

THE GORILLA HUNTERS.

A Tale of the Wilds of Africa.

BY

R. M. BALLANTYNE,

Author of "Hawdon's Rival; or, Everyday Life in the Wilds of North America;"—
"The Young Fur Traders;"—"Ungava; A Tale of Esquimaux Land;"—
"The Coral Island;"—"Martin Rattler;" &c.



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CHAPTER VIII.

PETERKIN DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF, AND OKANDAGA IS
DISPOSED OF, ETC.

WHEN within about three miles of the place where our men had been ordered to haul the canoe out of the water and make the camp, we came to a halt and prepared a spot for Okandaga to spend an hour or two in sleep. The poor creature was terribly exhausted. We selected a very sequestered place in a rocky piece of ground where the light of the small fire we kindled, in order to cook her some supper, could not be seen by any one who might chance to pass by that way.

Jack remained with her, but the guide went on with us in order to give instructions to our men, who, when we arrived, seemed much surprised that we had made such a bad hunt during the night. Having pointed out our route, Makarooroo then left us, and we lay down to obtain a few hours' repose.

We had not lain more than an hour when one of our men awoke us, saying that it was time to start, so we rose, very unwillingly, and embarked.

"I say, Ralph," observed Peterkin, as we glided up the stream, which in this place was narrow and sluggish, "isn't it strange that mankind, as a rule,

with very few exceptions, should so greatly dislike getting up in the morning?"

"It is rather curious, no doubt. But I suspect we have ourselves to thank for the disinclination. If we did not sit up so late at night we should not feel the indisposition to rise so strong upon us in the morning."

"There you are quite wrong, Ralph. I always find that the sooner I go to bed the later I am in getting up. The fact is, I've tried every method of rousing myself, and without success. And yet I can say conscientiously that I am desirous of improving; for when at sea, I used to have my cot slung at the head with a block-tackle, and I got one of the middies to come when the watch was changed and lower me, so that my head lay on the deck below, and my feet pointed to the beams above. And would you believe it, I got so accustomed to this at last that, when desperately sleepy, I used to hold on in that position for a few minutes, and secure a short nap during the process of suffocation with blood to the head."

"You must indeed have been incorrigible," said I, laughing. "Nevertheless I feel assured that the want of will lies at the root of the evil."

"Of course you do," retorted Peterkin testily; "people always say that when I try to defend myself."

"Is it not probable that people always say that just because they feel that there is truth in the remark?"

"Humph!" ejaculated my friend.

"Besides," I continued, "our success in battling with the evil tendencies of our natures depends often very much on the manner in which we make the attack. I have pondered this subject deeply, and have come to the conclusion that there is a certain moment in the awaking hour of each day which, if seized and improved, gains for us the victory. You know Shakspeare's judicious remark—'There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,' or something to that effect—I never feel quite sure of the literal correctness of my quotations, although I am generally certain as to the substance;—well, there is a tide also in the affair of getting up in the morning, and its flood-point is the precise instant when you recover consciousness. At that moment every one, I believe, has moral courage to leap violently out of bed; but let that moment pass, and you sink supinely back, if not to sleep, at least into a desperate condition of unconquerable lethargy."

"You may be very correct in your reasoning," returned Peterkin; "but, not having pondered that subject quite so deeply as you seem to have done,

I shall modestly refrain from discussing it. Meanwhile I will go ashore, and stalk yonder duck which floats so comfortably and lazily in the cove just beyond the point ahead of us, that I think it must be in the condition of one who, having missed the flood-tide you have just referred to, is revelling in the luxury of its second nap. Ho! you ebony-faced scoundrel?" he added, turning to the negro who steered our canoe; "shove ashore, like a good fellow. Come, Ralph, lend me your fowling-piece, and do you carry my big rifle. There is nothing so good for breakfast as a fat duck killed and roasted before it has had time to cool."

"And here is a capital spot on which to breakfast," said I, as we landed.

"First-rate. Now then, follow me, and mind your muzzle. Better put the rifle over your shoulder, Ralph, so that if it does go off it may hit the sun or one of the stars. A six ounce ball in one's spine is not a pleasant companion in a hunting expedition."

"But," retorted I, "you forget that I am particularly careful. I always carry my piece on half-cock, and *never* put my finger on the trigger."

"Indeed! not even when you pull it?"

"Of course when I am about to fire; but you know well enough what I mean."

"Hush, Ralph! we must keep silence now and step lightly."

In a few minutes we had gained the clump of bushes close behind which the duck lay; and Peterkin, going down on all fours, crept forward to get a shot. I followed him in the same manner, and when he stopped to take a deliberate aim, I crept up alongside. The duck had heard our approach, and was swimming about in a somewhat agitated manner among the tall reeds, so that my companion made one or two unsuccessful attempts to take aim.

"What an aggravating thing!" exclaimed Peterkin in a whisper.

At that moment I happened to cast my eyes across the river, and the reader may judge of my surprise when I beheld two elephants standing among the trees. They stood so silently and so motionless, and were so like in colour to the surrounding foliage, that we had actually approached to within about thirty yards without observing them. I touched Peterkin on the shoulder, and pointed to them without saying a word. The expression of amazement that instantly overspread his features showed that he also saw them.

"The rifle, Ralph," he said in a low, excited whisper.

I handed it to him. With careful deliberation he

took aim, and fired at the animal nearest to us. The heavy ball entered its huge body just behind the shoulder. Both elephants tossed up their trunks, and elevating their great ears they dashed furiously into the bush; but the one that had been hit, after plunging head foremost down a low bank, fell to the ground with a heavy crash, quite dead.

It was a splendid shot. The natives, who almost immediately after came up screaming with delight, could scarcely believe their eyes. They dashed across the river in the canoe, while some of them, regardless of the alligators that might be hidden there, sprang into the water and swam over.

"I'm sorry we did not get the duck, however," observed Peterkin, as we returned to the place where we had left the canoe. "Elephant meat is coarse, nasty stuff, and totally unfit for civilized mouths; though these niggers seem to relish it amazingly."

"You forgot the baked foot," said I.

"Well, so I did; it was pretty good, certainly; but that's the only part o' the brute that's fit to eat."

Soon after this, the canoe came back and took us over the river; and we breakfasted on the side where the elephant had fallen, in order to allow the natives to cut off such portions of the meat as they required, and to secure the tusks. Then we con-

tinued our journey, and at night encamped near a grove of palm-trees which Makarooroo had described to us, and where we were soon joined by him and Jack, who told us that he had got on well during the day—that he had shot an antelope, and had seen a zebra and a rhinoceros, besides a variety of smaller game. He also told us that Okandaga was encamped in a place of safety a few miles to the right of our position, and that she had stood the journey well.

I was much interested by Jack's account of the zebra and the rhinoceros, specimens of both of which animals I had seen in menageries, and felt disposed to change places with him on the march; but reflecting that he was much more likely than I successfully to hunt anything he might pursue, I made up my mind to remain by the canoe.

Thus we travelled for several days without anything particular occurring, and at length arrived at a native village which lay on the banks of a noble stream.

Here Makarooroo introduced us to Mbango the chief, a fine-looking and good-natured negro, who received us most hospitably, supplied us with food, and urged us to remain and hunt with his people. This, however, we declined to do, telling our entertainer that we had come to his country for the pur-

pose of shooting that wonderful animal the gorilla, but assuring him that we would come back without fail if we should be spared. We further assured him on this head, by proposing to leave in his charge a woman for whom we had a great respect and love, and whom we made him promise faithfully to take care of till we returned.

Peterkin, who soon gave them a specimen of his powers as a marksman, and contrived in other ways to fill the minds of the chief and his people with a very exalted idea of his powers both of body and intellect, endeavoured to make assurance doubly sure by working on their superstitious fears.

"Tell Mbango," said he to our guide, "that though we be small in numbers, we are very powerful; that we can do deeds [here he became awfully solemn and mysterious] such as no black man ever conceived of; and that if a hair of the head of Okandaga is hurt, we will on our return—"

Instead of completing the sentence, Peterkin started up, threw himself into violent contortions, rolled his eyes in a fearful manner, and, in short, gave the chief and his people to understand that something quite indescribable and unutterably terrible would be the result of their playing us false.

"Send for Njamie," said Mbango to one of his retainers.

Njamie, who was the chief's principal wife, soon appeared. She led a sturdy little boy by the hand. He was her only son, and a very fine little fellow, despite the blackness of his skin and his almost total want of clothing.

To this woman Mbango gave Okandaga in charge, directing her in our presence how to care for her, and assuring her of the most terrible punishment should anything befall the woman committed to her care.

Njamie was a mild agreeable woman. She had more modesty of demeanour and humility of aspect than the most of the women of her tribe whom we happened to see, so that we felt disposed to believe that Okandaga was placed in as safe keeping as it was possible for us to provide for her in our circumstances. Even Makarooroo appeared to be quite at ease in his mind; and it was evidently with a relieved breast and a light heart that he bade adieu to his bride, and started along with us on the following day on our journey into the deeper recesses of the wilderness.

Before entering upon these transactions with the people of this village, we took care to keep our crew in total ignorance of what passed by sending them on in advance with the canoe under Jack's care, a few hours before we brought Okandaga into the

village, or even made mention of her existence; and we secured their ready obedience to our orders, and total indifference as to our motives in these incomprehensible actions, by giving them each a few inches of tobacco, a gift which rendered them supremely happy.

One day, about a week after the events above narrated, we met with an adventure which well-nigh cost Jack his life, but which ultimately resulted in an important change in our manner of travelling. We were traversing an extremely beautiful country with the goods on our shoulders, having, in consequence of the increasing turbulence of the river as well as its change of direction, been compelled to abandon our canoe, and cut across the country in as straight a line as its nature would permit. But this was not easy, for the grass, which was bright green, was so long as to reach sometimes higher than our shoulders.

In this species of country Jack's towering height really became of great use, enabling him frequently to walk along with his head above the surrounding herbage, while we were compelled to grope along, ignorant of all that was around us save the tall grass at our sides. Occasionally, however, we came upon more open ground where the grass was short, and then we enjoyed the lovely scenery to the full. We met with a great variety of new plants and trees in

this region. Many of the latter were festooned with wild vines and other climbing plants. Among others, I saw several specimens of that curious and interesting tree the banyan, with its drop-shoots in every state of growth—some beginning to point towards the earth in which they were ultimately destined to take root; some more than half-way down; while others were already fixed, forming stout pillars to their parent branches—thus, as it were, on reaching maturity, rendering that support which it is the glory as well as the privilege of youth to accord to age. Besides these, there were wild dates and palmyra-trees, and many others too numerous to mention, but the peculiar characteristics of which I carefully jotted down in my note-book. Many small water-courses were crossed, in some of which Mak pointed out a number of holes which, he said, were made by elephants wading in them. He also told us that several mud-pools, which seemed to have been recently and violently stirred up, were caused by the wallowing of the rhinoceros; so we kept at all times a sharp look-out for a shot.

Lions were also numerous in this neighbourhood, and we constantly heard them roaring at night, but seldom saw them during our march.

Well, as I have already remarked, one day we were travelling somewhat slowly through the long

grass of this country, when, feeling oppressed by the heat, as well as somewhat fatigued with my load, I called to Jack, who was in advance, to stop for a few minutes to rest.

"Most willingly," he replied, throwing down his load, and wiping away the perspiration which stood in large drops on his brow. "I was on the point of calling a halt when you spoke. How do you get on down there, Peterkin?"

Our friend, who had seated himself on the bale he had been carrying, and seemed to be excessively hot, looked up with a comical expression of countenance, and replied,—

"Pretty well, thank'ee. How do you get on *up there?*"

"Oh, capitally. There's such a nice cool breeze blowing, I'm quite sorry that I cannot send a little of it down."

"Don't distress yourself, my dear fellow; I'll come up to snuff it."

So saying, Peterkin sprang nimbly upon Jack's shoulders, and began to gaze round him.

"I say, Peterkin," said Jack, "why are you a very clever fellow just now?"

"Don't know," replied Peterkin. "I give it up at once. Always do. Never could guess a riddle in all my life."

"Because," said Jack, "you're *'up to snuff.'*"

"Oh, oh! that certainly deserves a *pinch*; so there's for you."

Jack uttered a roar, and tossed Peterkin off his shoulders, on receiving the punishment.

"Shabby fellow," cried Peterkin, rubbing his head. "But, I say, do let me up again. I thought, just as you dropped me, that I saw a place where the grass is short. Ay, there it is, fifty yards or so ahead of us, with a palmyra tree on it. Come, let us go rest there, for I confess that I feel somewhat smothered in this long grass."

We took up our packs immediately, and carried them to the spot indicated, which we found almost free from long grass. Here we lay down to enjoy the delightful shade of the tree, and the magnificent view of the country around us. Our negroes also seemed to enjoy the shade, but they were evidently not nearly so much oppressed with the heat as we were, which was very natural. They seemed to have no perception of the beautiful in nature, however, although they appreciated fully the agreeable influences by which they were surrounded.

While I lay at the foot of that tree, pondering this subject, I observed a very strange-looking insect engaged in a very curious kind of occupation. Peterkin's eye caught sight of it at the same instant with mine.

"Hallo! Jack, look here!" he cried in a whisper. "I declare, here's a beast been and shoved its head into a hole, and converted its tail into a trap!"

We all three lay down as quietly as possible, and I could not but smile when I thought of the literal correctness of my friend's quaint description of what we saw.

The insect was a species of ant-eater. It was about an inch and a quarter long, as thick as a crow-quill, and covered with black hair. It put its head into a little hole in the ground, and quivered its tail rapidly. The ants, which seemed to be filled with curiosity at this peculiar sight, went near to see what the strange thing could be; and no sooner did one come within the range of the forceps on the insect's tail, than it was snapped up.

"Now, that is the most original trapper I ever did see or hear of," remarked Peterkin, with a broad grin. "I've seen many things in my travels, but I never expected to meet with a beast that could catch others by merely wagging its tail."

"You forget the hunters of North America," said Jack, "who entice little antelopes towards them by merely wagging a bit of rag on the end of a ramrod."

"I forget nothing of the sort," retorted Peterkin. "Wagging a ramrod is not wagging a tail. Besides, I spoke of beasts doing it; men are not beasts."

"Then I hold you self-convicted, my boy," exclaimed Jack; "for you have often called *me* a beast."

"By no means, Jack. I am not self-convicted, but quite correct, as I can prove to the satisfaction of any one who isn't a philosopher. You never can prove anything to a philosopher."

"Prove it, then."

"I will. Isn't a monkey a beast?"

"Certainly."

"Isn't a gorilla a monkey?"

"No doubt it is."

"And aren't *you* a gorilla?"

"I say, lads, it's time to be going," cried Jack, with a laugh, as he rose and resumed his load.

At that moment Mak uttered an exclamation, and pointed towards a particular spot in the plain before us, where, close by a clump of trees, we saw the graceful head and neck and part of the shoulders of a giraffe. We were naturally much excited at the sight, this being the first we had fallen in with.

"You'd better go after it," said Jack to Peterkin, "and take Mak with you."

"I'd rather you'd go yourself," replied Peterkin; "for, to say truth, I'm pretty well knocked up to-day. I don't know how it is,—one day one feels made of iron, as if nothing could tire one, and the next, one feels quite weak and spiritless."

"Well, I'll go; but I shall not take any one with me. Take observation of the sun, Mak, and keep a straight course as you are now going until night. D'ye see yonder ridge?"

"Yes, massa."

Then hold on direct for that, and encamp there. I'll not be long behind you, and hope to bring you a giraffe steak for supper."

We endeavoured to dissuade Jack from going out alone, but he said truly that his load distributed among us all was quite sufficient, without adding to it by taking away another member of the party. Thus we parted; but I felt a strange feeling of depression, a kind of foreboding of evil, which I could not shake off, despite my utmost efforts. Peterkin, too, was unusually silent, and I could not avoid seeing that he felt more anxiety on account of Jack's rashness than he was willing to allow. Our friend took with him one of our large-bore rifles, and a double-barrel of smaller bore slung at his back.

Shortly after parting with him, we descried an ostrich feeding in the plain before us. I had long desired to meet with a specimen of this gigantic bird in its native wilds, and Peterkin was equally anxious to get a shot at it; so we called a halt, and prepared to stalk it. We were aware that the ostrich is a very silly and very timid bird, but not being aware

of the best method of hunting it, we asked Makarooroo to explain how he was in the habit of doing it.

"You mus' know," he began, "dat bird hims be a mos' ex'roroninary beast. When hims run hims go fasterer dan—oh! it be dumpossobable for say how much fast hims go. You no can see him's legs; dey go same as legs ob leetle bird. But hims be horribly stupid. Suppose he see you far far away, goin' to de wind'ard ob him, he no run 'way to leeward; hims tink you wants to get round him, so off him start to git past you, and before hims pass he sometimes come close 'nuff to be shoted or speared. Me hab spear him dat way, but him's awful difficult to git at for all dat."

"Well, then, Mak, after that lucid explanation, what d'you propose that we should do?" inquired Peterkin, examining the locks of his rifle.

"Me pruppose dat you go far ober dere, Massa Ralph go not jist so far, and me go to de wind'ard and gib him fright."

Acting upon this advice, we proceeded cautiously to the several spots indicated, and our guide set off towards an exposed place, where he intended to show himself. In a few minutes we observed the gigantic bird look up in alarm, and then we saw Makarooroo running like a deer over the plain. The ostrich instantly rushed off madly at full speed, not

as might have been expected, in a contrary direction, or towards any place of shelter, but simply, as it appeared to me, with no other end in view than that of getting to windward of his supposed enemy. I observed that he took a direction which would quickly bring him within range of my companion's rifle, but I was so amazed at the speed with which he ran that I could think of nothing else.

Every one knows that the ostrich has nothing worthy of the name of wings—merely a small tuft of feathers at each side, with which he cannot make even an attempt to fly; but every one does not know, probably, that with his stout and long legs he can pass over the ground nearly at the ordinary speed of a locomotive engine. I proved this to my own satisfaction by taking accurate observation. On first observing the tremendous speed at which he was going, I seized my note-book, and pulling out my watch, endeavoured to count the number of steps he took in a minute. This, however, I found was totally impossible; for his legs, big though they were, went so fast that I could no more count them than I could count the spokes of a carriage-wheel. I observed, however, that there were two bushes on the plain in the direction of his flight, which he would soon have to pass. I therefore laid down my note-book and rifle, and stood with my watch in

hand, ready to note the precise instants at which he should pass the first and second. By afterwards counting the number of footsteps on the ground between the bushes, and comparing the result with the time occupied in passing between the two, I thus proposed to myself to ascertain his rate of speed.

Scarcely had I conceived this idea when the bird passed the first bush, and I glanced at my watch; then he passed the second, and I glanced again. Thus I noted that he took exactly ten seconds to pass from one bush to the other. While I was in the act of jotting this down I heard the report of Peterkin's rifle, and, looking up hastily, saw the tail-feathers of the ostrich knocked into the air, but the bird itself passed on uninjured. I was deeply mortified at this failure, and all the more so that, from past experience, I had been led to believe that my friend *never* missed his mark. Hurrying up, I exclaimed,—

"Why, my dear fellow, what *can* have come over you?"

Poor Peterkin seemed really quite distressed; he looked quite humbled at first.

"Ah!" said he, "it's all very well for you to say, 'What has come over you?' but you ought to make allowance for a man who has carried a heavy load all the forenoon. Besides, he was almost beyond range.

Moreover, although I have hunted a good deal, I really have not been in the habit of firing at animal locomotives under full steam. Did you ever see such a slapping pace and such an outrageous pair of legs, Ralph?"

"Never," said I. "But come with me to yonder bushes. I'm going to make a calculation."

"What's a calcoolashun?" inquired our guide, who came up at that moment, panting violently.

"It's a summation, Mak—a case of counting up, one, two, three, &c.—and may-be multiplying, subtracting, and dividing into the bargain."

"Ho! dat's what me been do at de missionary school."

"Exactly; but what sort of calculation Ralph means to undertake at present I know not. Perhaps he's going to try to find out whether, if we were to run at the rate of six miles an hour till doomsday, in the wrong direction, there would be any chance of our ever sticking that ostrich's tail again on his big body. But come along,—we shall see."

On reaching the spot I could scarcely believe my eyes. Each step this bird had taken measured fourteen feet in length! I always carried a rolled up yard measure about with me, which I applied to the steps, so that I could make no mistake. There were

exactly thirty of those gigantic paces between the two bushes. This multiplied by six gave 180 steps, or 2520 feet in one minute, which resulted in 151,200 feet, or 50,400 yards, or very nearly thirty miles in the hour.

"No wonder I only knocked his tail off," said Peterkin.

"On the contrary," said I, "the wonder is that under the circumstances you hit the bird at all."

On further examination of the place where we had seen the ostrich before it was alarmed we ascertained that his ordinary walking pace varied from twenty to twenty-six inches in length.

After this unsuccessful hunt we returned to our comrades and proceeded to the rendezvous where we expected to find Jack, but as he was not there we concluded that he must have wandered further than he intended, so, throwing down our packs we set about preparing the camp and a good supper against his return. Gradually the sun began to sink low on the horizon. Then he dipped below it, and the short twilight of those latitudes was rapidly merging into night, but Jack did not return, and the uneasiness which we had all along felt in regard to him, increased so much that we could not refrain from showing it.

"I'll tell you what it is, Ralph," cried Peterkin, starting up suddenly. "I'm not going to sit here

wasting the time when Jack may be in some desperate fix. I'll go and hunt for him."

"Me tink you right," said our guide, "dere is ebery sort ob ting here. Beasties and mans. Pr'aps massa Jack am be kill."

I could not help shuddering at the bare idea of such a thing, so I at once seconded my companion's proposal and resolved to accompany him.

"Take your double barrel, Ralph, and I'll lend our spare big gun to Mak."

"But how are we to proceed? which way are we to go? I have not the most distant idea as to what direction we ought to go in our search."

"Leave that to Mak. He knows the ways o' the country best, and the probable route that Jack has taken. Are you ready?"

"Yes—shall we take some brandy?"

"Ay, well thought of. He'll perhaps be the better of something of that sort if anything has befallen him. Now, then, let's go."

Leaving our men in charge of the camp with strict injunctions to keep good watch and not allow the fires to go down lest they should be attacked by lions we three set forth on our nocturnal search. From time to time we stood still and shouted in a manner that would let our lost friend know that we were in search of him, should he be within ear-shot, but no answer-

ing cry came back to us, and we were beginning to despair when we came upon the footprints of a man in the soft soil of a swampy spot we had to cross. It was a clear moonlight night, so that we could distinguish them perfectly.

"Ho!" exclaimed our guide, as he stooped to examine the marks.

"Well, Mak, what do you make of it?" inquired Peterkin anxiously.

Mak made no reply for a few seconds; then he rose and said earnestly, "Dat am massa Jack's foot."

I confess that I was somewhat surprised at the air of confidence with which our guide made this statement, for after a most careful examination of the prints, which were exceedingly indistinct, I could discern nothing to indicate that they had been made by Jack.

"Are you sure, Mak?" asked Peterkin.

"Sartin sure, massa."

"Then push on as fast as you can."

Presently we came to a spot where the ground was harder and the prints more distinct.

"Ha! you're wrong, Mak," cried Peterkin, in a voice of disappointment as he stooped to examine the foot-steps again. "Here we have the print of a naked foot—Jack wore shoes; and, what's this? blood!"

"Yis, massa, me know dat inassa Jack hab shoes.

But dat be him's foot for all dat, and him's hurt somehow for certain."

The reader may imagine our state of mind on making this discovery. Without uttering another word we quickened our pace into a smart run, keeping closely in the track of Jack's steps. Soon we observed that these deviated from side to side in an extraordinary manner as if the person who made them had been unable to walk straight. In a few minutes more we came on the footprints of a rhinoceros, a sight which still further increased our alarm. On coming out from among a clump of low bushes that skirted the edge of a small plain we observed a dark object lying on the ground about fifty yards distant from us. I almost sank down with an undefinable feeling of dread on beholding this.

We held our rifles in readiness as we approached it at a quick pace, for we knew not whether it was not a wild animal which might spring upon us the moment we came close enough. But a few seconds dispelled our dread of such an attack and confirmed our worst fears, for there, in a pool of blood, lay Jack's manly form. The face was upturned, and the moon which shone full upon it showed that it was pale as death and covered with blood. His clothes were rent and dishevelled and covered with dust as if he had struggled hard with some powerful foe, and all round

the spot were footprints of a rhinoceros, revealing too clearly the character of the terrible monster with which our friend had engaged in unequal conflict.

Peterkin darted forward, tore open Jack's shirt at the breast, and laid his hand upon his heart.

"Thank God," he muttered in a low subdued tone, "he's not dead. Quick, Ralph, the brandy-flask."

I instantly poured a little of the spirit into the silver cup attached to the flask and handed it to Peterkin who, after moistening Jack's lips, began assiduously to rub his chest and forehead with brandy. Kneeling down by his side I assisted him, while Makarooroo applied some to his feet. While we were thus engaged we observed that our poor friend's arms and chest had received several severe bruises and some slight wounds, and we also discovered a terrible gash in his right thigh which had evidently been made by the formidable horn of the rhinoceros. This, and the other wounds which were still bleeding pretty freely, we stanched and bound up, and our exertions were at length rewarded by the sight of a faint tinge of colour returning to Jack's cheeks. Presently his eyes quivered, and heaving a short broken sigh, he looked up.

"Where am I? eh! why, what's wrong? what has happened?" he asked faintly in a tone of surprise.

"All right, old boy. Here, take a swig of this, you

abominable gorilla," said Peterkin, holding the brandy flask to his mouth, while one or two tears of joy rolled down his cheeks.

Jack drank and rallied a little.

"I've been ill, I see," he said gently. "Ah! I remember now. I've been hurt, the rhinoceros—eh? have you killed it? I gave it a good shot. It must have been mortal, I think."

"Whether you've killed it or not I cannot tell," said I, taking off my coat and putting it under Jack's head for a pillow, "but it has pretty nearly killed you. Do you feel worse, Jack?"

I asked this in some alarm, observing that he had turned deadly pale again.

"He's fainted, man, out o' the way," cried Peterkin, as he applied the brandy again to his lips and temples.

In a few seconds Jack again rallied.

"Now, Mak, bestir yourself," cried Peterkin throwing off his coat. "Cut down two stout poles, and we'll make some sort of litter to carry him on."

"I say, Ralph," whispered Jack faintly, "do look to my wounds and see that they are all tightly bound up. I can't afford to lose another drop of blood. It's almost all drained away, I believe."

While I examined my friend's wounds and re-adjusted the bandages my companions cut down two

poles. These we laid on the ground parallel to each other and about two feet apart, and across them laid our three coats which we fastened in a rough fashion by means of some strong cords which I fortunately happened to have with me. On this rude litter we laid our companion, and raised him on our shoulders. Peterkin and I walked in rear, each supporting one of the poles, while Makarooroo, being the stoutest of the three, supported the entire weight of the other ends on his broad shoulders. Jack bore the moving better than we had expected, so that we entertained sanguine hopes that no bones were broken, but that loss of blood was all he had to suffer from.

Thus slowly and with much difficulty we bore our wounded comrade to the camp.

CHAPTER IX.

I DISCOVER A CURIOUS INSECT, AND PETERKIN TAKES A STRANGE FLIGHT.

It happened most fortunately at this time that we were within a short day's journey of a native village, to which, after mature consideration, we determined to convey Jack and remain there until he should be sufficiently recovered to permit of our resuming our journey. Hitherto we had studiously avoided the villages that lay in our route, feeling indisposed to encounter unnecessarily the risk of being inhospitably received ; perhaps even robbed of our goods, if nothing worse should befall us. There was, however, no other alternative now, for Jack's wounds were very severe, and the amount of blood lost by him was so great that he was as weak as a child. Happily no bones were broken, so we felt sanguine that by careful nursing for a few weeks we should get him set firmly upon his legs again.

On the following morning we set forth on our journey, and towards evening reached the village, which was situated on the banks of a small stream, in the midst of a beautiful country composed of mingled plain and woodland.

It chanced that the chief of this village was con-

have yet to be related, and that there is a limit to the patience of even youthful readers.

Our power of enduring fatigue and sustained active exertion, with comparatively short intervals of nightly repose, was much greater than I could have believed to be possible. I have no doubt that anxiety to save Okandaga from the terrible fate that hung over her, enabled us to bear up under fatigues which would at other times have overcome us. I know not well how it was that I kept up with my strong and agile comrades. Oftentimes I felt ready to drop down as I walked, yet, somehow, I never thought of falling behind, but went doggedly on, and at nights found myself little worse in condition than they. Peterkin, although small, was tough and springy, and his spirits seemed rather to rise than otherwise as his strength abated. As for Jack—I never saw any one like him! He seemed like a lion roaming in his strength over his native deserts. So hardened had we all become during the course of our travels that we found ourselves not only equal to Makarooroo in pedestrian powers, but superior; for when occasion required we could almost knock him up, but I am free to admit that we never succeeded in doing this thoroughly. In short we were all as nearly as possible equal to each other, with the exception of Jack, who seemed in every way invulnerable.

During this long and hurried but intensely interesting and delightful journey we came upon, at different times, almost every species of animal, plant, and tree peculiar to the African continent. Oftentimes we passed by droves and herds of elephants, deer, buffalo, giraffes, antelopes, and zebras; we saw rhinoceroses, alligators, leopards, lions, apes of several kinds and smaller monkeys innumerable. We also saw great numbers of birds—some curious on account of their habits and form, others beautiful and bright as the rainbow.

Yet, although, as I have said, this journey was very delightful, our feelings were at different times exceedingly varied, and not unfrequently pained; for, while we saw around us much that was beautiful, innocent, and lovely, we also witnessed the conflicts of many wild creatures and sometimes came across evidences of the savage and cruel dispositions of the human beings by whom the country was peopled. We always, however, carefully avoided native villages; being anxious not to be interrupted on our forced march. Neither did we turn aside to hunt, although we were much tempted so to do, but contented ourselves with killing such animals as we required for our daily subsistence; and of these we shot as many as we required without requiring to turn aside from our straight course.

having been secretly engaged in watching our proceedings; and we shuddered to think that, but for our firing, he might have sprung upon us as we lay there, little dreaming of his presence.

Since our last adventure with the king of beasts, Makarooroo had entertained us with many anecdotes of the daring of lions, especially of those monsters that are termed man-eaters; so that when we heard the roar above referred to, we all three sprang to our feet, and faced about with the utmost alacrity. So intent were we on looking out for this dreadful foe—for we had made up our minds that it must be a man-eating lion—that we were utterly indifferent to the other animals. But they were not indifferent to us, for the wounded rhinoceros, catching sight of us as we stood with our backs towards him, charged at once up the hillock.

To utter three simultaneous, yet fearfully distinct yells of terror, spring over the low parapet of bushes, and fly like the wind in three different directions, was the work of a moment. In dashing madly down the slope, my foot caught in a creeping shrub, and I fell heavily to the earth.

The fall probably saved my life, for, before I could rise, the rhinoceros sprang completely over me in its headlong charge. So narrow was my escape, that the edge of one of its ponderous feet alighted on the

first joint of the little finger of my left hand, and crushed it severely. Indeed, had the ground not been very soft, it must infallibly have bruised it off altogether. The moment it had passed I jumped up, and, turning round, ran in the opposite direction. I had scarcely gone ten paces when a furious growl behind me, and the grappling sound as of two animals in deadly conflict, followed by a fierce howl, led me to conclude that the lion and the rhinoceros had unexpectedly met each other, and that in their brief conflict the former had come off second best.

But I gave little heed to that. My principal thought at that moment was my personal safety; so I ran on as fast as I could in the direction of our encampment, for which point, I had no doubt, my companions would also make.

I had not run far when the growl of a lion, apparently in front, caused me to stop abruptly. Uncertain of the exact position of the brute, I turned off to one side, and retreated cautiously and with as little noise as possible, yet with a feeling of anxiety lest he should spring upon me unawares. But my next step showed me that the lion was otherwise engaged. Pushing aside a few leaves that obstructed my vision, I suddenly beheld a lion in the midst of an open space, crouched as if for a spring. Instinctively I threw forward the muzzle of my rifle; but