WAHLBERG

JOHAN AUGUST WAHLBERG AND HIS TRAVELS IN SOUTH AFRICA. ON THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

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On the 9th of October this year, an even hundred years had elapsed since the birth of the renowned Swedish African traveler, Johan August Wahlberg. It should therefore be appropriate that in *Ymer* something be said to commemorate this man and his achievements. The fact that Wahlberg himself never came to publish his travels and adventures causes even those who are interested in geography to know nothing more about him than that he undertook extensive journeys in the Dark Continent, that he was a fortunate and courageous elephant hunter, and that at the end he fell a victim to a wounded elephant. Yet the story of this man offers so many interesting aspects and his travels so many thrilling adventures, so simply told in his diary and in letters to relatives and friends at home, that his acquaintance is well worth making.

Johan August Wahlberg was born at Lagklarebäck, near Göteborg, on October 9, 1810. His parents were N. F. Wahlberg, storekeeper, and his wife, née Ekman. Following studies partly at home and partly in public grade and high schools in Linköping, Wahlberg became a student at the University of Uppsala in 1829. He pursued his studies at the university conscientiously and with zeal, although he never felt quite at home in the narrow student's chamber. He soon left the academy in order to study chemistry, at first under Consultant Professor Plageman at the Instruction Pharmacy Nordstjärnan, later under Professor Lars Fredrik Svanberg. However, before long his yearning for the hunt drew him to another field, and during the years 1831-34 he completed the courses in the then newly established Institute of Forestry. During this period he undertook some travel. In the year 1832 he accompanied the famous entomologist, Professor Boheman, on a natural science expedition to Norway, and from the fall of 1833 till the spring of 1834 he traveled, at government expense, in the interests of forestry research through southern Sweden and several parts of Germany. Following his graduation from the Institute of Forestry, he studied at the Office of Land Survey, where he passed an examination in May 1835, and he was appointed engineer in September 1836. During one of these years he is also said to have studied agriculture under Nonnen at Degeberg, in order further to prepare himself for a position as instructor at the Land Survey College, and this position he obtained, teaching physics, chemistry, natural history, and agronomy.

We find, then, that Wahlberg, at the age of twenty-seven, had a well-rounded education. In 1837 he arrived at a turning point in his life.

J. Letterstedt, Swedish consul and business man in Cape Town, visited Sweden this year and stirred up the idea of sending a Swedish naturalist to South Africa. Wahlberg offered to go, and was accepted. He was to make collections for the National Museum, and the Academy of Science gave him what financial support it could, amounting to some

1600 riksdaler banko[1] as a contribution towards his equipment, the balance being met from his own purse.

In 1838 he left Sweden and arrived on the 28th of July in London, where he studied in the museums and purchased equipment for his journey. On the 12th of October he left England and arrived at the Cape of Good Hope on the 2nd of February 1839. Until the middle of May he remained in Cape Town and its vicinity, making preparations for his principal trip to the interior by gathering information about land and people. He was favored in every way by Letterstedt. Around Cape Town he collected numerous specimens, which were sent home.

After serious consideration, Wahlberg decided to make a journey to Natal, and in May 1839 he boarded a sailing vessel that carried him to Port Natal. For traveling companions he had a German, a French, and an English natural scientist, all bound for the same parts.[2] "We shall," he relates in a letter home, "compete in collecting zeal, although those others are fitted out much more liberally than I have been." However, he unquestionably came to accomplish more than his companions.

Thus he arrived in June at "the beautiful land of Natal," as he expresses himself in a letter, and this country became his field of operations from June 1839 till October 1841. For a considerable time he made his headquarters in the Boer camp, Congela. There he installed himself in camp fashion, his arrangements being highly primitive. He writes:

"A little brush hut is my abode; it was excellent during the dry season, but now I am experiencing in an all high degree its frailty, since with October the rainy season began and I am forced to write these lines sitting under my umbrella. Space is scarce and therefore most of it is occupied by chests. A barrel standing on end is my chair, a mattress placed across two chests plus a blanket is my bed and my writing desk. The floor is loose dirt. My nearest neighbor is M. Delegorgue, a French naturalist."

With Delegorgue, Wahlberg later came to spend much time, and the Frenchman expressed himself in very complimentary terms about Wahlberg in his travel publication.

During his stay at Congela[3] (he later bought a house and left his brush hut), Wahlberg made several excursions into the surrounding territory and gathered particularly rich collections; he confined himself on the whole to collecting smaller animals, because his rifle and other equipment did not seem to have been adequate for big game hunting.

On October 7, 1841, he started out on his first long inland trek, accompanied by a twenty-one-year-old Boer, Willem Nel, a twenty-year-old Zulu, Ia, and a boy of thirteen from the same tribe, named Umslululu. He had one wagon pulled by twelve oxen. When one compares this small outfit with the caravans that are generally employed

[1] About $400 today. (Translator's note.)

[2] I have been unable to identify the English naturalist, though the German may have been a Dr. Kraus. The Frenchman was Adulphe Delegorgue, the author of *Voyage dans l'Afrique Australe*, published in Paris, 1847, in two volumes.

[3] On December 24, 1839, Captain Jervis and his 100 British troops evacuated Port Natal, now Durban, and soon after this Wahlberg, who was a surveyor, laid out Pietermaritzburg in Cape Colonial fashion. (Walker, *The Great Trek*, London, 1938, p. 220.)

by scientific expeditions in the African interior, it is easy to realize what courage and all-conquering enthusiasm must have been the drawing forces in such an undertaking as the Wahlberg Expedition to Interior Africa.

The course was set to the northwest, towards the Drakensberg, passing through a sharply broken landscape, and the trail was, according to Wahlberg in his letters home, extremely difficult, particularly so because it was almost continuously uphill. Five large rivers, which could be crossed only at certain fords, had to be negotiated, together with a number of smaller streams. For days on end the route led through a country without a single tree, and there it was necessary to use dried ox dung for fuel when preparing food; this dry dung was the only fuel available to the natives within a wide range west of the Drakensberg. During the trip, many ruins of stone huts and kraals were passed, and it was stated that the inhabitants had been killed or driven off by hostile Zulu Kaffir tribes. The incline of the Drakensberg towards the east is especially steep and it required considerable exertion to take the heavy wagon up. Towards the west, a high tableland now spread before his eyes, slightly rolling at first, but within two days he reached plains stretching endlessly, "which like the ocean close with the horizon in a distant blue remoteness, and where the roving eye searches in vain for a tree or a bush. Here in separate flocks numberless wild animals are grazing: quagga, gnu, the springbok, and the hartebeest the most common."

The journey was continued northwestwards across the Rhenoster, Vaal, and Mooi rivers. At the last-named stream, the Boers were engaged in establishing a town, apparently the one now named Potchefstroom.[4] About 100 kilometers north-northeast of this place lie the Magalies Mountains (called by Wahlberg the Makkalis). This mountain chain became the next objective, to which he hastened with eagerness, in order to explore "its slopes clothed in forests." Having passed a gap in the mountain ridge, he found on the other side level and forested plains. There some traveling natural scientists had been stationed for about six months, occupied with the gathering of specimens. However, they left a few days after his arrival. He now located a camp site suitable for his purpose at a point where a small brook, apparently with its headwaters in the Magalies Range and probably the one that on present-day maps is called the Sterkstroom, empties into the Crocodile or Limpopo River.[5] There he remained for two months, or from November 15, 1841 till January 8, 1842. "Now followed," he relates in a letter, "a period of continuous activity, during which the hooting of the owl and the screech of the hyena found me still awake, and the choir of the early songbirds was interrupted by the boom of my rifle."

His departure was delayed somewhat by a mishap which he describes in the following words in the letter referred to above:

> "I myself and Willem were sitting on a straw mat, chatting in my tent and drinking our tea, when we suddenly heard the oxen, which were crowded together in the small kraal, snuffle and blow.

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[4] Yes. It was sometimes called Mooi River Dorp.

[5] Apparently Wahlberg camped about twenty miles due west of Pretoria.

The cause could be determined right away, and I fired two shots towards the direction of the approaching enemy. This, however, did not seem to discourage him from getting closer and we could no longer restrain the oxen in the kraal, from which they broke by brute force and fled. The noise of the flight gradually subsided, but it was not long before we heard a painful sighing, now and then interrupted by mournful bellows. We could not in the darkness give any succor to the dying animal, which in the morning we found to be our best ox, the one that pulled nearest to the wagon. We now started to follow the tracks of the other fugitives, but I returned by myself, vengeful after a few hours of walking, with the idea of fixing up a self-firing rifle at the carcass. Willem and Ia carried on the search for the others. When I arrived at the carcass, which I approached stealthily in order get a shot at one of the numerous vultures which were gathered all around it, I heard something suddenly spring up in the dense underbrush where the kill had taken place. At once I saw the formidable lion fleeing away, passing me within a few feet. I pushed a tall stake into the opened belly of the carcass, hanging my handkerchief on it to keep the birds away, and walked on to the wagon. I returned shortly with Umslululu, who carried an ax and a tin dish in which to gather some meat and fat. The king of beasts had again returned, and fled when we approached, but reluctantly this time, giving voice to his anger with sharp, short roars. Hastily I rigged the trap with my double-barrelled shotgun, fixing it so that both barrels would fire at the same time. I did not dare cock them till the sun went down, for fear the vultures would set them off. Before long I had the satisfaction to see Willem and Ia return with all the other oxen, and we now set out together to make everything ready, but how surprised and defeated we were to find that the whole ox had disappeared. The smart lion had carried it bodily into the high and dense water grass and shrubbery that bordered the Crocodile River at this point where, we, being without dogs, deemed it wiser not to disturb it. The fat and tender meat, which I had cut, was lightly sprinkled with salt and peppered sparingly with my very last ounce of pepper, after which it was left hanging in an acacia tree to dry. The tree stood between the tent in which I slept and the wagon where Willem and the Kaffirs had their quarters. It was a stormy and rainy night, and in the morning I found my whole meat supply gone. In disgust I looked for the culprit and found the tracks of a hyena. The next night a bullet ended its life. It did not bring my meat back."

As mentioned above, Wahlberg broke up his camp in the Magalies Range on January 8, 1842. Following a trip west to the neighborhood of Olifants Nek in order to visit Commandant Potgieter and from him obtain permission to penetrate farther towards the northeast, he returned to the Magaliesberg, crossed the Limpopo River near his old camp site, and left behind him the last outposts of the pioneers. For two days' travel he could still follow a broken trail leading to a salt pan, a half-dried-up salt lake, where the pioneers fetched their salt. But from there on the journey continued through a landscape untouched by civilization, and on January 22nd Wahlberg reached the Aapjes River, named Soane by the natives. "Here," he says in a letter, "I arranged

my camp more sensibly than at the Crocodile River. A number of the terribly thorny acacia trees were cut, and from these a high stockade was built around tent and wagon, with two entrances. Every night the oxen were tied to the wagon and trees inside the stockade. My ox herders (two hired natives) had brought their dogs, and were visited often by ten to twelve of their friends, who themselves usually brought along dozens of dogs. These kept the wild beasts away so well that, except for a couple of visits by rhinoceroses, I was disturbed but little, although their screech and roar was heard every night."

The danger inside this stockade was therefore lessened, but Wahlberg and his servant Willem were forced to sleep all night with loaded guns handy, in order to gain a little peace for sleep with a few shots when the wild beasts—lions, hyenas, and rhinoceroses, crowded too close.

On one occasion he was in very real danger of his life during his stay at the Aapjes River. About this time he relates:

> "The black rhinoceros (*Rh. africanus*) is of an irascible disposition and goes to attack most frequently when surprised. This beast had me in tight corners several times. Once I heard a buphaga[6] fly up, and in a second the rhino rushed me. Armed only with a little shotgun loaded with birdshot, I take to flight as fast as I can and I luckily reach an enormous fallen tree trunk, already feeling the hot breath from the pursuer's nostrils. A few steps from the tree he stopped short, blowing and snorting, and throwing his terrible head from side to side. In a short while he turned suddenly around and took to flight hastily. The much larger *Rhinoceros simus* is of a much shyer and more peaceful nature. Once when I was in hot pursuit of a bird, I noticed a buphaga resting on something or other in the tall grass; suspicious, I sneaked back and gave a signal to my gun carrier to bring up my heavy rifle, and again cautiously drew near. Armed with this weapon, I knew well that, as long as I was hidden from the bird, the rhino —for such a one it was—also would not notice me. A small bush served me for cover, and on each side of it I could plainly see the beast, lying down on its legs and leaning over somewhat, the only movement noticeable a slight flapping of the ears. My bullet carried him successfully from his slumber into eternity, his body stretching a few times meanwhile. This one was of the irascible variety."

How different in these days is the fauna in these parts!

On March 2nd Wahlberg broke camp and started on the return trip across the Magalies Mountains. After a journey that took several months, he again arrived at Port Natal in August 1842, his wagon richly loaded with collected specimens.

During Wahlberg's absence from Port Natal, hostilities had broken out between the Boers and the British, and they were now engaged in open warfare. In order to protect his most important collections, Wahlberg stayed for some time in Pietermaritzburg. The collections were saved, but clothing, books, etc., that were stored at Port Natal

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[6] An oxpecker. These are birds of the family Buphagidae that eat ticks off cattle and big game animals and often warn their hosts of danger. There are two species in South Africa.

were destroyed. He particularly regretted the loss of a dictionary of the Zulu language that he had prepared—another demonstration of Wahlberg's many-sided ability in research work.

But not for long did Wahlberg remain in Port Natal. After having dispatched home his latest finds, he made two shorter expeditions inland, on the first of which he bagged, among other animals, two rhinos, a leopard, a number of buffaloes, a crocodile, and a few hyenas. He shot no elephants, though there were many of them around, because he could obtain no permit for this from the Kaffir king Panda, who seemed to hold elephant hunting a royal prerogative. On the second of these trips, which he undertook in the company of Delegorgue, he bagged three elephants and prepared two buffalo skeletons and one skeleton of hippopotamus.

While returning from the first of these trips, Wahlberg was held up for a few days by the high waters of the Tugela River, swollen by thundershowers. While here he experienced an adventure when lightning struck his camp. His own story of this is:

> "During this delay, at night on November 21st, another of those moments occurred when the thread of my life was nearly cut off. I went to rest in my wagon while the horizon southwestwards was continually illuminated by lightning, a muffled distant thunder being heard off and on. After a short nap I was roused by an earth-shaking clap of thunder, followed by a violent rainstorm, and shortly afterwards lightning struck the wagon, round which as usual my twelve oxen were tied, and behind which my two Kaffirs and their dogs were sleeping by the fire. For a moment I was only half conscious, but was brought out of my daze by the shouts for help from one of the Kaffirs. In spite of the heavy rain and the roaring storm there was no time to waste on clothing and, throwing a rubber cape over my shoulders, I hastened out to the man calling for help. Here I was met by a scene of terrible destruction and death, lighted feebly by the dwindling fire and the lightning, which had now subsided. One of my Kaffir boys was lying as though dead, while the other, an adult, was shrieking incessantly, incapable of moving from the spot, but yet armed with his assagai, which he brandished threateningly in defiance; two dogs were lying dead alongside, most of the oxen were lying strung about as if dead, but with two exceptions they came back to life. Even my two Kaffirs came about all right, to my great joy, though one of them became deaf in one ear."

After this adventure Wahlberg did not manage, as he had on preceding days, to obtain milk from a neighboring Zulu kraal by barter, because the people feared to invoke the wrath of heaven by trading with a white man pursued by lightning. Since provisions were low, the situation began to be quite critical, but fortunately the flood waters subsided within a few days. Wahlberg crossed the river and soon arrived at Port Natal.

Early in June 1843, Wahlberg began his second extensive journey inland, this time with two wagons, each one drawn by a span of twelve oxen. At first he followed his old trail by way of the Drakensberg and the Magalies Mountains, in a northwesterly course to the territory around the Limpopo River and its tributary the Marico. For some

time he camped in a section of the country where the tsetse fly, of ill repute, was rampant. All his oxen were affected, and by and by all of them died. In order to obtain the means for the purchase of new draft animals, Wahlberg now had to resort to elephant hunting. He set his course northwards to a point where the Marico River empties into the Limpopo. On March 3, 1844, he crossed the former with great difficulty and followed for some days the western shore of the Limpopo to the Notwani, a tributary entering from the southwest. This river was forded, and for one more day he continued along the shore of the Limpopo. The party had then arrived in the neighborhood of country ruled over by Mazilikazi.[7] Afraid of this hostile chief, his Basutos refused to continue farther. Thus the limit was set for his travels. Accompanied by Willem only, Wahlberg ascended a hill and climbed a high tree to get the best possible view over a countryside that he wanted to visit so much, but which circumstances forced him to leave beyond research. Of the view that spread before his eyes, he writes in a letter home:

> "Forests beyond measure showed in all directions, directly towards the north three table-shaped mountains appeared, and also towards the north-northeast lay mighty mountains at a distance of a day's journey, in the neighborhood of which, according to the natives, the great Motosi River bursts east to join the Limpopo,[8] which latter receives yet another three important tributaries from the north."

It was on March 12th that Wahlberg was thus forced to turn back.

On the road back, he was told by one of his company that towards the northwest from the point where he turned back, something of surpassing interest was to be found. If Wahlberg would return to the Limpopo with two wagons loaded with barter goods and turn one over to him, this Kaffir would reveal something and guide Wahlberg to a place, the discovery of which would make him famous among all white people. Neither threats nor promises would make the man tell what he had in mind, and Wahlberg did not take too much stock in his assertions; later, however, when the news came about the discovery of Lake Ngami, he thought that the Kaffir may have had reference to that great lake. Lake Ngami is located northwest from the point where he turned back, at a distance of some 500 English miles, and, as Wahlberg had a strong desire to pentrate farther into the wilderness, it may be assumed with a fair degree of certainty that only adverse circumstances kept him from becoming the discoverer of this lake.

Wahlberg suffered many hardships on this journey. Several of his servants deserted. As mentioned earlier, his oxen died and could be replaced only with difficulty and considerable loss of time. One of his double-barrelled shotguns was broken by a stone rolling from above, a loss felt the more keenly as his arsenal was none too good. After coming home, he told the story of how on this trip he was often forced to use a shotgun, one barrel of which had cracked at the very beginning of his stay at Port Natal, and which had been sawed off to a length of

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[7] He was at this place a long way from the country of the Matabele.

[8] The three table hills to the north may have been the Chwapong Hills, the "Motosi River" the Maklautsi.

only twenty-three inches. Later, the threads on the right barrel were worn out. Besides, the left hammer would not stay cocked except halfway, and, in order to fire a shot from the only barrel that still served, the left one, he had to, with index finger on the trigger, pull the hammer back with his thumb and let go to fire. One does not have to be a hunter to realize the difficulties experienced with such a gun. When asked if he ever shot anything bigger than sparrows with this gun, his answer was: "Oh, yes, shot a few buffaloes with it, too." While these details reveal Wahlberg's courage and resourcefulness as a hunter, they also bear witness to his capacity for carrying on with simple and primitive means under trying conditions.

In a letter Wahlberg himself tells a story about an adventure on this second extensive inland trek, when his guides deserted him:

> "We arrived now at a relatively small river, and my guide waded across first, carrying my rifle. I called for him to come back to get my clothes, but in vain; instead he continued on his way, unconcerned about my plight. Although he returned for a moment and called for help while fleeing from a black rhino, which were numerous here, he soon got such a start on me, while I waded across and dressed, that I could not catch up with him. He answered my shouts a few times from afar, but by and by this also ended, and I found myself quite alone, surrounded by darkness and wild beasts, without any weapons but a cane. Finally I lost the trail, and was forced to locate one of the small, knee-high acacias that are eaten with such relish by the black rhinoceros; in this I cut out a base section, which I covered with some grass for a bed, and lay down waiting for the dawn, tormented by hunger and thirst also. Several times I tried to start a fire by setting off caps between two stones on a piece of linen sprinkled with gunpowder. I was continually disturbed by hyenas and jackals, and close by the lions caught a blue wildebeest, the death screams of which, mingled with the roars of the lions, made a weird and fearful concert. It was the cause of my salvation, however. The hyenas approached especially unafraid, and I had to jump up several times to keep them away. The weather was chilly but calm, the sky overcast, and distant lightning now and then lighted up my miserable resting place. Finally the dawn came, and I started out at once, frozen stiff and hardly able to walk because my feet were swollen badly, to find water in a distant dale, from which I heard the loud croaking of the frogs, now to me a most melodious sound. Having slaked my thirst, I went back and came upon a troop of Basutos who, guided by the gathering vultures, had deprived the lions of the remains of the kill. They gave me the course I should follow to reach their kraal. I finally reached there, completely exhausted, and found my rifle and other gear, which had been carried by my deserted guide. The guide himself I never saw again."

On this trip a number of elephants were bagged, among them the enormous specimen whose skeleton is now one of the prize exhibits of the National Museum. It was killed at the Lepalule River (also called the Olifants River), and the work of preparing the huge skeleton presented a sizeable task. For over two months it was transported on

wheels over rough terrain. Few of those who view the Wahlberg Collection at the National Museum can appreciate the efforts that had to be expended before this giant skeleton could be shipped home.

When Wahlberg returned to Port Natal, he was greeted with real ovations—the rumor had spread that he had been killed by the Kaffir chief Panda, and he became doubly welcome.

He soon sailed for Cape Town, where he arrived on December 28, 1844, after having spent five years and a half in Natal and its hinterland.

He was received by Consul Letterstedt with the greatest hospitality and remained there a short time. He made a trip to Saldanha Bay in order to explore some guano deposits there. He did not leave the Cape till May 1845, and after a short stay in England arrived in Stockholm in August. He had been away seven years and two months.

In order to give an idea of the magnitude of the Wahlberg Collections, some figures are presented. Of mammal skins, he brought home 533 specimens, among them a young elephant, three adult and one young rhinoceros, two zebras, two lions (he shot five in all), one giraffe, and 118 ruminants, including a buffalo and several others of nearly the same size. There were 2,527 birds belonging to 400 varieties, among them several new species. Of amphibians and reptiles, 480 specimens, most of them in alcohol, but a few skins, such as crocodiles, pytonorms, etc. There were a number of fishes in alcohol. The skeletons, from a great number of animals, some of them very large, included one giraffe, one elephant, two rhinos, one hippopotamus, two buffaloes, etc. There were 5,000 varieties of insects in a large number of specimens. Crustaceans and shells are represented, and the collections include a considerable number of plants.

Concern about the collections was of course Wahlberg's chief interest after his return home. In accordance with his wishes, the whole of them were kept in the home country, inasmuch as the government redeemed them for a payment of 19,000 riksdaler[9], which exactly covered Wahlberg's expenses, though it did not match the price the collections would have brought abroad. However, insufficient space in the National Museum made it impossible to arrange and exhibit the collections, and these reverses stirred a deep resentment in Wahlberg, which should surprise no one. He resumed his teaching position at the Land Office in 1845, and shortly afterwards became attached to the Institute of Forestry as a teacher. It has been said that in zeal and teaching ability he stood without a peer.

Wahlberg unfortunately never published any more comprehensive reports of his travels. No doubt he had it in mind to do so, soon after his homecoming, but the indifference on the part of museum officials, perhaps more fancied than real, together with disappointment over the fate of his collections, kept him from seriously starting on his story. Besides, when Wahlberg began to assemble his recollections and observations, he found so much to be complemented and so many gaps to fill in, that he soon commenced to harbor a desire to explore South Africa once more.

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[9] About $4,750. (Translator's note.)

Then came the tidings of Livingstone's travels in Africa in the years 1849-51, and above all his discovery of Lake Ngami, and now a restlessness akin to a fever took hold of Wahlberg. In his mind he evolved magnificent plans. His first goal was to be Lake Ngami, but no doubt he visualized even more difficult objectives. This was revealed by remarks that escaped him in unguarded moments and also by the character of the carefully selected and costly equipment, which he himself bought and paid for.

In October 1853, Wahlberg departed from Sweden once again, remaining in England for some weeks, and he arrived in Cape Town around Christmas. From there he sailed along the southwest coast of Africa to Walvis Bay, where he was set ashore on April 14, 1854. He was to begin his inland trek from this point, but, owing to difficulty in obtaining oxen, he came to miss the most favorable season for such a journey. Not till near Christmas does he seem to have started for Lake Ngami. As his diary* of this trip begins with his story at the lake, nothing is known about the way he traveled, but in all probability he followed the path taken by Ch. J. Andersson in 1853.[10] From Lake Ngami he first made a trip (July-October 1855) upstream along the Taokhe River, which, coming from the north, empties into the northwest corner of the lake. A longer journey then was made east along the southern shore of the lake and farther along the Botletle (or Dzouga) River. He was accompanied on this expedition by a Mr. Green,[11] who seems to have been a trader. It appears that a neighborhood had been searched where elephants abounded, and for some time Wahlberg was favored by hunting luck. His last remark in the diary for February 1856 mentions a number of elephants bagged.

On the 28th of the same month he left the joint camp, accompanied by two servants and three natives hired locally for the occasion. At his departure, Wahlberg had remarked that he would not be gone very long, and when he did not return for ten days, Green became very uneasy. On March 11th, it was called out over the camp that Wahlberg was returning, but he was not as usual seen at the head of his men. The reason was soon enough learned. Wahlberg had fallen a victim of the fury of a wounded elephant. The detailed story from the lips of the servants has this to say about the sad affair:

> "On the same day we left the wagons, February 28th, we ran into the spoor of a young male elephant, which we followed for three days. We caught up with him on March 3rd and with three old males besides, and one of these was shot by Wahlberg and another one by Kooleman; the other two fled. We stayed at this place overnight. On the following day we took up the trail, caught up with them, and Wahlberg shot the old one; the young one took himself off. We followed his spoor till night set in,

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* This diary, which without any foreword begins with a running account for May 30, 1855, is obviously preceded by a first part, which was lost. (Author's footnote.)

[10] The route through Damaraland and the western Kalahari. By the time Wahlberg saw it, it was a fairly well-travelled wagon road.

[11] Frederick J. Green, by this time an old interior hand. Born in Canada, he reached Lake Ngami in 1852 and hunted in the desert north of the Botletle River in 1853. Then he proceeded to Walvis Bay via Damaraland, the second white man to use this road after Andersson. George Lacey's verdict on him is sufficient: "A man of iron constitution, undaunted courage, and remarkable judgment." (*South Africa* magazine, London, May 4, 1895, p. 222.)

which we spent as the previous night, without any water and sleeping on the trail. The next day, March 5th, we again took up the spoor, and in the forenoon our master shot a zebra, on which we feasted. In the evening we came to a pool, where we spent the night. The next day, March 6th, we followed the track till noon, when we came to Bayeye-by,[12] at a big river, where we got some pumpkins, as our supplies were exhausted. In the afternoon of the same day we got away again on the same old spoor, and towards evening caught up with the young one, along with an old male, on a rather open field near a small pool. We approached as near as possible and Wahlberg fired two shots at him, Kooleman one, after which he fled towards the river. Wahlberg now ordered us to drive the elephant up to a point that he showed us and where he meant to shoot the animal. We managed to drive out the elephant with one shot, and he ran in a rage in the direction where Wahlberg was. The beast was, however, out of range, but he and a Bushman from the village followed it. It ran only a short distance and hid itself in some dense bush; when Wahlberg reached the place, the elephant rushed him before he could fire, knocked him to the ground, and crushed him, trumpeting wildly. Wahlberg's gun was broken and his body was mangled horribly. We dug a deep grave near a large tree, placed him in it, and covered him well with a small mound."

So ended the life of Wahlberg in the midst of his victory run, for, aside from the difficulties that are always connected with journeys of this nature, which difficulties Wahlberg knew so well how to conquer, his expedition had been a success. In all, thirty-six elephants had been bagged, most of them by Wahlberg. His death is to be mourned for the sake of his country and for the sake of natural science; for his own sake, there can hardly be any regrets—he died in the midst of the occupation he loved the most, and from all the evidence, the end came easily, everything being over in a moment, surely.

In appearance, Wahlberg is described as being rather short but with a high, broad chest. He was strong and muscular, but his muscles were not overdeveloped. His face was open and friendly but serious.

In his manner, Wahlberg was retiring, almost shy, and social life was terror to him. He was happiest among children and he was particularly attached to his sister's little ones. Even-tempered, he did not fly up if he was irritated but sought solitude. In general, he was self-contained and kept his thoughts to himself, but those who were close to him knew that he had very definite ideas about persons and nations, though he did not broadcast them.

By all who came to know him well, Wahlberg was held in the highest esteem and affection.

In the year of his death—the tidings naturally were slow in reaching home—Wahlberg was elected a member of the Academy of Science on October, 1856. In 1858 the Academy had his medal minted in commemoration. (Size No. 7.)

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[12] A village of Bayei or Makoba, a riverine people of the Lake Country.

This year (1910), a portrait in oils of Wahlberg was hung at the Institute of Forestry. It was painted by C. T. Staaff. The magnificent frame is the work of the sculptor Ahlborn, and attached to it is Wahlberg's broken elephant gun.[13]

The memory of Wahlberg has also been honoured by donations at a late date. In 1896 one of his sisters, Mrs. Professor Emilia Retzius, established a scholarship fund, the income to be divided alternately between the Academy of Science and the Swedish Society of Anthropology and Geography.

In 1901 the same person furthermore donated to the Academy and to the same society funds for the presentation of gold medals to those who have made outstanding contributions to anthropological and geographical research. It may also be presented in silver. The medal, the face of which is shown below[13], presents the head of Wahlberg, and is the best portrait of him that can be found.

NOTES.

This article was translated for me by Mr. Henry Sahlin of Charleston, West Virginia, and I have not attempted to do more than put it into understandable English, working from a literal word-for-word version. Except where otherwise noted, the footnotes are my own. The map that accompanies the original article is of large scale and is not very good.

Green wrote an account of his trip to Lake Ngami and Libebe's with Wahlberg in 1854-56, soon after his return to Cape Town in December 1856. C. J. Andersson sent Green's narrative, together with a sketch of Wahlberg's career, to the *Cape Town Monitor*, where it was published on December 6, 1856. Green's story of the naturalist's death, the version that also appears in the article in *Ymer*, is found in Chapman's *Travels in the Interior of South Africa* (London, 1868), I. 350-54. Wahlberg's obituary is in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* (London), Vol. 27, 1857, cxvi-cxvii. He was considered very daring by his contemporaries because he hunted elephants on foot instead of on horseback, and his death was pointed out as an example of the danger involved. Nevertheless, Fred Green followed his lead in foot hunting and became the most successful professional hunter in South Africa in his time.

Green, Wahlberg, and J. H. Wilson were the first white men to reach Libebe's Town, on Andara Island in the Okavango River, from the south, in 1855. Wahlberg, who followed the Taokhe River upstream on foot, hunting elephants as he went, was the first to arrive, and he seems to have been the only one of the three actually to visit the island. Green and Wilson followed him by boat. The story of this important exploration was told by Green in the *Eastern Province Monthly Magazine* for June and July 1857, and it is reproduced in Chapman's *Travels*, I. 307-16, and in Andersson's *The Lion and the Elephant* (London, 1873), 371-80.

EDWARD C. TABLER.

[13] Reproduced with the article in *Ymer*.

HOMES OF THE EARLY SOUTH AFRICAN STOCK FARMERS

By James Walton

Wherever upland pastures occur one finds an associated transhumance; a seasonal movement of the stock farmers from the lowlands to the mountains in search of pasture and water. In the Himalayas, in Spain, in the Alps, in Norway, in Wales and in many other countries this annual migration of the herdsmen, with their families, takes place. Separate summer and winter houses are built, one in the lowlands and one in the mountains, differing in style to suit the different requirements of climate and function. And so it was in South Africa. As early as 1700 the farmers of Waveren, Drakenstein and Paarl were already driving their cattle onto the Little Karroo and at a still later date the