

Two-Horn the First.

YOU probably do not know much of the character of the African rhinoceros. Let it be my work to try and enlighten you. There are two or three varieties in Africa, and one of them is the most vicious and objectionable quadruped under the sun. Of my adventure with one of these creatures I will tell you later on.

I was on a shooting trip in South Africa, some years ago, and had met with fair sport at small game, but was disappointed at not coming across any of the larger species I had heard so much of. It was therefore with much pleasure I accepted an invitation to accompany a friend who was going surveying in the wilds; and, with a good commissariat and plentiful supply of ammunition on board, we had soon left the last nomadic boer's shanty behind.

Our *cortège* consisted of a light waggon—which my two shooting horses condescended to draw—my friend's waggon and sixteen oxen, his horse, a Hottentot driver (old Willem), a bushman leader, a half-breed for cook and "handy man," my own Zulu boy, and five dogs.

The latter deserve a word *en passant*. They were two pointers, Don and Jess, the progeny of an English bitch I had brought out, which had fallen a victim to climate; two young dogs crossed between a kangaroo hound and English greyhound, very fast and with good pluck, Paddy and Scot; and a boer hound, which I christened Rebel, under the following circumstances:—

On a former trip I had lost two dogs, and took a fancy to this one from seeing him hold a young ox by the nose in most approved style. He belonged to a transport driver, who did not wish to part with him, and candidly told me he was a savage; but I prevailed on him to sell. I got him to put a collar on the dog, and fasten him behind my waggon, and when we separated the poor brute fought like a fiend to get loose, and let himself be dragged for miles. I did not let him off the chain for two days, and he had already bitten one of the boys. On the third day, I let him off for a while, and was putting on his collar again, when he tackled me. It was a case of who was to be master; so, having a Kaffir stick handy, I got hold of the collar, and, though he was as strong as a calf and slippery as an eel, managed to get him down. I then pounded him till I was tired and ashamed of myself, for his eyes turned green, and he spun round like a top when I let him go. The boys said I had killed him; but after two or three buckets of water thrown over him, he came round again. He had no bones broken, though I had raised an immense bump on his head, which turned out to be one of veneration for me. By treating him kindly, and feeding him myself, we soon became good friends. I had had him now more than a year; and, though slow, I never knew him lose a wounded buck, and he had killed a hyæna single-handed—no small feat. He was the best dog I ever had, but never safe with strangers.

But I have wandered from my subject. The boers had warned us of the dangers of the lion velt, and old Willem harped continually on the same

string. There was a soreness between him and lions, at least on his side, as he had been nearly seized by one which, according to his own account, he valiantly did slay. For two days we had been travelling through a country very scarce of water, and been obliged to make long "treks," principally at night. The third day the oxen were getting very tired, and in the afternoon I saddled up to look for a halting place where there was a supply of the precious fluid.

Our route lay towards some low hills, where we were told we should find water, and where we were to camp for a day or two. About sundown I espied them, and found a large vley or swamp on the farther side. I hastened back with the good news, but found that the oxen had discovered the fact that there was water ahead, as their quickened pace showed. It was late before we halted for the night, and, after taking the precaution of filling our pots and kettles, let the thirsty oxen drink their fill. We had perforce outspanned close to the swamp, and the mosquitoes fell upon us in a solid mass; and though we, under the canvas, escaped pretty well, the niggers had a lively time of it, to judge by their exclamations under the waggon.

My first salutation after turning out for early coffee—a luxury only to be fully appreciated on the trek—was in Dutch from old Willem—

"Good morning, baas; this is a regular lion vley."

"All right, Willem," I said; "your master is going to stay here a day or two, and you and I will look them up."

"God forbid!" quoth Willem.

We moved the camp to higher ground, to get away from the "musqueteers;" and, being Sunday—which is always a *dies non* in Africa, except in urgent circumstances, such as a river rising—prepared to take things easy. By this I mean cleaning guns, airing bedding skins, &c. Game had been scarce lately; in fact, we had seen nothing but a few steinbok and ostriches—the latter very wild. Our larder was consequently low, and both dogs and niggers looked as if they would be none the worse for a good feed.

I was taking the guns to pieces, to wash them, when my friend proposed one of us should go and slay a buck. As he was not very well, I volunteered, and took the only gun that had not been unshipped—a heavy rifle, carrying a bullet of eight to the pound. Lucky for me I did so.

The hills consisted of a low range of ironstone, with spruys (watercourses) running from them into the swamp, which was a large one, about four miles long, and from half a mile to a mile in width, covered with reeds twenty feet high, at this time of year quite yellow and dry, and affording impenetrable covert. It was a hazy morning, and the mist still hung about. I took a long look round with a powerful telescope, and at length discovered a herd of game feeding on the farther side of a spruyt about a mile and a half distant. I marked them for my prey, and determined to stalk them by keeping close to the swamp, and then ascending the bed of the spruyt, by which means I expected to get an easy pot shot. I told my boy to tie up the dogs and saddle a horse, ready,

the moment he heard the report or saw the smoke, to gallop up, to follow in case of my only wounding, or carry back the game.

My friend, after wishing me good luck, turned in to have another snooze, and I started off at a Con-naught trot.

From the junction of the spruyt with the swamp to where I saw the herd feeding, I calculated to be about two miles; so, after going over a mile I ventured on a peep, and found the herd had moved towards the swamp, and were considerably nearer than I thought. The spruyt was about thirty feet wide, with a channel about four feet wide, and from six to eight feet deep in the centre, worn by the rains; between this and the banks, which were about seven feet high, there was a wide space to walk, covered with reeds and high grass.

I was plodding on, when I heard a noise in the reeds behind me, and I thought it was my boy following with the horse, having mistaken my orders. I inwardly promised him "pickles," and kept putting my hand behind me to stop him; but, the noise continuing, I turned round, and saw a sight which instinctively brought me down on one knee, with the rifle to my shoulder and my heart in my mouth at the same time. There, within ten yards of me, stood the king of the desert.

I had no time to think, further than to realize the fact that a full-grown lion was close upon me. It is no use trying to describe my feelings—I simply had none; neither fear, surprise, nor any other. When I faced about, he lay down and put his head between his paws, eyeing me intently, and I him. I had now the bed of the spruyt on my left, the camp also being on that side. I knew I would have to fire, and glanced on one side to see how deep the channel was, involuntarily full-cocking the rifle at the same time. Whether it was having the human eye removed from him, or the click of the hammer coming to full cock, I know not; but, on looking again, I saw he meant mischief by the flicking of his tail and rising of his hind quarters. I drew the foresight as fine as I could between his eyes, squeezing the trigger at the same time. A second before I fired, he raised his head. I heard a smothered sob, or rather grunt; and, under cover of the smoke, which hung, threw myself into the bed of the watercourse, and ran like a man till I came to a place where I could climb out the other side.

I loaded as quickly as I could; and it was a ticklish moment, as the reeds prevented me from seeing him. He was making a fearful row, and I did not know any moment but that he might be on me. I got out of the spruyt altogether, and saw the boy coming full tilt with all the dogs. All this time the lion was making a horrid din in the reeds, and I half hoped the heavy ball had crippled him. The dogs went into the reeds in a body; but, with the exception of Rebel, came out separately, each choosing a different point of the compass for his exit. Don and Jess never stopped, I heard, till they got under the waggon. Rebel kept baying him, and the other two dogs took heart of grace and went in again, and between the lot a nice noise was raised.

My friend now galloped up. Old Willem had been watching the herd with the telescope to tell

the boy when to start, also with an eye to the flesh-pots depending on the shot; and when he saw the smoke rise in the reeds, a long way from the game, sung out—

"The baas has fired in the spruyt; it is a lion."

Luckily W. himself thought it strange, and turned out. I told my boy to get back; but, like all his nation, he was a sportsman at heart, and begged to be allowed to stay and see the fun out. As the dogs kept baying in one place, we concluded he was crippled; so we decided on the rather risky course of both going in to give him the *coup de grâce*, and left the boy with the horses. The uproar going on was a caution, and on going in we found the lion only able to use his front paws—but how efficiently a rent in Rebel's side showed. On the dogs seeing us they rushed in with fresh vigour, and it was some little time before I could fire, W. standing by to cover me. When I did he made a spasmodic effort, and rolled over into the bed of the gully on his back, stone dead, with a bullet in his head. The rest of the boys had come up, and cautiously approached to have a look, with the exception of Willem, who stood at a respectful distance, protesting against anyone going near for half an hour, and spinning a yarn about a lion, seemingly dead, springing up and killing two men. There was some sense in what he said; but my last ball was too near his brain-pan for further mischief on his part.

The dogs were lying down licking their wounds, which were, luckily, slight, with the exception of one about four inches long in Rebel's side, which I sewed up afterwards. He licked my hand when I had finished, but I firmly believe he would have rent any one else in pieces who had ventured to touch him.

My first shot had entered just under the lower jaw when the lion raised his head, regularly raking him, and touching his spine near the kidneys. Had he not been thus crippled, none of the dogs would have got off as they did, if no worse damage had been done. He was a full-grown male, in splendid condition, with a mane as black as night, and teeth and claws very suggestive of sudden death.

We concluded he had been stalking the same herd as I was after, and followed me out of curiosity more than anything else, as, had he meant mischief at first, he could have wiped me out with a stroke of his paw when I passed him, as I must have done, and at a closer distance than I like to think of. I forgot to say that he had either sprung at the smoke, or been in the act of springing when I fired; more probably the latter, from the direction the ball took, as the marks of his claws and blood—in fact, where I killed him—were close to where I was when I fired the first shot.

We went back to the waggons to doctor Rebel, and left the boys to get the lion out of the spruyt, and to take his skin off. When I came to sit down, after fixing up Rebel's wound, I found myself perfectly unstrung, and was seized with a strong desire to cry, and to run about shouting. It took a "second's mate's nip" of peach brandy to steady me, and two or three pipes.

I have shot several lions since, though not at such close quarters, and been in worse danger on

land and by water, but have never experienced the reaction the same way. I suppose it was from going through such an ordeal for the first time, and realizing the fact that I had slain the king of beasts nearly single-handed.

During the next month I was hunting northward, with very little result, and at times I felt greatly disposed to give up my trip; but just as I was at the lowest ebb of despair, a good koodoo or an eland would fall to my gun, and my followers would rejoice. I had with me now as good a horse as ever it was my fortune to bestride—a spirited, long-maned and tailed grey, who liked nothing better than to hear my chirrup, when away he would go, *ventre à terre*, as the French say, after the first herd of antelope we encountered. I no more dreamed of sparing that grey than of sparing myself; and it was with—

But stop, I am going too fast.

I had been out one afternoon, and was returning empty-handed to the little tent and fire by my waggon, when on approaching, instead of finding the tent there as a landmark beside the curling smoke, no tent was to be seen—nothing but the waggon, and no one near.

When I rode up, I had to shout for some time before my boys came up, and meantime I had been examining the torn and trampled tent and the scattered fire.

I asked the scared-looking, trembling wretches what it all meant, and expected to hear that a herd of large animals had charged down upon them, wishing all the time that I had been there. But no. They told me that all the mischief had been done by a vicious rhinoceros, from whom they had hardly escaped with their lives; and when I seemed hardly disposed to believe, they showed me his spoor, the great three-toed hoofs being plainly indented in the soft earth, while here and there the ground was ploughed up by his horn.

"I must have you, my fine fellow," I said.

And the next morning, after shifting our quarters, I mounted, took up the spoor of the rhinoceros, and tried to track him down.

I might as well have tried to fly; and at last, sick of the self-imposed task, I alighted, secured the horse's bridle to a broken branch of a good-sized tree, and went off on foot to try and stalk some antelope. This took me a good two hours, and when I got well within reach they threw up their horns, and bounded off, to my great disgust.

"The fortune of hunting," I said to myself.

And, taking a short cut back towards the tree, I at last got pretty near; when I saw that the grey was kicking and plunging in a frightful manner, and snorting with dread.

"Soho, old boy, soho!" I cried.

But the horse did not hear me; while I hurried my steps, feeling sure he was being tormented with flies, and being in dread lest he should break the reins and gallop off.

Guess my astonishment—there and then, as I got within some sixty or seventy yards, I saw the horse rear right up, tugging at the reins, and fighting hard with its fore feet as it snorted and whinnied most loudly. My astonishment, though, was not at the

horse, but at what I saw to his left, as I quickly cocked my rifle and brought it to my shoulder; for, as the poor grey reared up, a great, vicious-looking rhinoceros was charging at him horn down, as if to rip, and uttering a strange, squeaking noise.

There was one sharp crack as I fired, and heard the bullet tell just behind the animal's shoulder; but I was too late, for in an instant the beast had caught the poor grey in the flank, ripping him horribly, and throwing him over on his side, as, in continuance of its charge, the rhinoceros went on in its blind fury for twenty yards, then fell on its knees, rolled over, and died—shot through the heart.

I was hardly thinking of the beast, though, then; for I had hurried up to my poor horse's side, loading as I went, to find it lying shivering in a pool of blood, and so horribly injured by the savage beast's horn that it was a merciful act to put my rifle to its head and fire, when, with a faint sigh, the poor brute raised its head once and then let it fall, for it was dead.

Dead as the rhinoceros, which did not stir when I went close up and sent another bullet through its head, receiving a fine trophy in its horn; but that day's work spoiled my sport, and I soon afterwards made my way to Natal.

A Dark Mamma.

THE following colloquy comes from an unknown source:

"Ephrahem, come to your mudder, boy. Whar you been?"

"Playin' wid de white folks' chilum."

"You is, hey? See hyar, chile, you'll broke yer old mudder's heart an' brung her gray hairs to de grave wid yer recklunness an' carryin's on wid evil assoc'yashons. Habn't I raised you up in de way you should ought to go?"

"Yethum."

"Habn't I bin kine an' tender wid you an' treated you like my own chile, which you is?"

"Yethum."

"Habn't I reezoned wid you, an' prayed wid you?"

"Yethum."

"An' isn't I yer nater'l detector and guarden fo' de law?"

"Yethum."

"Well, den, do you s'pose I'se a-gwine to hab yer morals ruptured by de white trash? No, sah! Get in de house dis instep; an' if I eber cotch you 'municatin' wid de white trash any mo', niggah, I'll broke yer black head wid a brick."

At the presentation of a pistol to a Connecticut corporal, the orator apostrophized as follows:—

"Corporal—My heart is full. These times try the souls of us all, as well as our pockets. My words must be few, and to the purpose. Take this weapon and go in. Say you will. Resolve that it is a big thing, and that you can see it. Shoot at it. Smite them, hip and thigh, and pay no regard to camphine or brickbats. But beware of old Bourbon. Do your duty, John. Keep out of draughts. Don't go off at half-cock, and keep your pistol pointed from you."