matabele there were in those days and their unwavering obedience to the chief. There was a 'wild' ox reported to Mzilikazi, an animal that had taken it into its head to break loose from its quiet traditions, and would no longer take its usual place with the kraal cattle. The chief told his people to bring it in. They immediately proceeded to teach the ox the lesson of his life. I don't know how many hundred men went after it, but I saw them return — a solid mass of men packed closely together, with the ox in the centre high in the air standing on their shoulders!

It was the noise of their singing that attracted my attention to the incident. They came marching in, some two or three hundred strong, chanting in exultant terms of how they had captured the culprit who had dared to break away from the care of the great chief. The terrified animal, bellowing and trembling with mingled fear and rage, was carried high above them till it was set down, amid jubilant shouts, at the kraal, where it received such a lesson admonitory and otherwise as to cure it of any further tendencies to roam.²

¹ 'Herds originally brought in from Zululand' is misleading. The Matabele came to their present home after a long period of domicile in the western Transvaal.

² The missionary T. M. Thomas, in his *Eleven Years in Central South Africa* (London & Cardiff, n.d.), p. 233, tells this story of the ox carried by warriors.

This incident reminds me of another curious story, which was told to me at the time, and I was assured that it had actually occurred. Crocodiles, it appeared, were under the special protection of Mzilikazi, who would not allow any of them to be killed. They occasionally took toll of cattle, also sheep, goats and even a human being, but this was regarded as the proper order of things. I could not ascertain whether there was anything in the nature of worship of these animals, but I subsequently learned that it was as much as a man's life was worth to shoot one.³

One day it was reported to the chief that a child had been taken at the river by a hungry crocodile and the distressed people wished to know what the chief would have them do.

'Bring them both to me,' was the laconic reply.

Now, it is well known that the crocodile never eats its victims immediately they are captured. The usual plan is to pull the prey under the water and drown it and then carry it to some hole, possibly under the projecting root of a tree, where the body remains in this 'larder' until it is 'high' and tender enough for the crocodile's epicurean tastes. The natives evidently knew this well enough.

How they did it I don't know, but I was assured that upon receiving the chief's instructions a huge crowd of them marched to the scene of the tragedy, and though the river was swarming with crocodiles the braves plunged into the water, captured the crocodile that was alleged to be the culprit — he was an enormous fellow — and recovered the child's body.

With the dead child and the live crocodile held high above them, they returned to the kraal, where the chief administered justice.

I have always regretted that I was not sufficiently curious to ascertain what actually happened. I do not think he would have ordered it to be killed. Probably it would be severely reprimanded and returned to its lair. Possibly some ceremony connected with 'medicine' would take place. I was too young to interest myself in the matter, being chiefly concerned with the almost incredible feat of capturing such a huge creature alive and carrying it on their shoulders to the presence of the chief. One can imagine the sort of song they would sing to a crocodile in such circumstances and how the power, might, majesty and dominion of the great Mzilikazi would be impressed upon the struggling saurian.⁴

During the whole time I was in the country I never saw a sign of

³ Crocodiles were protected because it was believed that certain of their internal organs could be used by wizards to make powerful medicine for doing harm to others.

⁴ There is nothing impossible about this. The rivers of Matabeleland dried up to pools in winter, and often there was only one crocodile lurking in a deep place. Enough determined men could catch it if they cared nothing for losses. However, I have never read this story anywhere but in Finaughty.

gold among the Matabele. If they knew of the value, or the presence in the country, of the precious metal they made no attempt to exploit it. Personally I do not think they had the slightest idea of its use or value or even of its whereabouts. Their idea of wealth was cattle, ivory, guns, ammunition, beads, etc.

I might say here that Mzilikazi would not permit any prospecting in the country. He knew just enough to know that there was in the ground that which, if discovered, would cause an influx of white men. He did not mind a few traders or hunters, for they brought him things from civilization which were desirable, but beyond that he did not mean to go, and to ensure this the artful old man put a guide at every white man's disposal from the moment he entered the country till the time he left. He was a guide it was true, but he was also a spy, and one's every action was faithfully reported to the chief. And knowing what Mzilikazi was, very few ventured to defy his explicit instructions with regard to looking for forbidden things. I never heard any other white men make reference to the presence of either gold or diamonds in the country save one — Baines, the explorer. We met him at the Mangwe and he mentioned that he had found small gold nuggets on the River Umniati, which would be somewhere about Que-Que, but we took little notice of it. The men who ventured into Matabeleland in those days were not gold hunters and did not trouble their heads about the matter. Ivory and cattle were their main consideration.⁵

The old chief treated us excellently, right throughout our stay. He sent us beer and meat almost every day, and showed his friendly interest in us in unmistakable fashion. He could not get it out of his head, however, that Francis and I by some possibility might be Boers, despite our denials, and he would frequently bring the conversation round to that point, and ingenuously ask us if after all we were sure we were not Boers? I don't know what would have happened if we had said that we were, but I fancy that the very least would have been an immediate ejection from the territory, if nothing worse.

I cannot refrain at this stage from telling a story that was told us by Mr. Thomas,⁶ father of the present Native Commissioner. He had arrived from the south, and told us that on his way he passed the Rev.

⁵ Mzilikazi died before the gold rush had a good start, so he had little opportunity to forbid prospecting. Hartley and Mauch discovered gold in 1866 and 1867, and attempts to work the reefs north of Tati were not finally abandoned till about 1871. Prospecting was not forbidden by Mzilikazi, by the regent Nombate, or by Lobengula; it was restricted at times and was subject to regulation. Every stranger traveling in the Matabele country was assigned a 'guide,' who also acted as a protector and saw that his charges did not break the rules.

⁶ Thomas Baines, artist-explorer, conducted during 1869—1871 an expedition that attempted to exploit the Mashonaland Goldfields. He obtained the second gold concession in what is now Southern Rhodesia. Finaughty could not have met him before 1869.

Almost immediately I heard Chapman fire and then followed a tremendous roaring. Galloping towards the sound I was just in time to see him get in a second shot which finished his lion off. Upon examining the carcass we found that the first shot had only hit him in the foot, hence the terrible roaring I had heard.

We rode back to the laagered wagons and asked the three gentlemen to come out and have a look at the dead lions, but this they absolutely and emphatically refused to do, saying they had seen enough live ones to last them for the rest of their natural lives!

When we had offsaddled and tethered the horses we went inside the laager and they told us one of the strangest stories I have ever heard.

The party, which included Mr. Throgmorton, Mr. De Barry and Mr. Page had, it appeared, fitted out an elaborate outfit in Natal for the purpose of hunting in the interior of Africa. They had two fine wagons, spans of oxen, several horses, a most complete and elaborate equipment and, worst of all from their point of view, several Zulu servants. Probably they thought that their affinity to the Matabele would render their presence of great assistance in obtaining admission to, and progress through, the Matabele country. On the contrary they realised when too late that the Zulus were anathema to Mzilikazi, who had no cause to love, or to regard with anything but suspicion, the presence of members of the race from which he and his people had cut themselves adrift. Anyway the presence of these Zulu servants had caused Mzilikazi to turn the whole party back. As things were, however, it was probably the best thing that could have happened to them, for a more helpless lot of men on the veld I never saw. If they had once got adrift in the wild Matabele or Mashona countries among the big game I am perfectly certain that some if not all of them would assuredly have been either killed or lost.

After they were turned back they camped by the Maklautsi River. The first thing that happened to them was the lions stampeding their oxen. After tremendous difficulty they succeeded in recovering five of them, but shortly after they got them back to the wagons they lost them again, this time for good. By this time they had only one horse left, and this, too, was killed by lions. They thought they would have some revenge and so fixed up a gun near the carcass with a line to the trigger, and during the night, when the lions came for their supper, the gun was discharged and one of the animals was killed though the party did not know this till some days later.

They were now placed in a most unenviable and dangerous position. With their oxen and horses gone they were unable to move the wagons and none of them would face the risks of going on foot to secure assistance. Meantime the lions, that had done so well out of the party, hovered around them, with ominous persistency. Every day they could

be seen prowling round the camp, while at night their roaring caused the most acute apprehension in the minds of the luckless hunters.

Though only a short distance from the river, the task of securing water for drinking purposes was one of extreme danger. Lions were frequently seen by the boys when they went to get water, and on one occasion the boy was treed by the brutes and had to remain in the branches for some three hours before the hungry animals turned their attention to more promising quarry and allowed him to get away.

So the time drearily passed. No help appeared on the scene; their stock of provisions was limited and they were at their wits' ends. Terrified by the encircling lions they had put the boys to work to cut down a huge quantity of thorn bush, and with this they completely encircled the wagons with a thick hedge some six to eight feet high. Only one small opening was left, through which a boy crept once a day to get water, and this was immediately closed behind him. To make their pitiable plight worse, all their boys, save one, deserted, and they saw nothing before them but to sit down and wait till relief in some shape or form, or starvation, solved the problem for them. They had been inside their zareba for *two months* and to such an extent had the lions got upon their nerves that the white men positively refused to go outside on any excuse whatsoever, and there they had remained cooped up in this pitiable, terrified state all this time.

What would have happened to them if we had not turned up when we did is hard to say. Their provisions were practically finished, their nerves were quite unstrung, and all initiative had left them. Their relief at our arrival was unbounded. Whether they would have made some determined move to get of their troubles if we had not turned up I do not know. Anyway, we were looked upon as saviours. Chapman managed to rake up a span of oxen for them; their two wagons were tied together so that the one span could pull both, and in this manner we got them back out of the wilderness.⁹

Our journey back to Shoshong was necessarily slow, and it was, at the same time, uneventful. The only incidents I remember were my success in shooting a couple of ostriches, also a lot of small game for the pot.

While at Shoshong the lions got among the missionaries' cattle and killed four of them. We white men, accompanied by about 400 natives, thereupon organised a big lion hunt. We had a great day's sport, rounded the lions up, and I was lucky enough to get first shot,

⁹ J. G. Wood, in his *Through Matabeleland* (Cape Town, 1893, pp. 25—27) tells this story, which he no doubt had from Edward Chapman and W. C. Francis, his partners in the Wood-Chapman-Francis syndicate of concession hunters. The two versions, Wood's and Pinaughty's, vary somewhat; according to Wood, two of the men were living in a strong thorn kraal as protection against the lions while the third white went to Shoshong to replace their lost spans of oxen, stampeded by lions.

my bullet hitting a big lion fairly in the ribs and bringing him down. There were only two of the beasts, but the other one managed to slip away unhurt.¹⁰

We stayed at Shoshong until the end of November, and a month later we arrived at Kuruman. I remained there looking after Mr. John Chapman's store while he went to the Colony to replenish his stocks of goods. It was a lonely four months for me, and I was only too glad when my vigil was over. Some people speak of the loneliness of the veld. It was never lonely to me, and certainly not so lonely as looking after an upcountry store in those days.

Thus ends my first trip into the interior. Even to-day I look back upon it with something like admiration, for it must not be forgotten that I was only a youngster of 21 years of age, and with no previous experience of the sort of life it would mean. One had to rely all the time upon one's own resources, for we could not afford to carry huge stocks of provisions on what was essentially a trading trip. Many and many a time I have gone hungry and been nearly starved, for one could not always get a buck, and if one failed in this respect we just had to go hungry till the Fates were kind again. The daily ration was a biscuit and a cup of coffee in the morning, a cup of tea, a biscuit and one tin of sardines among the three of us at midday, and at night coffee and a biscuit again. We hadn't room in the wagons to carry anything more elaborate for such a long trek, and even then, living on this most meagre fare, our stock of provisions for such a long trip was by no means a small consideration. I can truthfully say that hunger sharpened my hunter's wits. Many a weary tramp I have performed in order to fill the pot. In some parts, of course, the game was so thick you could kill it from the wagon, so to speak. In another place we would not see an animal for days together, and these were the times when we learned that a tin of sardines among three hungry men was not exactly a Grand Hotel banquet.

¹⁰ This hunt seems to belong to the year 1870. E. Mohr reports that (*To the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi*, London, 1876, p. 391), when he was at Shoshong in August 1870, Finaughty shot from his wagon a cattle-killing lion, one of two that had been raiding Mangwato stock kraals. The chief Macheng gave him an ox for the skin.

CHAPTER III

MY SECOND TRIP

My second trip in 1865 was rather tame. This time I went in on my own as a trader. I left Kuruman in March, and worked my way to Shoshong. Here I remained trading till November, when, upon the arrival of Mr. E. Chapman from the Matabele country, I replenished my stock from his remnants and left for Mzilikazi's territory. I had no adventures worth noting on the way in. When I got there I traded a little ivory and about 200 oxen, and then turned again to the south. Here I fell in with Mr. Hartley's shooting party. It was a big crowd of white men. There old Mr. Hartley, his three sons, Fred, Tom and 'little Willie' — who I may mention here subsequently died upcountry, and after whom the Hartley Hills are affectionately named — also his stepson, Maloney; Mr. S. Liesk, of Klerksdorp; 'Big' Phillips, Mr. Gifford, and a captain of some militia corps whose name has slipped my memory, and a Dutchman.¹

I had no horse, so Mr. Hartley lent me one to shoot with, I to give him half of all I shot. The horse turned out to be a brute and completely spoiled. None of the party could do anything with him, and that was why he had been lent to me! I was reckoned a good horseman, but he managed to unseat me the first time I got into the saddle. The girth broke and I came a purler, saddle and all. He scored there, but I soon taught him better manners, and after a very short time he grew so quiet and tame that he would allow me to shoot from his back. This horse, I may mention, was in excellent condition on account of not having done any work, while all the others were extremely poor from being severely worked, while at the same time they had had very little food, the party being unable to obtain grain for them in the Mashona country.

¹ Finaughty's chronology is confused here. In May 1866 he, with E. Chapman and Richard Clarke and the Griqua hunter Hans Hai, were joined en route to Matabeleland by a party composed of G. A. Phillips, James Gifford, Thomas Leask, Phil Smith, J. F. Wilkinson (nicknamed 'Cap' because he was an ex-officer of the British Army), and a man named Frank. They traveled together to the Matabele country, and there they combined forces — except for Chapman and Clarke — to go hunting in July to Mashonaland with the party of Henry Hartley. This consisted of that famous hunter, his sons Fred and Tom, his son-in-law Thomas Maloney, a Boer named Christian Harmse, and the German geologist Karl Mauch. (Leask, *Southern African Diaries*, London, 1954.)

The treatment of Finaughty by the Hartleys is confirmed by Leask's account. Will Hartley, another son of the old hunter, was not a member of this year's party, though Finaughty's correct remembrance of so many of these large groups is remarkable.

Hartley Hills were named by Thomas Baines for Henry Hartley, not for Will, who died of fever near them in 1870.

Our first trip from the wagons was for elephant. We left the wagons, all mounted, in the early morning, and in the afternoon we came across four bull elephants. They bolted, and we set off in hot pursuit. I was the first to come up with them owing to the fact that my horse was in better condition than theirs. As a result I bagged all four of the elephants, and I certainly regarded that as a very fair day's achievement on a horse that nobody else would ride.

That same week I got three more bulls out of a very large herd, while the whole of the Hartley party only got two between them. I did not like their style of hunting a little bit. They never secured a large bag. Instead of each man selecting his own animal, they all bunched together and shot at the same elephant until he was down, and then, if opportunity permitted, went after another. Of course, they got very little in this way. I suppose the chief reason for this, at any rate so far as the boys were concerned, was the necessity for them to keep together to look after the old gentleman, who was very shaky on his feet. If he had allowed them to go off each on his own line they would have done far better, but they had to do as he told them, and so I did as much, or more, myself as they did all told. The old man was certainly a drawback in this respect.²

The next time we came up to elephants we all made a terrible bungle of the business. I shot a cow and when she fell I saw she had a small calf with her. The little thing refused to leave its mother and to follow the herd. It remained by its fallen mother's side till I came up, when it immediately ran towards me in the most plaintive way. My horse was frightened and got out of its way, not understanding or appreciating the little creature. I just looked to see that the cow was dead and then turned to go back to the wagons. The baby elephant, acting upon some instinct that made it regard me as its protector — after I had slain its mother — persistently followed me all the way back to the wagons. When I got there with my strange follower I found, to my amazement, that a similar experience had befallen the Hartleys and a baby elephant, a little larger than mine, had followed them back to the wagons, mutely claiming their protection. For a moment we scarcely appreciated the position of foster-mothers to two unwieldy babies of this description but then we thought of the high prices young elephants fetched at the coast and we realised that if we could keep them and take them with us we should do even better with them than we should from the ivory of the dams we had shot. Unfortunately they did not live long, although we had two cows with us giving milk. We gave them plenty of milk, also some gruel, but the food did not suit them. Dysentery set in and they died about three weeks later.

² Thomas Leask says that old Hartley, who was a cripple and could not hunt except on horseback, was ruled by his sons.

After this I had to give my horse up. I had shot seven bull elephants and one cow and I could see that while the old gentleman appreciated his half of the ivory he did not like to see my eight tusks leaving him. Human nature, I suppose! I was offered another horse but I declined, and left the party.

I hurried on with all possible speed to Shoshong, where I fell in with a hunter from the Zambezi, one Martinus Swaarts.³ I sold him 50 oxen, for which I got paid in ivory, and then pushed on without delay to Kuruman, at which place I arrived after an absence of exactly 12 months. I certainly had no reason to complain of the result of my first venture, for both in cattle and ivory the trip had proved most successful, for a youngster.

Mr. John Chapman was away when I arrived but he returned from a trip to the Colony a few days later and I very quickly disposed of the results of my trip and made arrangements to return.

³ Lucas Martinus Swartz, a Transvaaler who was a successful elephant hunter in the interior from 1854 till his death in 1877.

CHAPTER IV

MY THIRD TRIP

My third trip was distinctly for trading purposes and was entered upon in April, 1866. With the proceeds of the previous venture I was able to carry a fairly heavy stock and looked forward to a highly profitable expedition.

My journey to Shoshong was without incident but extremely lonesome and I was glad when at the end of May I arrived at my destination. It at once set to work and built myself a large hut to trade in and sent a letter to Mr. John Chapman asking him to come up or send some one up for my produce. Towards the end of the year he arrived himself bringing with him a big load of goods, all of which I bought from him.

Once more I made a start for the Matabele country, but by the time I had traded all my goods for ivory and oxen I began to fancy that hunting, not trading, was my specialty especially in view of the success I had achieved during my previous short spells among the elephants. So when a few months later (early in 1867) the Hartley party came in again I decided to join them.¹

Leaving my wagon and the oxen at the missionaries',² I took only two horses and two boys, not intending to stay with the party for very long. My main object was to see something of the elephant country, of which I then knew very little. Once more my luck was in for I soon had nine elephants to my credit. It was clear that the party did not like it, and as it soon became too uncomfortable to remain, I left the ivory with them, with a request that they would bring it out on their return, and I pushed ahead entirely alone save, of course, for my two boys and the horses. On the road, I shot eight elephants, all cows, but carrying fair tusks. Luckily, I came across a Cape Colony boy³ coming out from the Zambezi, and I induced him to allow his boys to carry my ivory as far as Inyati.

My success with the gun having definitely decided me to follow a hunter's rather than a trader's calling, I started at once for Shoshong to thoroughly equip myself for the new life. Good horses were absolutely essential for this purpose, and I found it essential to go as far as Sechele's. There I had to give £ 60 apiece for two, but as they were guaranteed against horsesickness, the price could not be

¹ This is another memory of his travels with the Hartleys in 1866. No doubt Finaughty hunted with them in 1865, but south of Matabeleland and not in Mashonaland. See note 1, Chapter III.

² Inyati, the first mission station in the country. It was founded in 1859 by members of the London Missionary Society.

³ A man of mixed blood from the Cape Colony. More often called *Cape Colored*.

regarded as excessive, especially in those days. It may be of interest to mention here that one of them was the finest shooting horse I ever crossed, and after using him for three seasons, I sold him for £ 300 worth of ivory. It may sound like a fairy story, but it is sober fact, and he was worth it. He was a powerful bay standing about 14 hands, and the boys may like to know that I called him 'Dopper'.⁴ He would get up the speed of a racer when after game, would stop promptly, stand perfectly steady, and the moment he saw the gun out he would just bend his neck and hold his breath until the bullet was out. He learned by experience that that was the only way to take the shock of the muzzle-loader without a bad shaking. Even if I dismounted he would stand perfectly steady. Such a horse was a treasure to any hunter and I cannot but pay this tribute to his memory.

But I am getting ahead of my story. After fully equipping myself for a hunting trip, I left Shoshong the first week in December. My companion was Phil Francis (who afterwards died on the Zambezi) and there were two Cape Colony boys with us. On arriving at the Tati I determined to search the district for elephant spoor while waiting the arrival of David Napier, with whom I had agreed to hunt. Although I started out on the 1st of January (1868) in the hope of inaugurating a prosperous new year my luck for once was out, and when I returned to the wagons five days later, I was unable to report having seen a sign of elephant spoor. However, Napier was there and when we joined our forces we had the respectable complement of 30 boys to feed, to say nothing of ourselves.

We arranged to get the wagons down to the Semokwe. We started the second week in January, all down the Tati to where the Semokwe runs into the Shashi, but there was no sign of fresh spoor and we wondered when we were going to strike their trail. Luckily we hadn't long to wait. We were having breakfast one morning, when one of the horses commenced to make a tremendous noise. My boy had him by the bridle, but he was waltzing round like a circus horse and screaming with fright. I rushed to the boy and asked him what was the matter, and for reply he pointed across the river and replied 'Elephant!'

That was all I wanted to hear. I comforted and soothed the frightened horse and we then all mounted quickly, rode through the Semokwe and round a small hill, our impression being that once we got behind them they would plunge into the river and cross where we had forded. There seemed to be no other place because of the huge boulders. However, we found it impossible to carry out our proposed manoeuvre owing to the boulders, so regretfully we had to leave the herd of about 200 or so and return across the river to the place where we had saddled up.

⁴ The name for a member of the Separatist Reformed Church of Holland, a puritanical sect. Paul Kruger was the most famous Dopper.

When we got there, however, we were rewarded with a marvellous sight. For at least a mile and a half the south bank was literally black with elephants. It was impossible accurately to estimate their numbers, but there were literally thousands, and it was a spectacle of a lifetime to see the pachyderms assembled in such a mighty army. We quickly crossed over to them, and I fired the first shot to get them on the move and brought down a cow with a good pair of tusks. It was of course in the very nature of things that on this day of all days I should be short of bullets. I had started out with only eight in my pouch, for in my fondest moments I never dreamed of such mighty sport as this. However, it was no use sighing, it was time for work. Keeping close up to the herd and carefully selecting my quarry, I brought down six bulls with successive shots and then another cow.

Here I had to stop for I had travelled a considerable distance from my companions and having only one bullet left, I dared not fire that away. So I worked my way down to the Shashi and kept along the river bank for some distance, expecting to pick some of them up.

Nor was I mistaken. Napier was the first. He was in the river washing himself. I hailed him from a distance.

'Any luck, Napier?'

'Luck!' was his feeling reply. 'Look at my poor . . . horse.'

Not knowing quite what he was alluding to and thinking he must surely have had luck of some sort. I again shouted, 'What luck?'

His reply was forcible, expressive and to the point, so I rode down to him. He was in a sorry plight. The skin had been taken off his face from his eye to his chin, while his eye was black and discoloured. It was clear that he had had a bad mauling of some sort. He soon explained it by saying that he had been charged and trampled by an elephant cow and both he and his horse had a bad time. It was only too obvious.

The elephant had driven its tusks right into the horse's thigh and one tusk had gone completely through the leg. From the inside wound blood was still running in a copious stream. Fortunately, I had a needle and thread with me and promptly stitched up the wound and stanching the bleeding. It was a wonder that Napier came out of this encounter alive for the elephant, he afterwards told me, had charged him from behind, had both him and his horse down and tried to stamp the life out of them. Fortunately for the horse, it was pretty fat and the elephant was unable to get a fair down blow. It was, however, able to get a purchase on the saddle and this the angry creature had trampled into a pulp, while the girth remained intact. I never saw a saddle in such a condition. It looked for all the world as though it had been chewed. Napier, after getting trampled on the shoulders and one nasty scrape down the face, managed to crawl out between the elephant's hind legs, unobserved, leaving her to expend

all her rage upon the poor horse. When I saw Napier washing he was black and blue all over the shoulders, chest and back.

This was not Napier's first experience of being under a big beast. On the third day of our journey down he had been under a little black rhinoceros and was lucky to get off uninjured. Both mishaps were due to the fact that Napier was very slow, while his horse was about the same — a rather undesirable combination when big wounded animals are charging. Furthermore, Napier was not a very good rider, and his shooting was none too good. He told me that on this occasion he had put 16 bullets into one bull, without hitting a vital part. The bull had stuck to seven or eight cows, and as Napier was following them up through the bush one of the cows must have stayed behind and gone for him.

It took us two full days to cut out and gather up the ivory I had shot. We left two boys with the horse, which we decided should not be moved for ten days, and leaving the boys, with a gun to protect themselves and the horse from lions, we followed up the elephants. We were among them until the end of March. My total bag amounted to 38 pairs of tusks while Napier got seven.

I afterwards found out from Chief Khama that this big herd of elephants had assembled somewhere low down on the Limpopo after the marula,⁵ a fruit of which they are specially fond. It appeared that towards the end of the summer, the elephants from all parts assembled for this annual fruit revel. On this occasion the Mangwato got amongst them and shot one or two, starting them off. This accounted for the large herd we encountered on the Shashi.

After we had been amongst them for some time they broke up into small herds. This suited us much better for we oftener got fresh spoor than if they had remained in one body.

We also shot quite a lot of rhinoceros. They were easy to shoot and plenty of them and as their horns weighed about 15 lbs. and were then worth something like £ 4, they were well worth collecting.

After this we left for the Matabele country, and reached our destination in April. I sent my ivory out by a party just going south whose wagon was not heavily loaded.

Having obtained permission from Mzilikazi to shoot in the Mashona country, we wasted no time in studying native customs or anything else, for we did not know that the chief might not change his mind at any moment.

Before I forget it, let me here tell of one dramatic episode concerning old Mzilikazi and the attitude of the Matabele towards the missionaries that occurred on the occasion of an earlier visit in 1866. Mr. Thomas, the missionary, had invited Mzilikazi to attend divine service on a Sunday morning and to hear a short sermon.

⁵ Morula or wild mango (*Sclerocarya caffra*).

They all agreed to go, indunas and all, and we three white men, who were staying at the king's kraal at the time — Chapman, Clarke and myself⁶ — also went.

Mr. Thomas commenced in the usual way with prayer and then started his little sermon, calculated to appeal to the understanding of his Matabele hearers:

'God made the World!' he began, 'God also made the Sun . . .'

Up sprang an excited and indignant induna. 'You lie, Thomas,' he shouted, 'Mzilikazi made the Sun!'

There was an answering chorus of approval from the serried Matabele ranks, and the four wives who were the king's bearers promptly lifted him up and carried him from the place where his royal powers had been so severely called in question.

This attempt to convert the king and his court could hardly be called a success. The whole incident was disconcerting and unexpected, but it shows that even those barbarians had a pretty definite belief not only in the divine right but in the divine power of their kings.

We set out early in April — certainly a trifle early in view of the fever, but fortunately it did not attack me.

We got into a country that was practically unknown to white men. So far as I could learn only two white parties had ever penetrated there.⁷ The first, old John Viljoen's party, were reported to have shot 210 elephants on one trip, while the second was Mr. Hartley's party which for reasons previously explained did not get a very big bag. However, the latter party, despite their poor shooting, left the more permanent impression on the place, for the village of Hartley on the Umfuli River takes its name from this shooting party and the death there of one of the boys.

I had splendid shooting here. The elephants practically did not know what a gunshot was. On more than one occasion, I have fired at an elephant. As soon as he felt the bullet he would move off, but the others took no notice of the report; they would stand quite unconcerned until perhaps another couple of shots and the running off of two or three more wounded animals would start them all on the run. It was then that I had to work for there were elephants almost without stint and from a big-game hunter's point of view it was an ideal experience. If I had the breech-loader of to-day, I hesitate to think of the number

⁶ Finaughty remembers the year and his companions correctly. See note 1, Chapter III.

⁷ Jan Viljoen and Piet Jacobs and their party, and the Hartleys, were the first whites permitted by Mzilikazi to hunt in Mashonaland, in 1865. Viljoen, Jacobs, and their companions made the huge bag of about 200 elephants. The Hartley party and that of Phillips and Gifford, which included Finaughty, were there in 1866. George Wood hunted there in 1867; also the Jennings party, the Hartley party, T. Leask, and G. A. Phillips. So Finaughty was hardly a pioneer in those parts.

I could have shot. You sportsman of to-day, just imagine what it was to carry all day in the blazing sun a heavy old muzzle-loader with your powder loose in one jacket pocket, a supply of caps in another and your bullets in your pouch. Add to this that the gun kicked one's shoulder with almost as much force as the bullet struck the elephant, and you can believe me that it was no child's play. In fact the recoil was so great that I was more than once knocked down by it and on two occasions I was taken completely out of the saddle. One's shoulder was literally black and blue after a day's elephant shooting.

I had the two finest months of my life on the Umfuli on this occasion. In all I shot 95 elephants, the ivory weighing 5,000 lbs.

THE WILD MAN OF THE WOODS

While on this trip I had a most curious experience. The history of South Africa contains many strange stories of mysterious disappearances, and this is another to add to the list. While we were shooting on the Umfuli River I had gone off alone into the bush, my boys being some distance behind me. I had thrown myself under a tree, and was indulging in 'forty winks,' when I became aware of stealthy footsteps approaching. Accustomed to wake at the slightest sound, I sprang to my feet with my rifle in my hand, and there, not more than two or three yards from me, was one of the strangest objects I have ever seen. It was certainly a white man, but such a white man! It was a human being clothed in only the merest apology for clothes. Such clothes as he had on were nothing but rags; his skin showed through at every stitch, and they were held together by strips of bark. For a hat he had the remnants of something that had been a hat one day, but was now nothing but a shapeless brim, from the top of which there protruded a huge shock of jet-black hair, which fell in tangled knots on his shoulders. His beard was almost indescribable. It was black like his hair, but it spread out from his face in all directions and reached almost to his waist. I have a vague idea of what Rip van Winkle was like after his long sleep in the Catskill Mountains, and he certainly could not have presented a more uncouth appearance when he returned to his native village than did this wild man of the woods.

I at once asked him what he wanted, and who he was — at the same time keeping my gun in a convenient position. I need not have been alarmed, for the poor wretch had nothing more offensive upon him than a stick from the bush. He mouthed some gibberish, and shook his head. I tried him in. Matabele, but only unintelligible answers came from him in response. At this juncture my boys came upon the scene, and I told them to try and find out something of my strange visitor. As some of the boys understood a bit of Portuguese, and he apparently knew a bit of Mashona, we ascertained at last, after much questioning, that he had been lost in the bush for about four months. He would not say where he came from, nor would he give his name, but he said he had come in from Portuguese East Africa and had wandered in the wilderness all this time without any means of protection or anything in the way of food. It appeared that he had occasionally obtained a little food from friendly Mashonas, but for the most part had subsisted on wild fruits and berries. How he had escaped being devoured by lions I cannot understand, for he was in very dangerous country, and the feeble stick he carried in his hand was of no more protection than a garden syringe.

I tried to explain to him, through the boys and by signs, that our wagons were only a short distance behind, and that if he would go on and intercept them he would be provided with some clothes, a decent pair of boots, and a square meal, of which he apparently stood in great need. He evidently understood, for he nodded his head, and in other ways expressed his thankfulness and pleasure. He disappeared along the path we had come, whilst I and my boys proceeded on our way in the opposite direction.

When, much later in the day, the wagons caught us up I immediately enquired for my strange visitor of the morning, and was astounded to learn that he had not put in an appearance at the wagons. We never heard of him again. Whether he was a fugitive fleeing from justice, or whether he was an idiot and did not know what he was doing, is more than I can say. He flashed into my ken and floated out of it like a mote in the sunbeam — the strangest, loneliest figure it has ever been my lot to meet.¹

Our hunting exploits were cut somewhat shorter than we had intended, owing to the receipt of three messages from Mzilikazi to return immediately. The first we took little notice of; the second told us to come out at once if we wished to avoid trouble; while the third stated that if we did not come back without an instant's delay Mzilikazi would send and fetch us.²

This was peremptory enough for us, and we accordingly decided to retrace our steps. We started to move southward early in September, but thought we could combine business with duty by having a little excursion into the fly belt³ on our way down.

A few days before we came to this decision the boys came running to us with the news that seven bull elephants had passed in the bush close to the wagons. I went out to look at the spoor, and it was certainly good enough to warrant a trip. We followed the spoor, which went in an easterly direction, and on the following morning we came up with the elephants on a comparatively open flat. There was one large tree there, under which they had taken shelter from the sun, and I was lucky enough to secure the whole seven.

It took the boys the whole of that day to chop out the ivory of six of them that I had shot comparatively close together, and on the

¹ This man, perhaps a half-caste from the Portuguese settlements, may have been mentally unhinged as a result of his experiences. Such a case occurred, the victim being a white man who became lost and went crazy as a result, during the early years of the occupation of Mashonaland.

² The messages were sent by the principal indunas. Mzilikazi died on September 6, 1868. His councillors were afraid that some of the unruly young warriors would, in the temporary absence of control, kill and rob the whites, and the order to come out of the veld was designed to protect the foreigners.

³ The tsetse fly, whose bite is fatal to domestic animals, existed in well-defined zones, called *belts*.

following morning I sent two boys to chop out the ivory of the seventh, which was a considerable distance off. They left early, and after I had eaten a little breakfast I saddled up and started in their direction. As I was riding along through the high grass I saw what I took to be more elephants some distance away. There was certainly something of exceptional size moving along, but as I cautiously drew near I saw to my astonishment that it was a wagon, the top of which was covered with skins — but travelling through the high grass it had looked for all the world like a huge animal!

I rode up to it, and as I approached a woman gave expression to a perfect shriek of thankfulness, sprang out of the wagon, and ran towards me. She was a Mrs. Harrens (I am not sure of the exact spelling), an elderly Dutch lady, wife of Christian Harrens, whom I had previously met further south with the Hartley party. At the sight of me she nearly went into hysterics. She seized me in her arms, held me tightly to her, and cried as though her heart would break. For a time I could get nothing out of her, nor could she realise anything I was saying to her. She just clung onto me and cried. I could feel that there was some terrible tragedy behind it all, for she did not belong to the sentimental type that wears its heart upon its sleeve. The very fact that she was so many miles from the haunts of white men proved that she came of the hardy old voortrekker stock that feared neither loneliness nor distance. But now she had broken down completely, and it was apparent that her abandonment to grief at my appearance was the culmination of a long spell of iron-like reserve. I let her have her cry out. It was no use my attempting to stop it. She abandoned herself to her feelings, and all I could do was to utter a few words of kindly sympathy as she sobbed her heart out on my shoulder.

Gradually the sobs subsided, the tears slowly ceased, and when she had grown somewhat composed she told me of a tragedy that few women have experienced. Pointing to a little boy in the wagon, she said, 'He is the only one left out of all my family! I have lost my husband, five children, and a white man by the name of Wood, who came in with us. They are all dead, and I have watched them die, one after the other! All that are left is my little boy here and this faithful native now leading the oxen. The other natives are either dead or they deserted; and just we three have been trying, God knows how many weary weeks, to get out.' It appeared from subsequent conversations I had with her that after leaving the Hartley party her husband had decided to take an extended tour into the Matabele country and away to the northwest towards what is now Mashonaland. They had spent the summer there, and had been in a very sickly district during the worst period of the year. The party consisted of Harrens and his wife, three grown-up daughters, three small children, the white man Wood,

and several natives. First one and then another of the party had sickened and died, and the survivors had scraped out a shallow grave and buried them there. They were all too sick to get away from the valley of death in which they were encamped, and could do nothing but wait for the end.⁴

And the end came with terrible certainty and appalling suddenness. The two strong men, then one of the big girls, then two of the little ones, and finally the second of the big girls fell victims to the fever. Even three of the natives also succumbed, and it was at this stage only that the old lady, whose hair had grown white with grief, was forced to take control of affairs and make a desperate effort to get out alive. So she sat in the wagon all day long, and drove, while the one native who had remained with her led the oxen and did such other work at the outspan as he could.

I had a hard task to get away from her, for she was in a state of mortal fear that I would desert her, and it was pitiful to see how her nerve had broken down and how completely terrified she was of being left alone. She had kept a brave face upon it as long as she could, but once she had met a man of her own colour overwrought Nature had mercifully eased the strain, and she had practically reached the end of her courage and endurance. Of course, I assured her that I would not desert her. I left with her a Cape Colony boy, who could speak both Dutch and English, with instructions to bring the wagon down to where mine was. This he did by the second night, and on the following morning I returned.

⁴ The deaths of Christiaan Harmse, members of his family, and three servants are mentioned by Baines (*Northern Goldfields Diaries*, London, 1946, p. 486). The man Wood cannot be identified, though here Finaughty may be thinking of the deaths in Mashonaland during the Fever Year of 1870.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE FLY COUNTRY

When I rejoined the wagons on the second day I found that my boy had carried out his instructions faithfully and the old lady's wagon was outspanned alongside mine. I noticed a peculiar habit she had when kraaling her oxen at night. I thought it an unnecessary thing to do, but forebore making any comment on the matter. It was a pity I did not, for if I had I should have learned that her method was the outcome of practical experience and if I had followed the same plan I should have been saved a peculiarly unpleasant adventure, and one that nearly cost me my life. But of that in its place.

One way and another I had a lot of trouble with the old lady, but there was more to come, even after we started to trek southwards. The first calamity was the breaking of the axle of her wagon. Such an accident is serious in any circumstances when travelling on the veld, but here in the heart of the Mashona country it was little short of disaster. Mrs. Harrens very nearly collapsed with despair. The thought that, after being rescued so providentially by a white man, she would again be left stranded in the bush, through the breakdown of the wagon, was almost too much for her, and she was in a perfect state of terror lest I should be compelled to go and leave her. However, after considerable difficulty and hard work I was able to rig up a temporary wooden axle which answered the purpose of the real article and enabled her to continue her journey to the Transvaal.

Napier and I, having given the boys instructions to inspan on a certain day and trek southwards to the first river, the Umsweswe, started separately into the fly country on foot in the hope of getting a few more elephant tusks, for although we had had a very fine bag a wagon must be very full if there is not room for a little more ivory. I was in the fly country for 14 days and had a really good time. I shot 14 bulls and 8 cows, and could have had several more cows, but refrained from shooting as the ivory in them was very light and it therefore seemed a pity to kill them.

I had one narrow squeak with an old bull in the Umsweswe River, the bed of which, as many Rhodesians know, is all sand. I had two guns with me at the time and with one of them I fired at the bull at close quarters. Unfortunately it missed fire — the cap went off but the spark failed to reach the powder. I immediately handed it to my boy for him to put on another cap and in the meantime planted a bullet in the elephant with the second gun. I was watching the elephant all the time and did not notice what the boy was doing. The stupid fellow instead of putting on a fresh cap only, put in another charge of powder and a second bullet. Seeing the old elephant which I had

wounded coming for me at the charge I reached out my hand for the gun, put it to my shoulder and fired.

There was a terrific explosion. The gun flew out of my hand; I saw stars and was knocked flat on my back in the river bed. For the moment I was stunned, but, promptly recovering, I sprang to my feet and saw the elephant, trumpeting with rage, nearly upon me. I tried to run but could make no headway in the loose sand while the big flat feet of the elephant enabled it to get a grip and to move almost as easily as upon solid ground. I could feel him almost on top of me and as a last resource doubled short back.

The elephant tried to do the same and as he did so gave a loud scream. I thought he had me for certain, but as I turned my head found that he had paused. In trying to turn upon me he had twisted his shoulder at the knob, just where I had lodged my bullet. It was lucky for me, for nothing could have saved me in that loose sand. As it was, the elephant was helpless, for of course he could do nothing on three legs and it did not take me long to finish him off, which I did without wasting time, thankful that I had come through such a risky experience with a safe skin.

I mentioned in an earlier experience that the elephants in those days did not know the meaning of gunfire. There were six other elephants in the river and they took not the least notice of my firing. I had four of them down before the others began to move. The fifth moved off somewhat too quickly for my liking, but eventually I brought him down and was also successful in securing the sixth.

This was an extremely lucky bag and I was sitting down on the bank of the river congratulating myself on my good fortune when I heard a tremendous din on the other side. Springing to my feet with my gun in my hand I gazed in the direction of the noise and to my surprise and amusement saw a whole host of Mashonas who had been witnesses of my shooting exploits driving an elephant towards me. They had discovered a seventh member of the herd which I had overlooked, and spreading themselves out and raising a most unearthly din they had driven the big brute to where they had heard the shooting. This was the first occasion on which I had been favoured with volunteer beaters for the noble sport of elephant hunting. It did not take long to finish the elephant off, and my Mashona friends had their share of the spoil in the shape of a goodly store of elephant meat.

Though the sport was good, this hunting in the fly country was very much like hard work, and personally I prefer the horse.¹ The tsetse fly, as most people know, is a peculiarly vicious creature and the prompt and painful manner in which it draws blood renders it

¹ Finaughty quit elephant hunting when the beasts were all driven to fly country, where they could not be pursued on horseback.

most obnoxious to human beings while of course its bite is fatal to oxen and horses.

I was in the fly country for fourteen days and got to the appointed place of meeting on a Friday, with two boys, but to my great disappointment there was no sight of the wagons. Wondering what could be the matter I sent a boy back on the trail, with instructions that as soon as he came up with the wagons he was to return, bringing with him a horse. I also started to the north behind him so as to get a mount as quickly as possible. Shortly after sunrise one of my drivers returned on horseback with a led horse accompanying him. He told a curious story which did not strike me as altogether palatable.

He said they had started according to my instructions, and outspanned the first evening. They made up a kraal in which to put the cattle, but it was of a very flimsy nature, with the result that the oxen simply walked out of it during the night and commenced grazing. This was where Mrs. Harrens scored for, having tied her oxen to the yoke, she had them safe while mine and Napier's had gone off, goodness only knew where. So far as I could gather they must have been frightened soon after they got loose, and bolted, making off in the direction of the Umsweswe, which they had crossed. It was quite clear that lions were after them, for I afterwards found that, on the further bank, the lions had attacked them. Five of the oxen were killed at this spot by the brutes. I followed up the spoor as rapidly as possible. The first night (Saturday) I slept close to the wagons for I found that the oxen were travelling almost in a circle. The following morning I started off about daybreak and, during the afternoon, met several of my boys returning with 16 oxen which they said they recovered amongst the Mashonas in the vicinity. The next morning I continued the search, and noticed the somewhat peculiar manner in which the oxen appeared to be crossing each other's spoor, but failed to draw any particular conclusion from it, though I afterwards was enabled to explain it. If I had realised the real meaning at the time things might have turned out differently.

At this juncture the old Matabele guide I had with me complained of hunger, and, seeing three roan antelope not far away, I was about to shoot, and felt for my powder flask to prime the nipple, but to my annoyance could not find it, and then remembered I had left it where we slept for the night. As matters transpired I was extremely foolish in not sending back for it, for its possession would have saved me and the boys much subsequent distress. As I had only the one charge in the gun I would not fire at the antelope, not knowing how useful that one charge might turn out to be, for the wise hunter never cares to be without one last shot in case of emergency.

I soon found use for it, for about sundown we saw an old rhinoceros coming down the path to the water. I got off my horse and

went to meet him, halting at a very large ant heap, which was covered with grass. As he came near the heap he gave me his side, and I raised the gun and fired, but the weapon played me a trick that the old muzzle-loaders often did in those days — it hung fire, and there was I pointing my gun at a particularly ugly and dangerous rhino. Fortunately I kept the gun straight at him, wondering for a second what was going to happen, when to my intense thankfulness the fire crept down the nipple of the gun, and the charge exploded, giving the rhino a clean shot in a vital place. He ran for about 400 yards, and then fell dead. But those old muzzle-loaders sometimes were enough to make one's hair turn grey.

We camped all night near the carcass, and I told the boys they must cut up and carry as much of the meat as possible, for I had no more powder and did not know how far we might have to go. So we started off next morning — a somewhat queer procession — each boy carrying about four to five pounds of burned meat on a stick, while I cut off a big chunk weighing perhaps 12 lbs. or more. It was lucky for me that I did so, as I should almost for a certainty have starved to death. With the usual improvidence of natives, the boys had finished the whole of their meat by next day, while I nursed mine carefully from the start, and my portion lasted me for some nine or ten days.

From this time followed one of the most trying experiences of my life. We again took up the spoor of the oxen on the Monday, slept upon it on the Tuesday, and on the following afternoon we came to a place where it was evident they had been lying down for several days. Once more we followed up the spoor, and then we ascertained, what I had suspected for some time, that they were being deliberately driven. Footprints of two natives were now plainly discernible. It was obvious that after the oxen crossed the river close to the outspan and were attacked by the lions, they had been discovered by natives, who had promptly rounded them up, driven them across the river again at another spot, and while I was wasting time following up the spoor in an almost complete circle they were being driven away to the northeast. I could see now why the spoors crossed each other at a particular spot. Once we ascertained the real meaning of things we followed hot-foot, and 70 miles from the wagons we came up with them in a native kraal.

And what a sorry sight they presented! When Napier and I left them three weeks before they were all fat and fit for the butcher. Now, after being worried by lions and driven to death by the Mashonas, they were like bags of bones. I took possession of them without making too much fuss, though, of course, I had my own opinion as to whether the Mashonas were, as they said, ignorant of the ownership of the cattle, which they had found wandering in the bush. It was a trying journey, and it was sixteen days from the time I left the wagons before I got

back. The oxen were so low in condition that I had to give them a rest for three of four days on the Umfuli River.

When I arrived at the wagons I was amazed and startled to find that Napier had not turned up. He was now 16 days overdue, and I began to get anxious. I was compelled to move the wagons, and so soon as I got back with the oxen I inspanned, trekked through the Umsweswe River, and about half a mile from the bank halted and built a strong kraal around the wagons, intending to go back in search of Napier, who had been absent now for nearly a month.

Napier was not the only one who had disappeared, leaving no trace. A little native boy of mine was missing the evening we got to the Umfuli with the oxen. The boys searched all over the country for him, but without success, and we had given him up for lost. Later on, as we were inspanning the oxen, one of the boys discovered some object on the plain, and climbing to the top of the wagon, announced excitedly that it was his long-lost little brother. He ran off to meet him, and when the poor lad reached us he was in the last stages of exhaustion. It appeared that he had completely lost himself, and had been for eight days without food, save a few wild berries. He was fearfully emaciated, but soon recovered.

I may mention here that on this wearying search for the oxen I also knew what it was to be hungry. The rhino meat lasted me for ten days, and for five days after that I did not have a scrap. The experience taught me never to leave my gun or my powder flask behind me.

I was about to start back in search of Napier in the afternoon, but something delayed my departure. This proved to be a fortunate delay, for on the following morning I had started with a dozen boys and had reached the river when we first met some of Napier's boys and then Napier himself. But it was scarcely the Napier I had left a month ago. Then a hale, hearty man. Now almost a living corpse, unable to walk and carried in a rude stretcher by four boys. He was simply racked with fever, and said he had been down with it for about 20 days. He was in a terrible way, thinking I had gone on without him, and said that that fear, more than the fever itself, had brought him almost to the verge of despair. He had had bad luck with the elephants, getting only a few cows, and, generally speaking, had no reason ever to wish to repeat the experiment of shooting through the fly country alone and on foot.

After two or three days' rest Napier had sufficiently recovered for me to make a start for the south, and after a good long trek we arrived at Inyati.

I should mention here that Mrs. Harrens continued to be of the party. She was an interesting old soul, full of quaint sayings and odd ways of looking at things.

I was talking with her one day about her husband. The dear old lady shook her head sadly as she thought of him and his sad end. She was so very, very sorry, she said, that he collapsed so quickly, '... for had the dear Lord only spared him a few months longer he could have shot some more elephants, and so have provided for her in her old age!'

CHAPTER VII
THE DEATH OF MZILIKAZI

We continued our journey southward as far as the missionaries' and then discovered the reason for the urgent messages from Mzilikazi ordering us to return. Whether the messages came from the old chief himself I don't know. Probably, feeling that his end was near and being anxious that his white friends should not be mixed up with any disturbances that he felt would follow in connection with his succession, he had sent for us to return so that we might be well out of harm's way before the storm broke. He might have been dead at the time and these were messages from the council of chiefs in his name. At any rate the rumour of his death was in everyone's mouth, the whole countryside was in a state of uproar, and with the old man's tight hand removed and with no chief appointed to take the restless spirits in hand, there was a tendency towards outrage and plunder which boded ill for our little party.

We had seen signs of restlessness for some time, but the first real breath of danger reached us at the kraal where I first saw Mzilikazi on my first trip into the country with Mr. Chapman. It was at the Bembesi, Mbigo being the induna.¹ As the wagons came to the kraal, about two thousand Matabele surrounded us, with threatening gestures. They first seized our boys, stripped them of all their clothing and gave one or two of them a severe beating with sticks and knobkerries. A vast number of them were armed with assagais and these swarmed up close to us, placed their spears against the wagon sides, and apparently only waited for the signal to fall upon us and 'eat us up' in true Matabele fashion.

It was an anxious moment or two. I was sitting in front, on the wagon box, trying to appear as unconcerned as possible, but inwardly feeling that I had certainly experienced more comfortable moments in my career. I was wondering what sort of a miracle would happen to get us out of a very nasty corner when to my joy I saw Mbigo the induna. I recognised him at once and he was not easily to be mistaken. It was the same short, squat, square, light-coloured Kaffir I had seen years ago.² I had only seen him during the first few months' stay at his kraal but thinking the best thing I could do was to put on a bold face, I jumped from the wagon, pushed my way through the serried ranks of

¹ Mbigo was commander of the Zwangendaba Regiment and a favorite of Mzilikazi. The principal kraal of this impi, a good fighting force, was at the Bembesi River. Mbigo opposed Lobengula's election as king and was killed when his regiment was defeated in the brief civil war of 1870.

² This concise description of the headman agrees well with other descriptions of him.

the warriors and walked up to him, holding out my hand, with the greeting, 'How are you, Mbigo?'

He seemed a trifle nonplussed, apparently had no recollection of me and asked me who I was.

I quickly told him how we had met in the same kraal some years before, recalled various incidents to his mind and without giving him time to make a counter move I invited him to come up to the wagon as I had a very nice present for him.

I could see by his eyes that his desire for a present overcame all other considerations, and, motioning back the reluctant braves, he followed me to the wagon and climbed up in front with me. In the tent of the wagon I had a bundle of lovely blue crane feathers hanging up. It was a really fine bundle, weighing $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. to 2 lbs., and I knew that these feathers were prized above everything by the natives for purposes of adornment. Hastily cutting the bundle down from the tent, I ripped through the cord that bound them, and spread the delicate plumes all along the seat. I saw his eyes glisten with pleasure as he saw such a treasure unfolded, and I gathered them into a bundle and handed them to him.

The old fellow received them in his arms, and hastily commenced to get down, but his precipitancy to get away made me still doubtful of his pacific intentions, and I at once checked him and intimated that I had something more for him.

He paused, and I played my final card. Picking up a bar of lead 12 lbs. in weight — I was stronger in those days than I am to-day — I held it out in one hand. He took it unsuspectingly, but the weight was too much for him, and he dropped it to the floor of the wagon. With a smile I handed it back to him, put another of the same weight on top of it, and the old man, literally as well as metaphorically overloaded with gifts, scrambled down. I guessed rightly that the lead would clinch his friendship, for lead, powder and guns were the most prized articles that one could give to the natives in those days — particularly lead, which, on account of its weight, was even less readily obtainable than powder.

The old induna dropped to the ground grunting his appreciation, and, with a few sharp words, ordered the impatient warriors to fall back, saying that I was his friend. They drew back at once from the wagon, leaving Mbigo near me.

'Where are you going to outspan, white man?' he asked.

I replied that I proposed to make camp down by the river (the Bembesi).

'All right,' he replied, looking me meaningly in the face. 'But do not stay too long.'

I took the hint, and, as fast as I could, without showing undue signs of fear, I not only put the Bembesi but as big a strip of territory

as I could between Mbigo's kraal and myself.

I afterwards learned that when Lobengula became chief he wiped out Mbigo and his kraal to a man. The massacre was complete, for Mbigo had been opposed to Lobengula's succession, holding that Kuruman was the rightful heir. I, too, believe that Kuruman was the legitimate successor, but he could not be found, and Loben, therefore, was chosen to the chieftainship, an honour which he proceeded to celebrate in true savage fashion by 'eating up' all who had failed to support him from the outset.³

It is somewhat out of its chronological order, but I am reminded by this incident at Mbigo's kraal of a curious experience I had here on the occasion of my first visit. I mentioned, in an earlier chapter, Mzilikazi's order to his people to capture alive a big crocodile which had devoured a child. My personal experience showed me that Mzilikazi regarded certain animals with peculiar veneration. I have previously said that with every white man in the Matabele country was a guide, who was, in other words, a spy — sometime a very decent fellow, sometimes not. It was lucky that mine was of the first-named variety, or I might have got into trouble. One day I was on the banks of the river overlooking a clear pool, the floor of which was literally covered with white bones — mostly rhinoceros bones, so far as I could see, but many others of a smaller and more suggestive size. On a sand bank were several big, ugly crocodiles, and the sight of them and that aquatic sepulchre filled me with disgust and rage. Raising my gun I sighted on the biggest of the saurians, and finished him off with a bullet through his brain. Just as I did so my guide glided out from the shadow of a tree and touched me on the shoulder.

'Don't kill any more,' he said, with a curious look in his eyes. 'Mzilikazi does not allow any of them to be shot. He says that the crocodiles and the wolves must not be killed — that they have to live just as we have. Other things you may kill, but not crocodiles and wolves; they are sacred. If I were to tell Mzilikazi there would be trouble, but as you are a young man and did not know, I will not tell him this time.'⁴

Just one more story of Mzilikazi before resuming. Chapman told me that on the trip he made into the Matabele country, the year before I first went in with him, Mzilikazi had agreed to purchase a wagon from him. The old chief came down to the outspan to take possession of his purchase, bringing with him the agreed amount of ivory which was to be handed over in exchange. Chapman was not expecting him so

³ On the contrary, Lobengula throughout the trouble displayed much moderation. After his victory he offered an amnesty to the defeated rebels.

⁴ The hyena was called a wolf in South Africa. Finaughty is the only traveler who states that these animals could not be killed in the Matabele empire.

quickly, and had not offloaded the wagon of his trade goods, provisions, etc. This he at once commenced to do, whereupon Mzilikazi, obviously very much annoyed, shouted out —

'What are you taking the inside of that wagon out for? When I sell you a bullock I don't take its inside out before handing it over.'

It took some time to mollify the old man, and to convince him that a wagon was a wagon, and not a wagon with all its contents.⁵

But, to resume. Trekking south, the spirit of unrest and insolence was manifest on every hand. Going past one kraal a lot of young Matabele turned out and walked by the side of the wagons, clearly up to mischief. Napier at the time was riding on my wagon with me. The young scoundrels got into Napier's wagon, which was behind mine, seized his feather mattress and pillow, ripped them open, and darted off with the coverings, which they wanted for limbo.⁶ The first thing we noticed was the swarm of little black, yelling rascals disappearing in a moving cloud of white feathers. Napier's language as he gave chase after his beloved featherbed was quite equal to the occasion, but he had to content himself with half a wagon load of feathers, while the remainder, also the coverings, trailed away into the bush.

This was not the only experience we had with those impish youngsters hereabouts. It was at this spot (crossing the Xoce, near Thabas Induna) that I was very much amused at another incident in which Napier got the worst of it.

I should mention that Napier had developed a partiality for Kaffir beer, and, while I was busy with some wagon repairs, Napier improved the shining hour by producing a basket of beads and other goods fascinating to the native mind and announcing to the gaping and inquisitive native youngsters who came prying round that he was open to do business — beads for beer. The glad tidings soon spread and presently the lads came along with calabashes of beer, escorted by their dusky sweethearts who fingered the beads and the gaudy trinkets with all the fine criticism of a society lady in an Oxford Street jewellery establishment. However, business was soon in fine progress. Napier sat in the shadow of the wagon with his basket of trade goods on his knees and two or three buckets around him. As each transaction was completed the beer was poured into the buckets, and the beads, etc., were handed over. So it went on until Napier had filled the buckets with beer, and had also secured a goodly supply of Kaffir corn, wherewith to make a further supply, for, being still weak after his fever he felt that he needed plenty of nourishment.

Suddenly, and without a word of warning, the basket containing

⁵ Chapman sold Mzilikazi a wagon in 1860, after a good deal of haggling. (Wallis, *The Matabele Mission of John and Emily Moffat*, London, 1945, pp. 100, 173.) If Mzilikazi acted in this way, it was not through ignorance.

⁶ Limbo was the native name for trade cloth.

the balance of the beads was snatched off his legs by some enterprising youngster, others seized the buckets of beer, and before poor Napier, who was still very shaky, could rise to his feet and chase them they were on the other side of the river and there they sat and drank the beer, laughed at us and mocked us with the beads. Much as I felt inclined to chastise the young varlets, I could not help laughing heartily at Napier's impotent wrath at being so completely outwitted when he had looked forward to such a glorious drink.

It was at this spot that I had a good deal of trouble with Mrs. Harrens's wagon. After telling the boys to inspan I went on ahead on horseback, hoping to shoot some meat for the pot that evening. I was lucky enough to sight a herd of giraffe, and turned a fat cow onto the road, where I shot it. As the wagons did not come on as expected, I returned along the road, and found that the axle of the old lady's wagon had this time completely collapsed. She was in a fury of despair and rage — despair that I would now certainly leave her in the lurch; rage at the rottenness of the wagon. She expressed her opinion of the man who sold the wagon to her husband in terms that should have made his ears burn, though he were a thousand miles away. When she concluded her opinions of him with a wish that she would like to see him with the point of the axle balanced on his nose, and she after him with an ox sjambok, and she would teach him to humbug a poor widow woman, I smiled serenely, for the man who sold the wagon was 'Big Phillips,' popularly known as the 'Playful Elephant,' who could have taken both myself and the dear old *iron*, one in each hand, and thrown us onto the top of the wagon.⁷

Sending some of the boys on to cut up the giraffe, I chopped down a good pole, placed it under the broken axle, and tied it to the side of the wagon. In this way we got to the Umguza, where next day I put in a false wooden axle, which lasted the remainder of the journey.

Early that morning I saw fresh elephant spoor below the drift, and quickly saddled up and got the elephants just above where Bertlesen's limekilns now stand. The bush was very thick, and I only got one shot, but this brought down a young bull with tusks weighing about 25 lbs. each. I did not then know that the country was more open further on, or I should have followed up, but as the spoor indicated that they were a poor lot I returned to the wagons. Next morning I sent my formal farewell greetings to Mzilikazi at Old Bulawayo,⁸ only a few miles away (I did not go in to see if he were alive or dead), and made tracks as quickly as I could for the south.

⁷ George Arthur Phillips, who came to the Matabele country in 1864 and two years later settled there, was known as 'Elephant' Phillips. A man of powerful physique, he lived in the country as trader and hunter until he retired to London in 1890.

⁸ A slip. Old Bulawayo was built by Lobengula, beginning in 1870.

I did not stop, except for the usual outspans, until I reached the Ramaquabane River, where I waited for some Boers who had gone into the Zambezi country with a quantity of goods I had advanced to them on credit, the stipulation being that they should pay me in ivory.

Old Mrs. Harrens went on, while Napier proceeded to Shoshong. I remained on the Ramaquabane for three weeks, and had a most laughable and enjoyable time. Old Jan Lee and his family had settled here. Jan had built a comfortable house and they certainly were having a happy time. The fun consisted in hearing the old man talk. He would tell the most circumstantial yarns, full of adventure and humour, by the hour together, and to listen to him you would think he had left no elephants in the country. At the same time his son would be whispering to me that his father was a second edition of Baron Münchhausen, that he was too frightened to go near an elephant, that he had never shot one and was never likely to shoot one. But the gravity of the old man in telling adventures and the bursts of Homeric laughter that invariably followed their recital kept the house in a constant state of merriment.⁹

The Boers I was waiting for turned up at last and handed me over a rare lot of ivory. It was lucky for me that I had sent mine down by Napier or I should not have been able to find transport for it. However, I now had plenty of room, started for the south with my load, and reached Shoshong early in November, where I met my brother Harry who had come up with Francis. I went on to Sechele's, sold my ivory — between 11,000 and 12,000 lbs. in weight, which I had both traded and shot — and got drafts for same on Port Elizabeth at an all-round price of 6s. 10½d. per lb.

⁹ John Lee, a man of mixed English and Afrikaner parentage. He settled at the Mangwe River (not at the Ramaquabane, as Finaughty has it) about 1863, on a farm granted him by Mzilikazi. Lee became an advisor, or rather the foreign minister, to both Mzilikazi and Lobengula. His farm was a rendezvous for whites during the 1870's and the 1880's. Thomas Baines says he was a good man and a good hunter.

the dust all round his neck. With an angry growl he made off.

We secured the horses as quickly as possible, made up some big fires all around us, and after eating the evening meal settled ourselves comfortably to sleep, Gifford, myself, and the Colony boy being at one fire together. I was awakened by hearing the horses snorting and knew that this portended the presence of danger. Hastily rising to my knees, I peered over a small bush that we had at our heads and looked — straight into the face of a big lioness who was not more than six feet away! She had been taking a quiet survey of the camp by the light of the fires and, evidently, when I popped up my head she got as big a fright as I did, and promptly bolted, leaving behind her a peculiarly offensive odour which compelled us to shift our quarters and kept us awake for some time.

It was about three hours later, and we were just sleeping comfortably again, when there was another scare. The fire was suddenly scattered all over the place, there was a fearful grunting noise, the horses screamed with terror and snapped their riems, the boys with howls of fear climbed the nearest trees and the whole camp was a perfect pandemonium. The cause of all this trouble was a pugnacious little black rhinoceros who, undismayed by our fire, just blundered through it in his own pig-headed way right into our midst and nearly frightened us to death. He was probably startled at the noise his little exploit evoked, for within a minute he had scuttled away into the darkness.

We had considerable difficulty in catching the horses. The poor creatures were very restless after this second trial of their nerves in one night and we had great trouble in pacifying them. They were almost frightened to death and as by this time everybody's nerves were more or less shaken, further sleep, by tacit consent, was out of the question. The boys piled more wood on the fires and we promptly made ourselves a kettle of coffee and sat by the fire drinking till daybreak.

CHAPTER X

THE HARTLEY PARTY AGAIN

As soon as it was light we moved off and, picking up the spoor of elephant, we started in pursuit. They took us a long way up the Ramaquabane River, the trail crossing the main road.¹ We were somewhat surprised to find at this spot several wagons outspanned. These proved to be old Mr. Hartley's, but there were only native boys in charge at the time, the white men having also gone in pursuit of elephant. The presence of white men was too rare an occurrence for us to miss the chance of meeting them, so we left the elephants we were pursuing to their own devices, offsaddled and waited for my old friends to turn up. This they did eventually and, after renewing old acquaintance, told us that they had been unsuccessful in their particular jaunt that day but had shot a rhinoceros not very far from camp and had left a number of boys there to cut out the eatable part and bring it along as food.

We had many reminiscences to exchange, and just as we were full of talk one of Mr. Hartley's boys came running up at full speed, crying and moaning and in a state of considerable distress. For a time it was difficult to get a coherent story out of him, but eventually we calmed him down and he then told us, with many gesticulations, that the headman had been seized by a lion, killed and carried off into the reeds in spite of their attempts to save him.

Upon hearing this startling news we immediately sprang to our feet, caught our horses, saddled up, and with the boy racing ahead of us to show us the way, we galloped for the scene of the tragedy. We had not gone more than halfway when we saw a procession coming towards us.

Leading the way was the 'dead' man — walking, with a boy on either side supporting him. He wasn't quite dead; in fact he was worth half a dozen dead men, but there was no doubt that he had received a very bad mauling. Upon questioning him and his comrades it appeared that, being too lazy to come back by the proper path, they had taken a short cut through some river reeds, when the lion came upon the scene from behind. The king of beasts, attracted probably by the smell of the rhinoceros meat, and being in search of supper, made a spring and — caught the headman, bending. There were four ugly wounds, the marks of His Majesty's four big teeth in the headman's anatomy, but beyond the fact that he was unable to sit down for some weeks he was very little the worse.

After being bowled over in this undignified fashion and hauled away for a short distance, it appeared that the headman's struggles,

¹ The road from Shoshong to Matabeleland.

and the other boys' shrieks, had scared the lion sufficiently for him to release his victim, who now, with much circumstantial detail and appropriate gesture, accompanied by innumerable groans, told us how the tragic affair had happened. It took some time to tell, naturally, for though the lion went straight for the mark, no native ever yet lived who could do the same, when telling anything that happened. He had to begin at the beginning and wander all round the subject, in which he was aided and abetted by his comrades, and by the time they had finished we had had the whole scene re-enacted before our eyes and knew what every man said, thought, or did, together with their opinions of the lion and his dastardly and cowardly method of attack.

Eventually, the *indaba* was finished, and we proceeded to the spot where the rumpus had occurred. Our dogs were with us but we could not induce them to go into the reeds where the lion had taken refuge. We were determined to get the lion, but when the dogs refused to go in, there was no anxiety on the part of anyone to make a move.

Seeing that they were all diffident I, rather rashly perhaps, said I would go in, provided they all stood by with their guns ready. This they agreed to do, and as a gun was useless in a close encounter I handed my gun to one of the boys and armed myself with the big assagai that the headman had dropped.

I dropped down the bank into the thick reeds, and at the second stride I trod upon something which gave a loud scream. In an instant I stabbed with the assagai with all my might and, drawing back the weapon, found I had impaled a young lion cub, about six weeks old. The lioness, doubtless frightened by the noise of our big party, was afraid to come back and protect her offspring. This was certainly fortunate so far as I was concerned, for she would unquestionably have given me a very rough time. At the sight of the cub the dogs plucked up courage and came into the reeds with me. They smelled out and killed two more cubs, but the parents were not to be found.

We returned to Mr. Hartley's wagons and slept there that night. On the following morning we set off along the bank of the river, and offsaddled, while it was yet early, by the side of a small spruit. We made a fire, grilled some of the rhino meat and, having satisfied our keen appetites, stretched ourselves out in the warm morning sunlight, filled our pipes and prepared to enjoy a blissful ten minutes.

We were in the midst of a delightful reverie that the huntsman-smoker knows so well, when my daydreams were suddenly dispelled by Gifford, who quietly touched me on the arm and pointed to a buffalo cow which was grazing not more than a hundred yards away from us. We kept perfectly still for a few seconds, but just as we were about to move we heard a fierce growl, saw a flash of a tawny something — and the buffalo cow was rolling over in the middle of a great cloud of dust.

The whole thing happened in a flash. Almost before we had recovered from our astonishment the dust had cleared away and we could see a big male lion and lioness savagely tearing at the buffalo.

Our guns were lying by our side, and it did not take us many seconds to agree as to which each of us should take. Within five seconds our guns had spoken, and both lions were lying dead by the side of their victim. Reloading, we walked over to the three dead bodies and ascertained that it was the lion that had made the first assault. He had jumped squarely on the shoulders of the buffalo, and, holding onto the neck by one paw he had put the other over the buffalo's nose, thrust in his great claws, and broken the poor beast's neck with one mighty twist.

We looked around to see where our boys were, but, as usual when lions were about, they had deemed discretion the better part of valour, and were all of them in the topmost branches of the nearest trees. We shouted to them to come down, but they were mighty reluctant to do so. The cowards said they were afraid of something else turning up, and they were not coming down until they were sure that all danger was past.

Perhaps the cowardice of natives in such circumstances is excusable, for there have been tragedies enough among them, plenty of whom have fallen victims to the lions.

There was one very plucky feat, however, I remember, performed by two young Matabele boys, and it deserves to be placed on record, for it is one of the finest pieces of bravery on the part of two lads that I have ever heard. There picannins were herding cattle one day. It was in the wet season, there was a nasty drizzling rain, obscuring all the landscape, save for an immediate twenty yards or so. Suddenly two lions came on the scene, sprang onto a cow and killed it. This stampeded the remainder of the cattle, while the two terrified boys, with shouts of terror, ran madly behind the panic-stricken herd.

Gradually, however, the boys recovered from their panic, and stopped to talk it over. Solemnly they debated the whole matter — and here comes in a beautiful illustration of pride of race — and they said: 'We are Matabele boys; we are the sons of brave men; the Matabele do not fear lions, and because we are Matabele we must not be afraid. If we went back to the kraal and told our people we were frightened by lions, they would laugh at us, and say we would never be Matabele warriors, but were only girls, and only fit to stay with women in the kraals. And so we should be laughed at all our lives. We must go back and kill the lions.'

It sounds incredible, but those plucky boys returned. They crept cautiously through the bush until they came to the spot where the cow had been attacked. There they saw the lioness tearing away at the carcass of the cow. They discussed the plan of campaign, and

decided that the best way to approach their formidable foe was to advance in single file. The boy in front was to carry the shield for the lioness to jump upon when she made her leap, and as soon as she did this the second boy, who carried the assagai, was to stab the brute. These plucky youngsters carried out the program to the letter.

The lioness, interrupted in her meal, looked up with a savage growl as the two picannins strode manfully towards her. With muzzle and paws red with blood she dropped to a crouching attitude and with a snarl of rage sprang upon the first boy, who manfully thrust the shield forward to receive the onslaught. Of course, he went down like a blade of grass and the lioness proceeded to worry and shake him as a terrier worries a rat; but in the meantime the other boy stabbed, and stabbed, and stabbed again until the lioness, mortally wounded, ceased from savaging her victim and, crawling away for a few yards, expired.

The boy who had borne the burden of the attack was terribly lacerated and bitten and eventually died. The other lad did not receive a single scratch. Strange to say, the male lion did not come to the assistance of his mate, but ran away and left the picannins in possession of the field.

CHAPTER XI

A BUSH THIEF

We were not lucky in securing any elephants, so as we neared our own wagons we made up our minds to shoot some rhinoceros for the sake of the horn and the hide for sjamboks. They were extremely plentiful in this part, and we soon had a bag of 13. These we had skinned, and the hide cut up into strips, and sent for the wagon to fetch them. When it arrived we were enraged to find that a Bushman had taken one of our oxen. As this was the second that had been surreptitiously taken away by these slim little savages. I was determined to follow up the spoor and administer a salutary lesson.

Quickly getting onto the spoor I went in pursuit, and I had a pretty dance before I came up to the Bushman's kraal, for the thief had allowed for the possibility of pursuit, and had resorted to all sorts of tricks to mislead pursuers. To my disgust the kraal was deserted. I was not surprised, for these little forest people have no settled habitation. They gather a few sticks and a little grass wherewith to make a rude shelter and never remain in one spot for any length of time. In this case it was clear that they had not been gone long, and had evidently killed the ox and taken the meat in a half-dried condition with them. As, however, they were at least two days ahead of me, I did not consider it worth my while to follow up, and so returned to the wagons certainly in anything but a good humour, and vowing vengeance at some future date.

We rested for a few days, and then trekked to the east this time. This proved to be a much more profitable outing, for on the first day we picked up fresh elephant spoor. We slept upon it and made a fresh start in the morning, having been aroused several times during the night by the noise of elephants trumpeting.

We came upon the herd early in the morning, and I secured five bulls and Gifford three cows. Leaving the few boys we had with us to cut out the ivory, we retraced our steps towards the wagons, and on our way, only a mile from the wagons, came across a herd of buffalo. The opportunity was too good to be resisted, and I brought down three and Gifford one. We sent out as many boys as we could spare to skin and cut them, the hides being valuable for conversion into riems, while the flesh was also most acceptable.

As an instance of how lazy boys can be when there is no one to 'boss them up,' I may mention that the boys we had left to cut out the ivory were eight days before they put in an appearance. However, there was plenty of work to do preparing the buffalo skins for riems. Some of my readers may be interested in the process. The hide having been cut into strips the riems are hung to the branch of a suitable

tree with a heavy weight tied to the bottom. A boy then takes a stick and twists the riems round and round as tightly as possible. Then he suddenly pulls the stick out, and the weight causes the riems to unwind with great speed. Just as it is on the point of stopping the stick is put in again, and the riems again wound up. This process is continued for three days, the riems being well greased in the meantime, and the result of this tedious process is a strip of hide as strong as wire rope and as soft and supple as a piece of velvet. From a bull buffalo about 50 riems can be cut, and from a cow about 40, worth in those days half a crown apiece.

I am not likely to forget this particular encounter with the buffalo, for I was chased by one, and she made me go for all I was worth. I make no secret of the fact that I turned and raced away from her as fast as poor old Dopper could go, for I think I would rather face a wounded lion than a buffalo. Dopper got me out of danger after a hard gallop, the result of his strenuous exertions being a swollen fetlock. Happily I was fortunate enough to have a bottle of embrocation with me, and with plenty of vigorous rubbing we were able to reduce the swelling.

I made up my mind to return to Shoshong, having ordered a lot of goods to arrive there. My intention was to start my brother trading there. I allowed Dopper to have a long rest, and I, using a horse that was no good for elephant shooting, shot other game for the sake of the skins and horns. A few giraffe, about a dozen eland, and 20 rhino fell to my gun, giving a big addition to an already large stock of riems, sjamboks and whips. Gifford went out one day and shot two very decent bull elephants, besides some rhino and an eland. It was five months since I left Shoshong, and in that time I had shot 53 elephants, yielding approximately 3,000 lbs. weight of ivory. During the same period Gifford had bagged 26.

During the fifteen days we were here preparing for our southern trek I had a great stroke of luck. Two fine cock ostriches came close to the wagons, and I managed to secure both. Their feathers were very fine, and each bird realised about £ 25. It was a great fluke for me, for I was a poor hand at shooting them. They are not at all easy prey, and I have been almost close up to them and then failed to bring them down. I remember on one occasion firing 16 shots with a small-bore gun at an ostrich, and in spite of that I did not get him. He was certainly hit, but he managed to get away, and I was quite unable to find him. I did not like leaving a wounded creature to die like that, but there was no help for it. I could not wait too long, for the nearest water was 15 miles back and 25 miles ahead, and though we had a little for ourselves, we were bound to get water for the sake of the oxen. We reached Shoshong in good time, and I purchased a large quantity of goods from a Natal trader.

It was here that I parted with my faithful old hunting horse, Dopper, for 900 lbs. weight of ivory. I was very sorry to part from him, for he had served me well, but he was getting the worse for wear, and, therefore, more or less unsafe when at close quarters with an elephant or buffalo.

I was offered two more horses, both guaranteed salted.¹ I bought them, also a third one with a very good frame which I had seen standing with the horsesickness, and at that time had almost recovered. I took all chances, and gave poor little Johnny Strombom² £ 15 for him. It was a bargain for the horse got all right, and I shall have more to say about him later on.

There was no time to be lost if I wished to take advantage of the hunting season which lasts from May to November, when the trees are leafless, and there is less likelihood of losing sight of one's quarry.³

At this stage I must introduce a well-known character. Those of my readers who have read Selous's first book will remember him mentioning a little Hottentot boy named Cigar, from Grahamstown. Well, I took Cigar with me on his first hunting trip in Matabeland. It will, of course, be understood that Selous had not yet set foot in South Africa.⁴

Cigar proved to be a good horseman as well as a fair shot.

I made a start about the middle of August, taking no fewer than five horses — four of my own and one belonging to the young chief Khama which he lent me for the expedition. For the second time he himself came with me for a brief hunting trip, but on this occasion his little jaunt occupied only a few days as he only wanted to obtain some meat. We found giraffe at a well-known pan of water and shot eight, sufficient to fill the two wagons he had brought with him. I left him there as the process of drying the meat would occupy at least two or three days. And at this spot I lost my first horse through

¹ A salted horse is one that has recovered from the African horsesickness and through the recovery has gained immunity.

² Jan Oscar Strombom, a British subject of Swedish ancestry, arrived at Natal in 1862 and traveled to Lake Ngami about 1866. He established a store there and became the principal white trader to the Tawana. A small, short man, he was happy-go-lucky, hardy, brave, and even-tempered. He gained quite an influence over the Ngami natives. He died in 1892 or 1893.

³ Other and more important factors set the hunting season in the South African winter. At that time the high interior was dry and cool, and malaria and horsesickness were absent.

⁴ The Hottentot Cigar was a former Grahamstown jockey. When he was first taken hunting by Finaughty he was too terrified of elephants to deal with them. Later he lost his fear and became a brave and successful foot hunter, one who introduced F. C. Selous to the pursuit of elephants. (Selous, *A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa*, London, 1907, p 51.) I have not seen it suggested elsewhere, but doing without a horse may have made to Cigar the difference between fear and confidence.

horsesickness. Perhaps it is needless to add that it was one of the two that was sold to me under a guarantee that it was salted.

I had a big caravan on this trip; two wagons, a double set of boys (forty-six mouths in all to feed) and Cigar shooting on the halves system. Three of the boys were to be paid wages and cash while forty-two were each to receive for their services for a three months' trip a musket with a supply of powder, lead and caps. There is no doubt whatever that I went in for 'the grand' on this occasion and for the first time launched out into extravagance. I even included among my food supplies six tins of jam, one pot of chow-chow, a cheese and, luxury of luxuries, a case of small Bass. What a contrast to my earlier trips when dry biscuits and coffee for breakfast, and ditto with a tin of sardines between three of us for the big meal of the day!

We crossed the Maklautsi River and about five miles further on, while I was resting in the wagon trying to protect myself from the intense heat, my driver galvanised me into life with the cry of 'Elephant.' There were at least thirty of them looking at us! I didn't wait to saddle up. Seizing my gun I caught the pony nearest to me, slipped the riem into its mouth and galloped towards the herd. I brought down three splendid bulls, their total yield of ivory being 300 lbs. Needless to say I celebrated my good luck by opening a bottle of the precious Bass. It may interest some readers to know that the boys, in addition to cutting out the ivory, obtained a large quantity of fat. Elephant fat is very much like sheep tail, is quite white, never gets hard, is excellent for cooking purposes and can be eaten on bread like butter.

Leaving the main road we continued down the Shashi, where I halted for the purpose of having a little novel form of sport. The idea is this: in the high river bank a cavern is scooped out leaving the smallest possible entrance and a small window or loophole. A pail of water is placed a few yards from the window and when the big animals come down to drink they offer an easy mark. Well, we constructed such a fort and leaving the wagons some three miles further down the river, I and a boy took up our positions. It is a most interesting experience to kneel at the window and watch the wonderful procession of animals of all sorts and sizes coming down to the river to drink. Of course one does not fire until the particular animal one is after comes into view. After kneeling at the porthole for some time my knees ached terribly and about midnight, to ease my bones, I sat down, though in this position I could see nothing. As might have been expected I fell into a light doze and woke suddenly to find the cavern in complete darkness. I wondered what had happened, for it was a bright moonlight night, and started fumbling about to find the window. Groping round the walls of the little cavern I at length felt the small opening, and then a deep sniff suddenly apprised

me of the fact that some animal had thrust his nose in from the outside and was trying to 'smell us out.' At this moment, however, it moved back allowing the moonlight to stream in and then I saw that my visitor was a magnificent male lion! I was thankful that our front wall was very thick and was doubly grateful when he stalked majestically down the sand in the river bed and disappeared from view. The temptation to fire was almost irresistible, but I was out for elephant, not lions, and my restraint was rewarded, for about four o'clock five bull elephants came down to drink and I got a nice young one carrying about 40 lbs. of ivory.

CHAPTER XV

DAN FRANCIS'S MINING PARTY

On my way out I ran up against a number of hunters and others coming down from the Zambezi district. They were travelling by the Tati. I did a little trade with them, securing a fair amount of ivory in return. At a place called Khokwi — where it will be remembered I had hung the koodoo meat in a tree — I met Mr. Hume and Sir Percy Douglas's son, who were out on a shooting trip. Nothing would do but they must make me go back with them for a few days in order that they might get an elephant.

After some demur I agreed to go back for a fortnight, only on condition that they would hold out for that length of time in the elephant country. They at once agreed. As I told them it was useless taking our wagons for such a short time, we decided to leave the heavy gear behind. Leaving my wagons at the Khokwi, just below the old Tati drift, we all mounted our horses and turned our faces to the northward. I explained to Hume and Sir Percy Douglas's son, that if they wanted elephant they must on no account shoot anything else, otherwise the sound of their weapons would frighten all the elephants away long before they could be seen by the hunters.

They listened to all I had to say, but shortly after we crossed the Tati and had surmounted a high ridge, a little black rhinoceros crossed our path. The two sportsmen immediately forgot their resolution. They put their new breechloaders to their shoulders, and to me it sounded like a regiment of soldiers at work.

I promptly lost a little bit of my temper. I reminded them of what I had told them about not shooting anything but elephants and told them, without any circumlocution, that by their stupid and unnecessary fusillade they had spoiled the shooting for the day and it was now only eight o'clock in the morning. I pointed out that by this time there would be no elephants within seven or eight miles of us, for every animal within that radius would have taken fright.

However, we went on a little further when we came upon a very fine lot of giraffe. Hume could not resist the opportunity and begged me to let him have just one. As I knew the elephant were hopeless for the day I said, 'All right,' and we cautiously moved towards the giraffe which were about a mile and a half away. On our way, I showed my companions what they had missed by their noisy assault upon the rhino, by pointing out to them, right across our path, the fresh spoor of seven bull elephants — evidently started off on the run by the reports of the guns. My companions looked a bit sick over it, but they were not long downhearted and their spirits quickly recovered at a nearer view of the giraffe. The herd was contentedly browsing

on the tender buds and young leaves of the trees which were just beginning to sprout.

As a supply of giraffe meat was likely to prove a welcome addition to my larder, I went away on the right, while my two companions went straight ahead. I bowled over a fat cow and they shot two or three. They were highly delighted with themselves and could not have been much better pleased if they shot two or three bull elephants. They faithfully promised that next day they would not shoot for meat but would withhold their fire till elephant were in sight.

The boys skinned and cut up the giraffe and after enjoying juicy, grilled steaks, we had the remainder of the meat hung in the trees and protected with branches from the ravages of the birds.

Next day, at daybreak, we set off after elephant, but though we kept as silent as could be there was not the spoor of a single elephant to be seen. The previous day's fusillade had driven them out of the district. Seeing that elephants were hopeless, I told them they had better amuse themselves with shooting what they liked and we would slowly make our way back to the wagons.

They enjoyed themselves after their own fashion and were quite contented with their sport. We arrived at the outspan four days after our departure and my companions immediately started on their return southwards. I also got away with my wagons and went on from there to Seruli. That morning I had brought a giraffe right alongside the road within 100 yards of the wagons, shooting it there, when I was startled at seeing a number of white men come stumbling forward with pannikins in their hands shouting: 'Water, water, give us water!' and holding out their pannikins in a despairing way. There was little doubt that they were in a bad way and had been suffering severely from thirst. In fact they were in such a condition that it would have been positively dangerous for them to drink the muddy stuff in the waterhole near our wagons.

I therefore told them that if they would wait a few minutes I would soon give them something to quench their thirst. I quickly prepared a big kettle of tea for them and as its heat prevented them from swilling large quantities, their thirst agonies were relieved without danger to themselves. I gave them a couple of pannikins each. As they regaled themselves, impatiently waiting for the tea to cool, others of their party came straggling in, in a state of exhaustion. I kept the kettle on the boil so as to be ready for them. They were a big party, 29 altogether, and they taxed my tea making resources to the utmost.

Presently their wagons turned up in charge of Mr. Dan Francis (who paid a passing visit to Bulawayo only a few weeks ago). I warned them all not to touch the dirty water at the waterhole unless it was boiled, unless they were anxious to get typhoid fever, and offered them such water as I had in hand.

We remained there all next day, while the party rested. They were a curious lot of men, all of them miners, who were being taken up to what are now the Tati Concessions Mines.¹

And they were a hungry lot too. In one day they finished two sides of the big giraffe I had shot.

On the following morning Dan Francis put them on to clean out one of the dirty water pits in order to obtain a supply of fresh water. While they were engaged in this work, I heard a terrible squabble in progress and soon there was something like a free fight between the miners and some of Khama's natives.

Francis and I ran over and it was lucky we did, for matters had assumed a serious stage. I told Francis to tell the men to put down their shovels, which they were about to use as weapons, warning him that if the white men made an attack and killed one of the natives, there would be a heap of trouble all around.

Upon enquiring into the trouble I found it was caused by the discovery in the waterhole of a pair of gemsbok's horns. These are, of course, very long and straight, with sharp points; and the natives had planted these in the mud of the waterhole so that cattle or wild beasts coming down to drink would be probed by the horns. The white men having found the horns in the hole claimed them, while the natives who had seen the horns recovered were equally vehement in their assertion that the horns belonged to them — which unquestionably was the case, though the white men did not understand or did not appreciate their point of view, and refused to give them up.

However, I was able to induce Francis to get the horns delivered up to their rightful owners. After this we parted on excellent terms of good fellowship. They went north and I went south.

Thus ended my trip of 1869. I went in again in the following year but met with no special adventure.

¹ So large a party of miners could only have been the thirty-four Australians who came to Tati early in 1869. Dan Francis remains unidentified.

CHAPTER XVI

AN IMPUDENT THEFT

It was at this spot I was made the victim of a most impudent theft. I mentioned in a previous chapter that when I left Shoshong I had very little grain, as owing to a very bad harvest the natives had very little, and such as they had they wanted for themselves and did not care to sell. The quantity I had brought in with me was by this time nearly exhausted, and it was necessary that I should secure some food for my boys.

Upon returning to the wagons after my short spell with Jennings and Blanch, I made preparations to purchase some grain from the natives. Taking out the hind axle and wheels of the wagon I made a body to it, composed of rawhides. It was a good, serviceable vehicle for the conveyance of grain, even if it was not particularly artistic, and was large enough to carry twelve bags comfortably. In this improvised cart I packed from £ 80 to £ 100 worth of trading goods, in the shape of half a dozen muskets, ten bags of powder, some lead and caps, a quantity of beads, blankets, hats, jackets and shirts, also some brass wire and Kaffir picks. I placed it all in the charge of my old boy, Hans, with instructions what to do in the matter of barter and exchange.

He was absent about 12 days and then returned absolutely empty-handed, with all the trade goods gone and not a bag of mealies in their place. For the moment I was almost too furious to speak, but I soon saw that something was amiss for poor Hans was obviously in a state of great distress and nearly starved to death.

I was not long in gleaning the full particulars. It appeared that when he set off on his trading expedition he arrived at a certain kraal in the hills late in the afternoon. He slept there that night, and in the morning went to see the headman, who listened to his story and condescendingly told him he could bring his goods up to the kraal and he would inspect them. Hans, having stated that he was willing to trade cattle, sheep and grain, went back to his camp, brought up the cart and offloaded all the things onto some blankets for the inspection of the lordly headman, who surveyed the articles with a critical air, and was kind enough to say that they met with his approval.

He then told his men to take charge of the goods and place them in the huts. Hans stood by, but just when he expected the headman to produce the necessary cattle, grain, etc., in exchange, the old villain told him to inspan and clear out or he would quickly blot him out!

Old Hans needed no second threat, for he knew the character of this headman too well to doubt that the threat was genuine and that he was lucky even to receive warning. Without even waiting to get

a bit of food he came back a good deal faster than he went!

I found out from some of my boys that this headman M'Tibi was a notorious scoundrel. He was afterwards prominent for his cruelties during the subsequent Matabele Rebellion.¹ For the moment, however, I allowed his theft to pass unnoticed. I could not afford 12 to 14 days to go up and recover my goods, but, registering a silent vow of vengeance, I treasured up his impudence and made up my mind to get my own back during my next trip. Which I did, with interest, as will be manifest at a later stage.

We worked our way quietly up the river and I went out shooting alone. I had got fresh elephant spoor some seven or eight miles from the wagons but did not feel inclined to follow it up for they were only a paltry lot of cows. Just at this juncture, about 11 A.M., I fell in with three Boers, one Smidt, and his two sons.² They were on the spoor of one of their oxen that had been taken or had strayed from their wagons, and I joined them. Within a very short distance we found there was a second ox. I did not know whose it was, but it afterwards transpired — what I did not then suspect — that one of my own oxen had also been taken during the night.

I asked Smidt what he was going to do and he replied grimly:

'Follow it up and fire into the niggers.'

'I'm with you,' I replied, 'for I also have had enough of their thievish propensities. *But send your niggers back!*' This they did and told them to go back to their wagons, which were on the Shashi, about seven miles from my wagons and nearly opposite those of Jennings. I also sent my boys back.

We four white men followed the trail till dark, and though the spoor was getting quite fresh we were compelled to relinquish any further pursuit until morning, owing to our inability to see.

We made a camp for the night and as we sat round the fire we could hear, a considerable distance off, the sound of revelry. We knew then we were not far behind the cattle thieves who, not suspecting pursuit, were indulging in a wild orgy to celebrate their successful raid upon the cattle of the white men. Their shouting and dancing continued far into the night and we snatched a few hours' sleep, by no means placated by their jubulations which, we knew, betokened that one of the oxen had been killed and partly eaten.

¹ A chief named Matibi, who lived on the Buby River, gave useful assistance to the whites in the Matabele Uprising of 1896. Several hundred of his men fought well for the Chartered Company. (Selous, *Sunshine and Storm in Rhodesia*, London, 1896, p. 239.) Finaughty seems to slander this man, perhaps to try to justify what was an unprovoked raid on his cattle.

² A Boer family named Smidt, hunters and itinerants, appear often in the literature about southern Matabeleland in the 1870's. They appear to have settled there by 1873, though they led a nomadic life. The Smidts were father, wife, grown son, daughter, and several grandchildren.

At daybreak we resumed our pursuit and creeping cautiously through the bush we came up to the thieves' kraal just as the dawn was breaking. To my amazement I saw one of my oxen standing there — the quietest and laziest beast I possessed. The Dutchmen's had been killed to provide for the feast, and the unconsumed portions were still on the ground. There was not much of it left for they had gorged themselves the whole night through and those who know the Bushman, or any native for that matter, know how much meat he can pack into his anatomy when he has the opportunity. There were three men, two women, and two or three little children, and they had evidently gorged themselves to repletion.

It was the men's last feast, however. I had no quarrel with the women and children, but we had been too often robbed by the wicked little Bushmen to have much sympathy for them.

I recovered my ox and drove him back to the wagons, Smidt and his sons continuing their journey to their own camp. Working my way along the Shashi I got elephants once or twice and arrived eventually at the old road above Ramaquabane Drift. Telling the boys to erect a strong kraal, I went out on horseback after elephant and succeeded in getting three. After a bath in the river and supper, I turned into bed but about eleven o'clock we heard the roaring of a lion, though as it appeared to be a long way off we did not take much notice of it.

Presently, however, the lions drew near to our kraal. So near in fact that the oxen started to stampede. The first thing I realised was that old Blesman, the one that had been stolen by the Bushmen, was just coming through the fence. As he was the laziest of the span and always the last to move, I naturally assumed that he would be the last to leave the kraal, so without waiting to dress I sprang up barefoot, clad only in a shirt, and made a rush to turn the line of bullocks back to the kraal.

Only a few seconds elapsed before a tremendous roar, a cloud of dust, and the bellow of a bullock, told me that the lion was already at work. I fired at the spot where the commotion occurred, with what result I could not say.

The same morning at daybreak I was up and, accompanied by two or three boys, followed up the cattle tracks, and came up with the frightened animals towards the Tati. They had certainly been badly scared, but we soon tamed them down. Upon counting them I found that one was missing, and upon returning to camp about 3 o'clock old Hans said one had been killed on the road not 100 yards away. We walked over the spot, but just as we reached the carcass a lion sprang up and raced away. I had a shot at him but missed. He was a huge black-maned animal; one of the best I have ever seen, and I regretted not securing him. However, there was still a chance. Sending back

to the wagons for the other guns, I got Hillier and Farrel to assist me in building a kraal round the carcass. We made two entrances to the kraal, and placed a gun at each, the trigger so fixed that anything crossing the opening would receive a bullet.

Having fixed up a pleasing reception for Leo, should he return during the night, we returned to the wagons, after giving old Hans instructions to remain nearby till nightfall, and keep the vultures from setting on the carcass.

Hillier and myself took a couple of towels and went down to the river to have a bathe. To my great annoyance, just as we were finishing I heard one of the guns go off with a loud report.

Openly reviling old Hans for his crass stupidity, I dressed and hurried up to him, and stormed at him for disobeying my instructions and allowing the vultures to settle on the carcass and cause the gun to go off.

The old man waited till I had finished, then answered quite calmly, 'I did not let the vultures pitch. It was not the birds' doings at all, it was a lion.' I did not credit it, for four o'clock in the afternoon is an unusual time for a lion to feed, but upon going over we found the big lion there and quite dead.

After fixing up the gun again I returned to the wagons, but had not been there more than three quarters of an hour when another report was heard. It was now almost dark, so I told the two boys and old Hans to come with me, and asked Farrel and Hillier to go over and have a look. When we got near the trap I told them each to make a substantial torch with the dry grass, of which there was an abundance at that spot of from two to three feet high.

To the torches a match was applied, and soon the five flares were illuminating the scene.

At this moment my two dogs, magnificent bull mastiffs, who had, unknown to me, followed us out from camp, sniffed out the second lion, and commenced an attack. The lion had only been wounded by the bullet, and when the dogs appeared on the scene, he commenced growling. At this ominous sound both the natives and the white men dropped their torches among the dry grass with quite amazing celerity, and ran to the roadway, about 100 yards away. The result was that before I reached it I was between the lion and a roaring fire — certainly as bad as being between the devil and the deep blue sea. I rushed back to try to save the two guns. One, I knew, had had its charge exploded, and this I promptly tried to rescue. I tugged and wrenched at it but could not quickly get it loose from its fastenings. By this time the flames had reached such a strength that I could see everything as plainly as in daylight. The dogs were fighting with the lion all the time, and watching my opportunity I at last got a shot in, brought the lion down, and bolted for safety, accompanied by the dogs.

Both lion skins were burned and the stock of one of the guns was also scorched. This was the only occasion up till then upon which I wished to secure the skins as trophies, and I was specially annoyed because they were the black-maned variety and very large. I had counted upon securing these to reimburse me for the loss of the oxen, for a doctor who came out with Moch, the German explorer,³ had offered me £ 7 10s. apiece for two good lion skins.

³ Probably Paul Jebe, who was the companion of Karl Mauch on the latter's last trip to Matabeleland. Jebe died of fever in Mashonaland during 1870.

CHAPTER XVII

MY LAST HUNTING TRIP

I started on my last trip into the interior as a hunter from Shoshong in April 1870. My final trip was for quite a different purpose, but of that last journey more anon. On the present occasion I took up my old ground on the Shashani River. There was any amount of spoor of elephant, showing me that they had not been disturbed to any extent, during the six months I had been away.

We outspanned in an excellent position and then set to work, making a strong fence all round the wagons, a kraal inside the fence for the oxen, and a stable for the horses. The boys built several huts for themselves and also one for me. I had to have everything effectively secured, on account of the lions which were pretty numerous in that locality. It was necessary that the work should be well done in order that I might have no reason to feel alarmed when I was away from the wagons, which was generally the case when in the hunting veld.

I had four horses with me, also a white man, a regular greenhorn.¹ He had begged me to let him come, promising to make himself generally useful. He could ride very indifferently, and he scarcely knew the muzzle from the butt end of a gun. It was astonishing, however, how quickly he picked up shooting. His first start out was with three boys to shoot rhino. I believe he had several shots but did not succeed in bagging one. As a matter of fact a little black rhino very nearly succeeded in bagging him. It appears he was going along in a very thick ridge of bush. He happened to be on the top side of the wind and this little black demon came for him like a fury. He was taken unawares and fired at the last moment, when the rhino was right up against him. He was knocked over and butted about a good deal. Luckily he was not trampled to death. I think he must have had a rib broken, for he subsequently complained, when I was rubbing him, of a severe pain in the ribs. His gunstock was broken, but I managed to splice it pretty well by putting in two plates, one on each side.

I had my first outing after the elephants about the first week in May. I did pretty well, having got among them twice in one week. The first time I got five bulls, and on the second occasion five bulls and three cows, all carrying very nice ivory, although not very heavy.

I got back to the wagons on Saturday evening and found everything all right, with the exception of the greenhorn who had managed to run

¹ The man named Hillier, who has been brought into the story before. Here Finaughty gets back to his trip of 1870, the narrative of which he began in Chapter XIV.

up against another black rhino! After this his boys simply refused to go out with him any more.

When expostulated with they said: 'If the white man gets killed we shall be blamed for taking him into these very thick places.' The boys said he would certainly be killed if he would not listen. They stated that he used to go crawling in and about the dense thickets, and in case of danger he could not have fired, for very often he could not have got his gun into position. I advised him to keep in touch with the wagons and do a little shooting in that way. He followed my advice and was fairly successful as an amateur.

My boys all turned up on the Sunday morning with the ivory and told me there was very fresh spoor close by. It being Sunday I did not go after them that day. I made another start on the Monday about nine o'clock in the same direction I had been the previous week. I camped on a small spruit and got comfortably settled about sundown, when the boys saw an old bull elephant coming along. The boys grew tremendously excited and made such a noise that I thought they would frighten him off. I had the greatest difficulty in keeping them quiet, but after a few threats they succeeded in keeping their mouths closed. I managed to get quite close up to his lordship. He appeared to be restless, but it was too late for him. I gave him a splendid shot at quite close quarters. He rushed away and struck against a good-sized tree which he knocked down. Then he staggered on one side and, failing to recover his balance, came down with a heavy groan, and it was all over. He had a very nice pair of tusks, weighing sixty pounds each, which we buried on the following morning.

I got away a little after sunrise and came upon the fresh spoor of a very large herd. We had been going east but this spoor took us north, and after following on it for over three hours, we came to where the elephants had got our wind and bolted. The spoor went south and the elephants must have come quite close past us. I off-saddled for a short time, got in the saddle again and thought I would follow this spoor a little way and see if they continued in their direction. I suppose I had spooored them about four miles, when my horse pricked up his ears, I followed the direction of his glance and at once saw that the elephants had got a fright in their course, had turned back almost on their spoor and were coming towards me.

It did not take me long to get ready and I had some very good sport with them. There were one or two tuskless cows amongst them, and these gave me a lot of trouble, chasing me whenever I came too near them! I had to give them a shot each to make them a little more cautious. Altogether I got three young bulls and five cows out of the herd.

It was now very late, and I had still to seek the boys. I did not find them till after dark, and then they were without water. It was not

cheerful after a hot and tiring chase, but there was nothing else for it, and we had to camp without water. I was very sorry indeed on account of my horse who must have been very thirsty after his hard galloping. However, after lighting a fire, three of the boys went to search for water, each carrying a firebrand. Luckily they found some not very far away and when they returned with the welcome news and a supply for the kettle, I sent the horse down to have a drink. We made ourselves as comfortable as possible for the night, and spent the whole of the next day collecting the ivory. This we buried in a small rivulet close by and then continued our journey eastward on the following morning. We saw no elephant but there was an amazing quantity of other large game such as rhino, giraffe, eland, sable antelope, also buffalo. Although a supply of meat would have been very acceptable for the camp, I was too far from the wagons, so I did not shoot any of them.

I turned towards the south, but I did not like the look of things in that direction on account of the many buffalo we came across. I suppose we must have seen some seven or eight different herds of them within a distance of four miles, and knowing by experience that where one found buffalo one could rely on tsetse fly being close at hand, I was afraid to venture further in that direction, for it was only reasonable to presume that this large quantity of buffalo might easily have brought some of these pests with them and I was not anxious to lose a valuable hunting horse.

We were now about fifteen miles from the buried ivory and I therefore decided to return there, and let some of the boys go back to the wagons with the tusks, telling them to pick up the old elephant's ivory on their way. I got there that night and next morning early I started the boys back to the wagons. I took a more northerly direction and had not gone a great distance before I saw fresh elephant spoor. I followed it and came up with the herd in the afternoon. Three very decent bulls fell to my gun. One of them gave me a considerable amount of trouble. Every time I tried to get near him he turned and chased me and it was some time before I got near enough for a shot. Eventually I broke his shoulder and that stopped him. The boys managed to cut the ivory out that night and next morning I started three boys off with the tusks to the wagons. I continued on my previous direction and got fresh spoor and followed this for a long way, but did not catch up to my quarry as a big swarm of locusts completely obliterated every trace.

By this time I was nearing the wagons and calculated to reach them on the following day. I camped for the night close to a big rhinoceros which I shot for food. It was very fat and gave a good supply of delicious meat. In the morning I came to the Shashani River, and kept all down it, thinking I might possibly strike old Smidt, who

had previously promised to meet me on this river. He had summered it high up on the Tati, and I was anxious to meet him, for he had promised me the previous year to give me a hand in punishing old M'Tibi, the rascally chief who had stolen the valuable lot of trade goods I had sent to him in exchange for sorely needed corn.

About three miles from my wagons I saw a large herd of eland. I thought this was a very good chance of giving some of my idle boys at the wagons useful employment, so I got to work with the gun and shot six eland. Putting the boys to skin them and dry some of the meat, and also secure some of the fat, I went on to the wagons that afternoon, and on Monday sent a wagon out to fetch the skins, meat, etc. When I reached the camp I learned that old Smidt had been to the wagons, but had gone again, telling old Hans, however, that he would be over with his wagon on the following week. I did not like the news for I did not want him to camp close by me. He and his sons used to shoot too much around the wagons for my liking, their almost continual shooting disturbing any elephant that might be in the vicinity.

At any rate Smidt's wagon had to come over to fetch some things he ordered last year, which I had brought for him. His wagon came to the river just as I was ready to start on another short outing. He was very pleased to get the stuff I had brought, in fact they needed it very much. They were short of most things, and, as Mrs. Smidt said, 'almost naked.'

I also had a bottle of dop for the old chap, and it was not long before the unaccustomed luxury oiled his tongue, and he became very talkative. He gave me full details of his summer trip, said there were plenty of elephants, but the country was so very wet with the continuous rains, that he could not do much. The few elephants he got, however, all carried very heavy ivory. He mentioned the very curious fact that there were no herds of elephant, but that there were bulls in small numbers, seven being the largest lot he had seen together. He added that for the most of the time shooting was practically impossible, for the horses sank in the mud knee deep.

I got 1,000 lbs. weight in ivory from him. His lot made my stock of ivory look small for I had really only got one bull with heavy tusks.

I promised that I would take one of my wagons, go in for a short time and shoot, mostly for hides, and dry the meat before the weather got too hot.

I had lost a whole week over the old chap, and immediately he had gone I started after elephant again. I was fairly successful, getting into touch with them twice during that time, while I was lucky enough to secure eleven, six bulls and five cows. None of them, however, had heavy ivory.

I returned to the wagons on the Saturday, and Mr. and Mrs. Smidt came down on horseback on the Sunday morning. They said their wagons were standing about seven miles up the river. Smidt said that he and his sons had got a herd of elephant on the Wednesday. They shot fifteen of them, but only one bull, the remainder being cows, although he said they had fairly decent ivory. I gave them an excellent dinner, and they apparently enjoyed themselves immensely. We agreed that we would meet at my wagons on the ninth day for the skin and meat trip. They did not leave till the afternoon. The old chap was 'pretty well on' and I had to give him a hoist into the saddle!

I started for an outing on the Monday, and made northeast. I got nothing either on Monday or Tuesday. Twice I got fresh spoor, and each time I had to give it up, not being able to follow on account of the dense swarms of locusts. Early on the Wednesday I got the spoor of three bulls which had not passed more than a half hour previously. I came up with them about three miles further on, and secured the three of them. They averaged fifty lbs. a tusk — a very useful weight. Leaving six boys with instructions to cut the ivory out, and proceed with it to the wagons, I turned south for about ten miles. The game hereabouts was extraordinarily plentiful, there being almost countless herds of all kinds of game, together with plenty of rhino. I next turned west in the direction of the wagons, and ran across a small lot of elephant on my way. I picked out four of the best cows, and let the others go as they were not worth shooting.

I got to the wagons at midday, on Saturday, and set the boys to work on the buck wagon to get it ready for Monday's outing. My greenhorn companion had, I found, been amusing himself learning to ride. I had told him he could do so, and which horse to take, and so diligently had he been practising that he was by this time really at home in the saddle. In view of his proficiency I promised that he should go out with us on this skin and meat trip. He was delighted.

I started the wagon off on the Monday morning, telling old Hans I would catch him up. I was quite surprised, about ten o'clock, to see Smidt's wagon turn up. Mrs. Smidt said she really could not stop at their camp alone for eight or ten days and so she was going in with us. While at their camp the old man and his sons had taken it in turns to go into the hunting veld. The old man and boys arrived shortly afterwards, having had an unsuccessful cast around for elephant. We offloaded his heavy stuff and started the wagon after mine. We mounted and followed on about 2 o'clock and got to the wagons about sundown.

Next day we were right among the game, which was exceptionally plentiful. We actually shot in three days enough to fill the wagon. Our bag consisted mostly of eland and a few giraffe. I also shot eleven rhino, from which I got a nice lot of sjamboks. The old man and his

two sons got among a herd of buffalo and shot six of them. One of the two sons very nearly got into trouble, for a buffalo cow chased him and almost had him. In fact he was as good as caught when his brother jumped from his horse and fired. The shot gave the buffalo such a shock that it brought her to a standstill, and they soon finished her off.

was a nerve-shaking roar and a huge lion, that had been lying concealed in the reeds, sprang through the air and onto the back of the zebra nearest me.

The impact and the fright caused the three zebras and the lion to fall headlong into the deep water together. With screams of terror two of the zebras managed to scramble out and, hastening up the steep bank, disappeared into the bush.

To my amazement the other one did not reappear above the surface, neither did the lion. For a few seconds the water was agitated as though some terrible tragedy was being enacted beneath, and then there came to the surface eddies of blood, colouring the water all around. I remained for some minutes but the blood gradually disappeared, the surface resumed its former placid appearance and there was nothing to show that another forest tragedy had been enacted. Nothing? Well, the crocodiles had disappeared from view! It would not have taken that hungry, awful mob many seconds to tear both lion and zebra limb from limb.

I stopped fishing after this and hastened back to the wagons without losing any time, this particular neighborhood being a little too exciting for me. When I got to the wagons the boys were all agog to know what had happened, for they had heard the combined roar of the lion and the screams of the zebras.

When I told them of the fate of the lion, they were clearly startled and promptly voted that we inspan and shift to less dangerous quarters for the night.

CHAPTER XXVI

FROM HUNTER TO TRADER

I am not sure that the later stages of my career possess any interest for the general reader, but as my editor informs me that several people have inquired whether I 'shuffled off this mortal coil' at the end of my last hunting trip, it may be as well to explain that the finish of my hunting days did not mean the finish of myself. The financial results of my hunting and trading trips had been such that I was able to command a fair sum at the bank, and in the school of experience I had discovered that there was more money and less risk in trading than in pitting my skill against wild beasts. Furthermore, my last trip, with the severe attacks of fever, had engendered in me a feeling — for the first time in my life — that I was not immune from the common dangers of the bush veld. Until we get a serious illness, none of us realise this fact, and after slipping out of the jaws of death as I had done, I felt that it was due to myself to leave the strenuous life to the younger men and to take things quietly.

For two years I remained at Kimberley, gradually rebuilding my shattered constitution, and then, on the opportunity presenting itself, I moved out to Mamusa, not far from the diamond capital, and opened up a trading station there, my customers for the most part being the Korana natives.

Here I remained for three years and did excellently from a business point of view, trading mealies and Kaffir corn against the ordinary articles of barter. During my stay here the Basuto War¹ broke out and the country was scoured for food for the troops. I was the lucky possessor of about 1,200 bags of grain, and though only my own wagons were available for transport, I managed by tremendous efforts to get it into Kimberley where it realised £ 4 5s. per bag. As it had not cost me more than about 10s. per bag it was worth a struggle to get it into Kimberley at the price above named!

Life jogged along quietly till the [First] Boer War broke out, with the Majuba incident as its termination. I had never been in love with the Boers and made no secret of it, and my exploits with the cannon did not tend to increase their love for me. When, therefore, they came out on top with their country returned to them by the British Government and the Union Jack was hauled down, it was clearly no time for an avowed Britisher to remain within their reach. I never imagined, when I decided to get away for a spell, that things would fall out as they did, so I did nothing more than lock up the store — which was chock-a-block with trading goods worth anything up to £ 4,000 — and leave it in charge of David Massouw, chief of the

¹ Probably the Gun War of 1880—1881.

Koranas. He was a broken reed and, like most of his kind, a thief by nature, for upon my return some time afterwards I found that that worthy and his people had looted the store of everything it contained. It is no consolation to me to reflect that the Boers, subsequently, practically wiped the Koranas off the face of the earth.

I then moved further into the Transvaal and remained in the rural districts from 1883 to 1887. Then I moved to Johannesburg in the early days of the Witwatersrand boom, and took my little part in the life and sport of that amazing community, and though I could many a bright tale unfold I refrain, for mine is a hunter's story and such lively incidents as I could narrate have nothing to do with elephant shooting in the country of the Matabele. The days when men sat down to a game of cards on Friday and did not finish till Monday or Tuesday, when fortunes were won or lost in a night, when a madcap would ride his horse into a store or bar (finding entrance through the window!) and make hay of everything, amid the delighted shouts of the sportive bystanders, are among the memories of other days.

Such incidents are probably common to all mining communities where money flows almost like water and the spirit of adventure runs strong in men's veins.

My thoughts, however, were always in the country of my early exploits, and when in the fulness of time they, to me, unexpected thing happened, and the power of the great Matabele chief was broken, I packed my traps and, like many others, moved northwards. To me, of course, it was all familiar country. It was in the year 1894 that I came back to my old hunting grounds, and here I have lived and seen another great immigration of the British race. I had seen Johannesburg rise from a camp to a city, and the process repeated with regard to Bulawayo. That such wonderful changes could be effected in the lifetime of an individual even now fills me with amazement. During my hunting days here the power of the Matabele appeared to be invincible, and I did not expect to see it broken in my time. I had not allowed for the intrepidity of the British — though my own career might have afforded me a slight index to their recklessness and daring — and the ever onward flowing tide of humanity that overflows from the Old Country.

Maybe others will have, and are having, opportunities of hunting among the big game of the world such as I have attempted to describe in these recollections, though I fancy those days are gone forever. I do not think that any man will ever again see and follow such mighty herds of elephant and big game that once roamed over the spots where towns now stand and the railway pushes its iron way. The great spaces of Africa are being penetrated on all sides, and before the resistless march of the railway and the man with the breechloader the game inevitably disappears.

Similarly, the aboriginal, if he does not disappear, undergoes a change. Doubtless it is better for civilization that the *indaba* tree should be an object of curiosity to globe-trotters than the place of swift and terrible judgment of a dusky potentate like Mzilikazi or Lobengula, and that even incorrigible barbarians should serve their sentences inside the four walls of a comfortable gaol, rather than meet their instant doom in the open air in the presence of the people. Possibly the native appreciates the change; possibly he does not. He may have improved, mentally, morally and spiritually since he took to wearing trousers and learned to read and write, but I have my doubts.

The Matabele, as I knew him in the old days, before he had been spoiled by civilization, was, take him all in all, a man one could both admire and trust. During all my hunting years I had no reason to regard him as other than a friend. There were occasional lapses from the strict path of honesty, as I have previously mentioned, but these incidents were few and far between, and when the Matabele ruled the land a white man was quite as safe from ill-treatment or theft as he is to-day — perhaps more so! Cruelty, bloodshed and rapine were not the distinguishing traits of the people or their rulers, as some would have us believe.

Well, their day has passed and the day of the big game in Southern Rhodesia is passing, too. In good time I shall also pass to the Happy Hunting Grounds, but not with regret, for I have lived every hour of a very full life and am just entering upon the three-score-years-and-ten limit. I have been privileged to have adventures and to enjoy such hunting as falls to the lot of few men and come out unscathed; I have seen the face of a continent changed out of recognition; yet I am still hale and hearty, able to do a five miles' walk against the boys, to enjoy a companionable pipe and glass and, when the lamps are lit, to draw from memory's store such fragments of a hunter's recollections as have herein been set down.