

# TALES OUT OF SCHOOL

BY

FRANK R. STOCKTON

*NEW EDITION.*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,  
1916

# TALES OUT OF SCHOOL.

---

## COLONEL MYLES' ADVENTURES IN AFRICA AND INDIA.

HE had shot many a buffalo. Indeed he sometimes thought that he had shot too many, for out on our Western prairies it was often impossible for him to use the meat, or even to take the skins of the animals that fell before his generally unerring rifle. And the Colonel was very much opposed to the useless slaughter of wild animals. If the buffaloes did any harm while alive or could be put to any use when dead it was all very well to shoot them. Otherwise, not.

And yet, whenever Colonel Myles saw a buffalo he could not help shooting at it, if he happened to have his gun with him.

So he made up his mind that he would go abroad and hunt animals that ought to be killed.

Now you understand how the Colonel happened to go to Africa. His sporting experiences did not commence as soon as he set foot

on "Afric's burning shores," and indeed it was several months before he could make all the arrangements for a trip through those portions of the country where wild and savage beasts, worthy the bullets of such a hunter, were to be found.

Some parts of his journey were very pleasant, even when he saw no game, because of the novel modes of traveling.

For instance he was carried many miles in a sort of portable lounge which was borne on the heads of four negroes. The Colonel lay at ease on this elevated conveyance, which had a little fence on each side to keep him from rolling off, and hoops so arranged that when it rained or the sun shone too brightly, a canopy might be thrown over him without interfering with his comfort.

Here he could lie and read or smoke while his swift-footed bearers carried him along at a rate which would have obliged a horse to hurry himself considerably in order to keep up with them.

Another time, accompanied by a number of negro soldiers, and preceded by a set of fantastic savages who danced before him with horns on their heads and shields and spears in their hands, he rode for many miles upon a well trained native bull.

This steed was not very fast, but he had great endurance and traveled very easily and pleasantly, without seeming to mind in the least the black fellows who leaped and shouted in front of him in a way that would have frightened the soberest old horse that ever hauled a sand cart.

Perhaps the bull knew that these men were merely trying to impress upon the mind of the Colonel that they were wonderfully brave, and that with their spears and their yells they could scare away any enemy that might be encountered, while in fact a white man with a couple of pistols could have frightened them out of their wits in about half a minute.

But whether the bull knew this or not, he paid no attention to the

dancing braves, and carried the Colonel faithfully for many a long mile.

But Colonel Myles did not always travel on bulls or in hammocks. After a time he found an admirable horse, on which he rode on many a hunting expedition.

Among the first large animals he hunted—he did not count deer and such small game—were rhinoceroses, of which there were a great many in that part of the country.

One of his first hunts of the kind began in rather a curious manner.

He had heard that there were rhinoceroses to be found in a certain hilly part of the country, and, accompanied by two negroes, he started on his horse quite early in the morning.

Reaching some very rough ground, he thought it better to climb over the rocks on foot, so he tied his horse to the branch of a tree and set off with his companions to reconnoitre. They walked up and down through the bushes, and over gullies, searching for the big animals they were after, but not a horn of one of them could they see.

At last, returning somewhat discouraged, they reached the top of a little hill, and there their eyes were greeted with an unexpected sight.

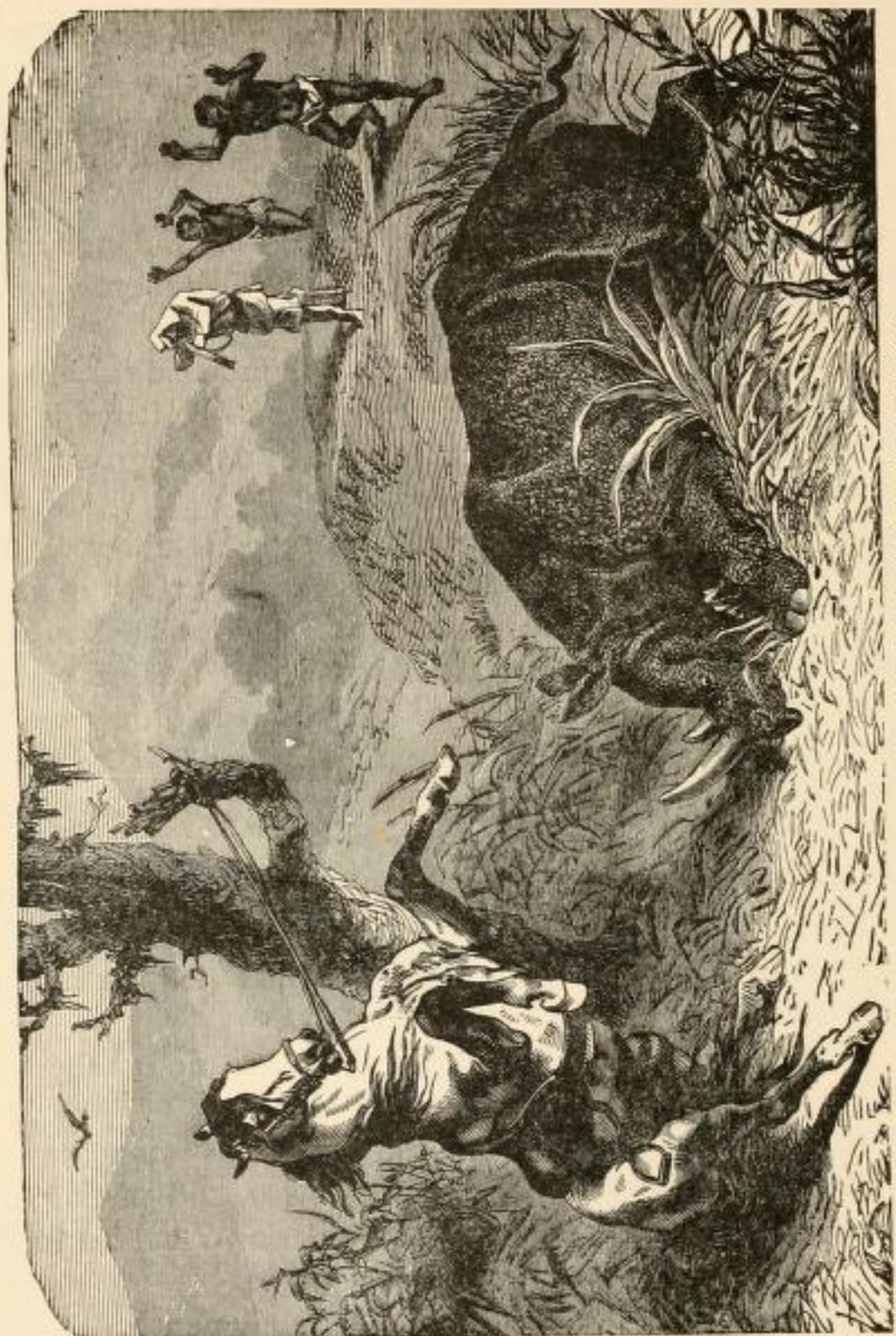
They saw a rhinoceros, a big fellow too, but he was not hunted—he was hunting!

And what was especially startling was that he was hunting the Colonel's horse!

The great beast had caught sight of the horse, tied to the tree, and was charging down upon him at full speed.

When they arrived on the scene, the rhinoceros was quite near the horse, who was rearing and pitching with terror, and pulling furiously at his bridle. The rhinoceros had his head down and his long sharp horn seemed to be almost under the poor horse.

Another second and the horse would certainly perish.



THE RHINOCEROS SEEMED ALMOST UNDER THE POOR HORSE.

But in that second the Colonel's rifle was at his shoulder and a sharp shot rang out in the air.

The ball struck the great beast just behind his shoulder. It did not kill him, but it stopped his onward course. He turned toward the hill, and at that moment the horse tore himself loose and galloped away.

The rhinoceros now advanced towards the three men. But he found them very different kind of game from a poor horse tied to a tree.

Again the Colonel's rifle rang out and Mr. Thick-hide rolled over dead.

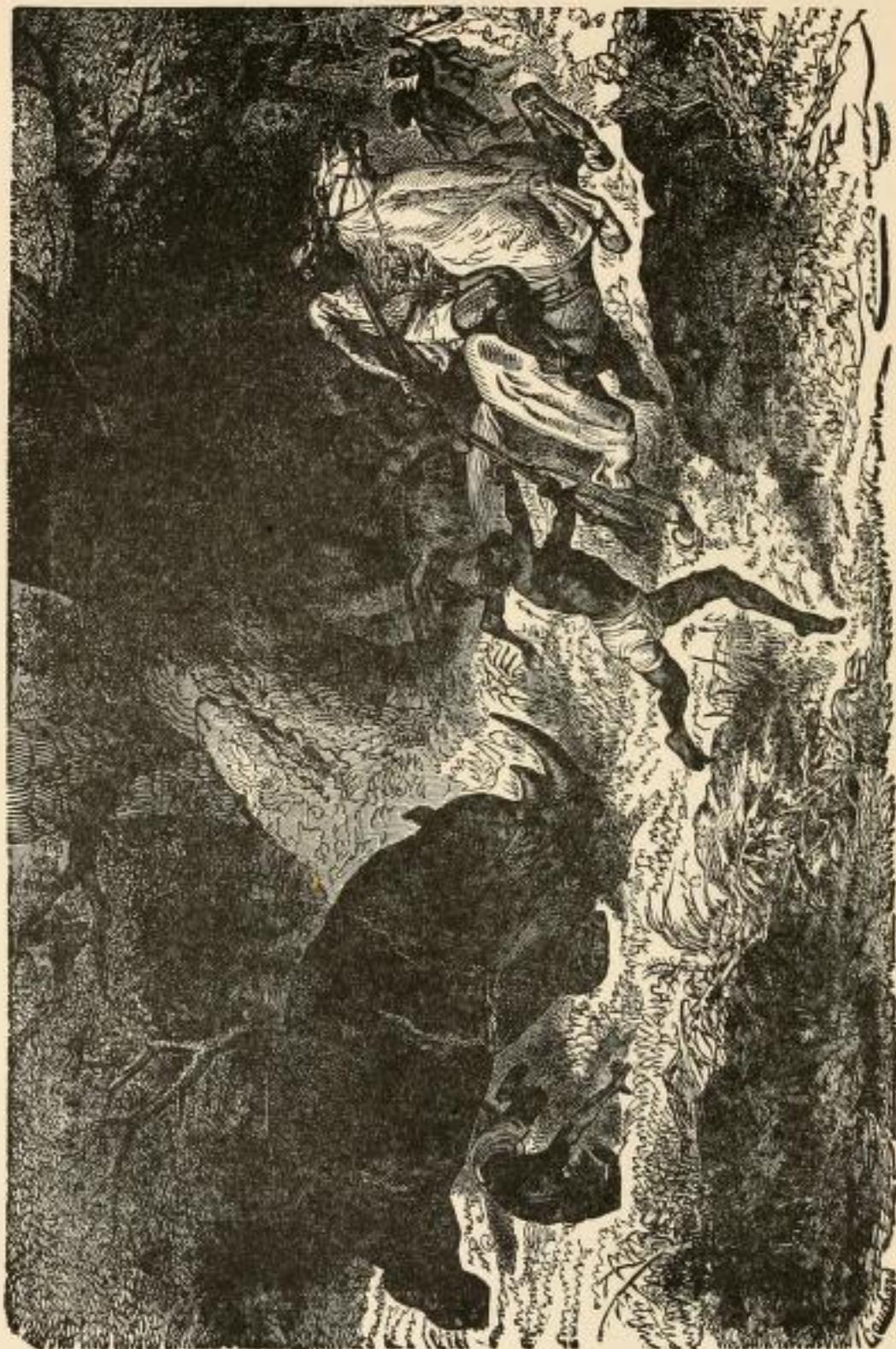
This was the first rhinoceros Colonel Myles had ever shot, and he was proud of his achievement, as well he might be, for it is not an easy thing to kill a rhinoceros.

If you do not hit him in exactly the right place you might as well fire at a brick wall.

But Colonel Myles was a capital shot, although he had never had such difficult creatures to shoot as this great animal which now lay at his feet. Perhaps his alligator hunts in Florida had taught him how to aim at iron-clad game, but there is a difference between shooting alligators and rhinoceroses. If you miss the alligator there is generally an end of the matter, for he will plunge into the water as soon as he can, and disappear. But if you miss the rhinoceros he will plunge after you, and if you cannot disappear very rapidly there may be an end of the matter, but in the wrong way.

The horse did not run very far, and one of the swift-footed negroes soon caught him.

This was not the only occasion when a rhinoceros proved a very dangerous animal to hunt. One day the Colonel was out with a large party. One man besides himself was mounted on a horse, and there were half-a-dozen negroes on foot, well armed with guns.



THE RHINOCEROS AFTER THE COLONEL.

For some time they scoured the country without finding any signs of a rhinoceros, but at last the tracks of one were discovered, and he was followed up to his retreat.

When Colonel Myles first caught sight of him he was standing quietly under a tree. Our hunter took a good aim at him and fired, but just as he fired, his horse, apparently bitten by a fly, gave a start, and the ball struck the rhinoceros on one of his heavy flaps of skin, with just enough effect to make him turn around to see who was there.

Then the Colonel fired again—he had a double-barreled rifle—and this time the ball struck the rhinoceros fair on the nose, and it made him mad. Without stopping to consider the matter, he turned squarely round and charged down straight upon the hunters.

The Colonel had no time to reload his gun, so he put spurs to his horse and dashed away as fast as he could go.

The other man on horseback did not wait for the savage beast to come after him but galloped off in another direction. As to the negroes, they seemed to forget that they had guns, or else they thought that if the Colonel could not hit the beast in the right spot there was no use in their trying to do it. At any rate they took to their heels. As the rhinoceros dashed on, he ran right over one negro, knocking him heels over head, and he came after the Colonel and his horse at a rate that gave good reason to expect that in a minute or two he would get his horn under the horse and toss him over.

But the horse was a good one and he kept ahead of the beast until his rider loaded again. Then the Colonel turned and as he was so near the rhinoceros he put a ball into him that rolled him over dead.

This was one of the most dangerous hunting expeditions in which Colonel Myles ever engaged. Had his horse been a poor one, or had he stumbled, there would have been no more hunts in Africa—or anywhere else—for our hero.

He soon had another rhinoceros hunt, which was not dangerous, but very peculiar.

He started out with four negroes on horseback, and none of them were armed with anything but the swords of the country, which are not exactly the things with which to cut sheet-iron, or rhinoceros hides.

The Colonel was well mounted, and of course had his rifle. Before long two rhinoceroses were started up together, and they rushed out of the bushes so suddenly and dashed away in such a frightened way that the Colonel could not get a shot at them. Whichever way they ran there was always a negro between his gun and the flying beast.

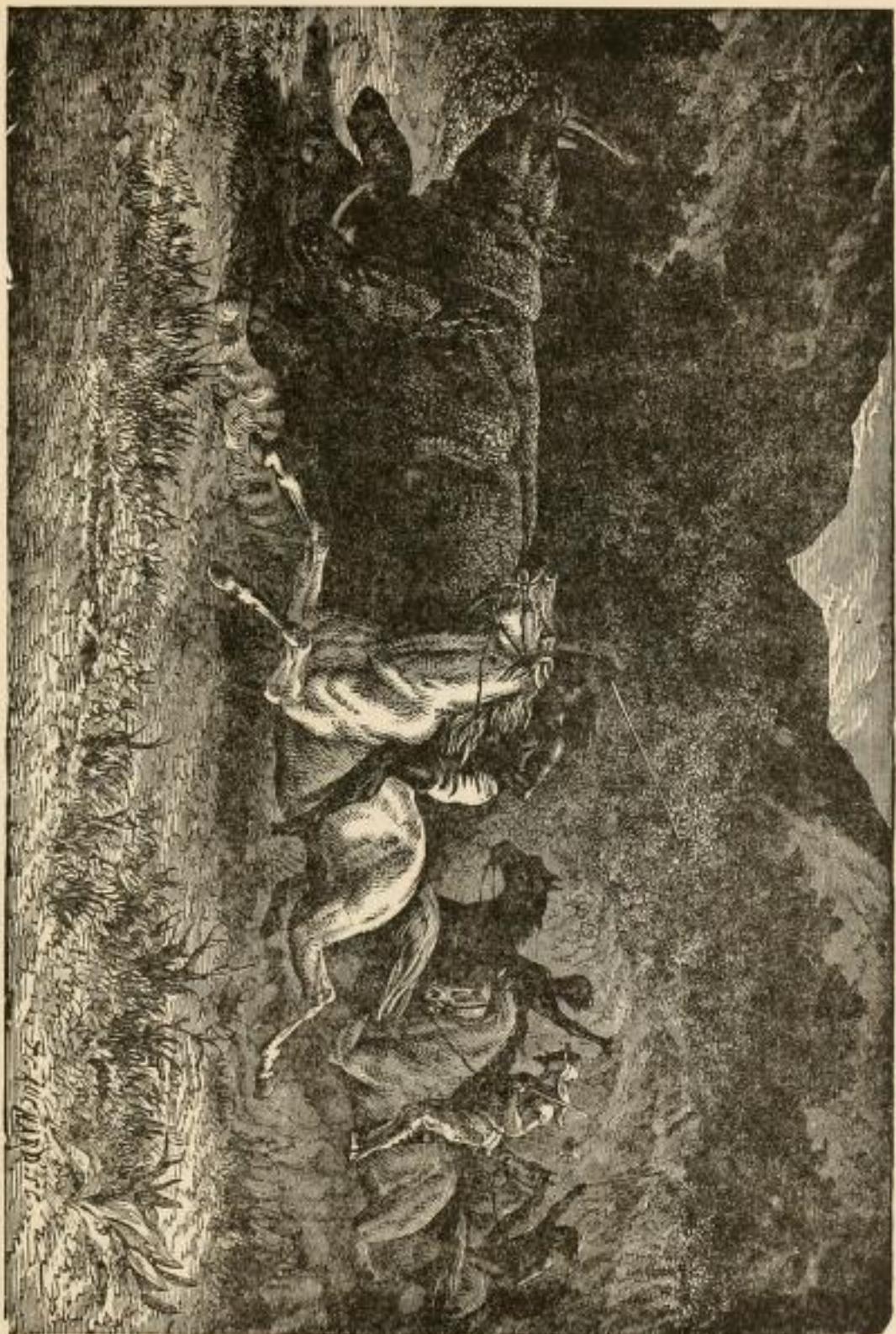
Perceiving that the rhinoceroses were trying their best to get away, the negroes became very brave, and rode after them as if they intended to chop them up into little pieces, if they could only get some fair cracks at them.

In fact they were so enthusiastic, and kept so close to the rhinoceroses that it was impossible for the Colonel to fire at the animals without running the risk of killing a black man, and so on they went as hard as they all could gallop. The rhinoceroses seemed like a couple of great fat hogs, but they could run famously, and it was as much as the hunters could do to keep up with them.

One darkey kept ahead of the rest, and quite close to the flying beasts, and he whacked away at their thick hides, with no other effect than to make them run faster.

The other negroes shouted and yelled as if they were trying to frighten the rhinoceroses ; and, at any rate, to make them run as fast as they could.

The Colonel held his gun ready to fire if he could get around where he could have a fair shot, but his shouts to the negroes to fall back and leave the beasts to him were totally disregarded. They had found some game that was afraid of them, and they were going to chase it, as long as it would run away.



CHASED A PAIR OF RHINOCEROSSES.

The result of it all was that the rhinoceroses ran into some heavy brushwood where the Colonel's horse could not follow them, and he did not get even one shot at them.

It was very disappointing to him, after having been so close to the game. But he made up his mind that he would never again go hunting when there were mounted negroes in the party. They put themselves forward entirely too prominently.

These negroes were excellent fellows to run after any thing which was not apt to run after them.

The Colonel once saw a very funny incident which exhibited this quality in the natives in a very striking manner.

In a village where Colonel Myles was staying, making arrangements for a hunt, there was a large elephant, which belonged to another village some forty miles away.

This elephant was rather an unruly beast, and did not at all like his new quarters, or the new driver who had charge of him.

He seemed to be home-sick, and he gave a great deal of trouble by his uneasy disposition. One day he broke loose, and no sooner did he find himself at liberty than he determined to go home.

So off he started at the top of his speed, but he had not gone far before his flight was discovered, and six or eight negroes, snatching up their swords, immediately gave chase.

They were all on foot, but they could run so fast that they soon caught up with the elephant.

But then all their trouble commenced. He wouldn't stop!

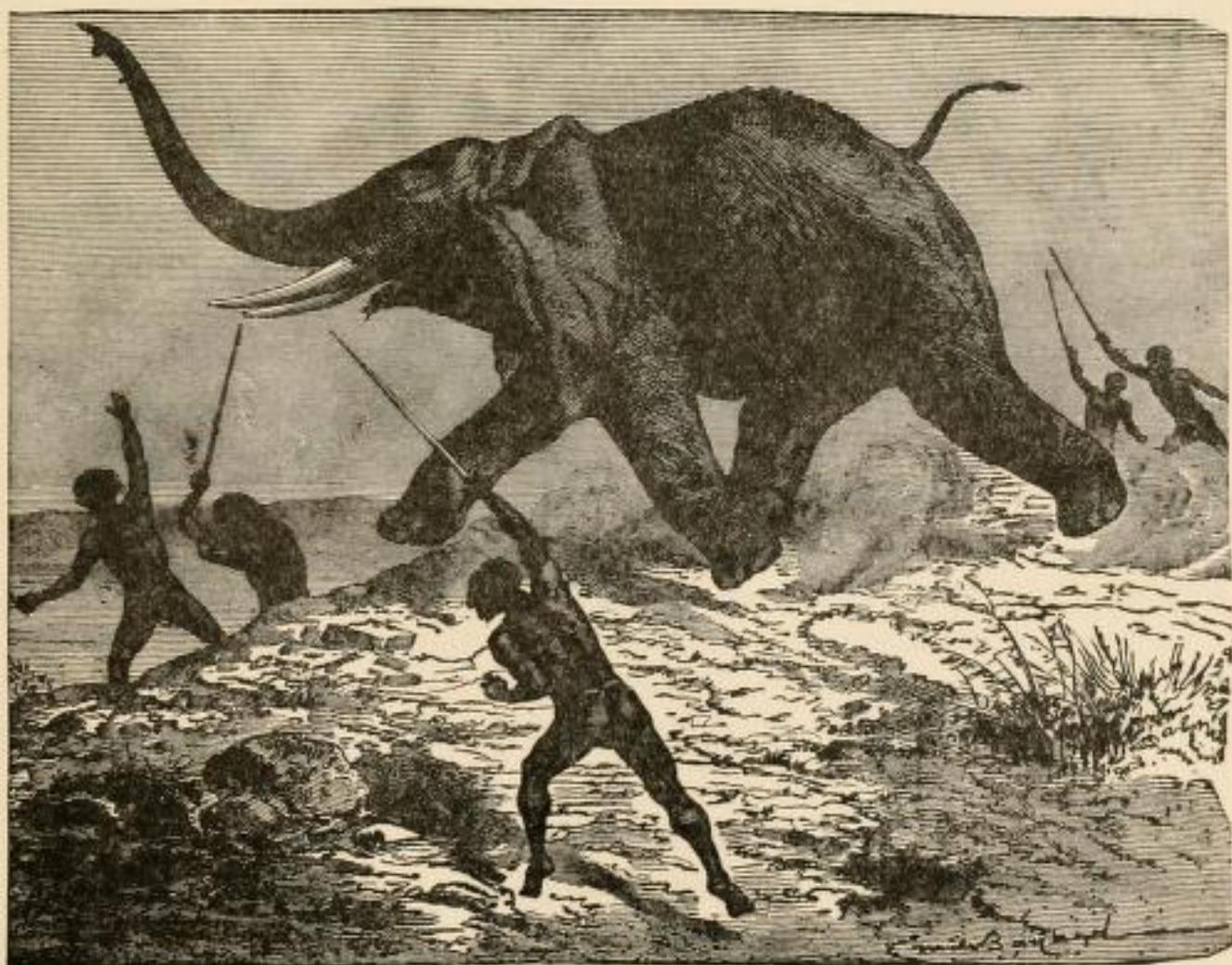
They shouted, they yelled, they brandished their swords, and running before the great beast, they tried their best to make him stop.

But the elephant, with his trunk and his tail in the air, strode along at a tremendous pace. He did not seem to like his company, for he bellowed loudly as he ran, but they could no more stop him than a lot

of spring chickens could stop you if you took it in your head to run home some day in recess-time.

The negroes sprang in front of the elephant, until it seemed as if he certainly would run over them, and they dashed at him from all sides, waving their swords in his face as they shouted to him to halt, but he kept bravely on until the Colonel lost sight of the party.

Together, they ran four or five miles, and then the negroes thought they might as well give up that chase as a bad job, and the elephant went on to his home unmolested.



THE ELEPHANT WANTS TO GO HOME.