the men indicate excitement. They pull as if rowing in a regatta.

Soon they are near enough to be individually recognised; when it is seen that neither of the two officers is in the boat; nor the coxswain, one of the oarsmen having taken his place at the tiller.

As the boat draws nearer, and the faces of the two men seated in the stern-sheets can be distinguished, there is observed upon them an expression which none can interpret. No one tries. All stand silently waiting till the cutter comes alongside, and sweeping past the bows, brings up on the frigate's starboard beam, under the main-chains.

The officers move forward along the gangway, and stand looking over the bulwarks; while the men come crowding aft as far as permitted. The curiosity of all receives a check—an abrupt disappointment. There is no news from the barque, save the meagre scrap contained in the lieutenant's order: 'Bring the doctor.'

Beyond this the cutter's crew only know that they have seen the hairy men. Seen and heard them, though without understanding a word of what they said. Two had sprung upon the shrouds, and shouted at the cutter's people, as if scolding them off!

The tale spreads through the frigate, fore and aft, quick as a train of powder ignited. It is everywhere talked of, and commented on. On the quarter, it is deemed strange enough; while forward, it further intensifies the belief in something supernatural.

The tars give credulous ear to their comrade, again repeating what he said in the boat, and in the self-same words: 'Shipmates, we may never see that lieutenant again, nor the young reefer, nor the old cox'n—never!'

The boding speech seems a prophecy already realised. Scarce has it passed the sailor's lips, when a cry rings through the ship that startles all aboard, thrilling them more intensely than ever.

While the men have been commenting upon the message brought back from the barque, and the officers are taking steps to hasten its execution—the doctor getting out his instruments, with such medicines as the occasion seems to call for—the strange vessel has been for a time unthought of.

The cry just raised recalls her, causing them to rush towards the frigate's side, and once more bend their eyes on the barque.

No, not *on* her; only in the direction where she was last seen. For, to their astonishment, *the polacca has disappeared!*

NATURAL HISTORY AND SPORT OF SOUTH-EASTERN AFRICA.

For those to whom the very name of Game acts as a war-cry, who love danger for daring's sake, and who prefer the skin of some wild beast spread under the open canopy of heaven to the softest couch modern luxuriousness can provide, the Honourable W. H. Drummond's book, entitled *The Game and Natural History of South-eastern Africa*, must prove an acceptable boon. The subject of the natural history of Africa and its game is one full of interest, and a few facts in connection with it we will now lay before our readers. The ground chosen by Mr Drummond as his hunting-field extended over a wide area from 26° to 29° S. lat.; and he gives us the experience of five years, during which he rarely slept under a roof.

But even in these wild districts, still probably the finest game-country in the world, we find savage beasts like savage races diminishing at the approach of the white man. As our colonies spread, and our colonists penetrate farther and farther inland, the wild animals retreat, or become exterminated. Nor does this cause alone operate to diminish their numbers. The greed of the hunters brings its own punishment, as in the instances of the eland and the elephant. In the former case, the hide being very valuable, and the flesh extremely good eating, the hunters will occasionally kill a whole herd, bull and calf, without a thought for the future. While, as regards the elephant, the improvident greed for present wealth from the sale of ivory, becomes a much more serious affair, involving as it does the ultimate, indeed speedy, extirpation of this interesting and valuable animal. While sympathising with our author, and lamenting the wanton destruction of the eland and elephant, let us stand in imagination on the banks of that Unkomati River, in the far interior of Eastern Africa, where our traveller encamped in the summer of 1870; and with him let us watch the curious habits and customs of the game, which always come at early dawn to the nearest river or water-hole to drink, and perhaps to bathe. Few positions could well be more full of thrilling interest than some that Mr Drummond took, when, hid in the thick branches of a great cabbage-tree, he watched through long nights the various herds of wild animals as they congregated round some pool—rhinoceroses, buffaloes, hyenas, antelopes, all, almost within touching distance, following their time-honoured customs, unconscious of the observant eye of man; while in the fissure of a neighbouring mountain some great owl would entertain himself, and possibly his wife and family, by imitating the cry of the leopard. Many an interesting point in the natural history of these animals was made plain to the observer during these vigils—their relations to each other in the matter of fear or confidence, courage or cowardice. A herd of Koodoo (*Antilope strepsiceros*) stepping silently down to the water with ears intent to catch the faintest sound of danger, would drink, and then as silently retire; while the larger game would often seem unconscious of each other's presence—'a troop of lions sometimes walking past some old rhinoceros bull with its mouth buried in the pool, and laying themselves down, lap the water within a few yards of me.' Or 'some grumbling, ill-tempered *tepetyaice*, or two-horned rhinoceros (*R. bicornis*), would come in sight, ploughing up the ground in long furrows, as it pawed it with its foot after the manner of savage bulls, but hardly making the antelopes stir, as he walked past them to the centre of the pool.' But meanwhile great herds of gnu and zebra, and sometimes eland, would stand almost motionless, too thirsty to graze, yet not daring to approach the water, till thirst conquered prudence.

The eager observing of wild animated nature under a starlit sky must have had a wonderful fascination; but when, under a heavy storm, flashes of lightning alone light up and reveal the scene,

the imagination must be even more powerfully stimulated. 'The thickest of the storm is the time lions generally make their appearance.' The power of absolute noiselessness is essential to any one who would become a great and successful hunter; the rustling of a leaf or the breaking of a twig may be fatal. But it must be an art difficult of attainment when penetrating jungle so thick that it can only be traversed on hands and knees; or when, as in the search for buffaloes, the way may lie through tunnels of reeds, in any part of which the animal may lie *perdu;* or, worse still, perhaps, when searching for wounded prey in those marvellous vegetable caves formed of creepers climbing round the thorn-trees, which Mr Drummond tells us are often so regular in their formation as to appear at first sight as if they could not be the work of Nature, but must have been trained by the hand of man. But though, doubtless, the danger possesses in itself a decided charm, European hunters are generally accompanied by natives, whose wonderful skill in spooring—namely, detecting and following the trail of different animals with unerring accuracy—is almost incredible; persistently will they follow some wounded animal, often after long hours of interval, through thicket and open, on through more thicket and open, rarely failing to come up with him at last. Buffaloes, which are the great object of the huntsman's rifle, would, but for the noiselessness above alluded to, generally receive notice of the enemy's approach from the rhinoceros bird, which perches sometimes in whole flocks upon their backs, searching for the great grass ticks on which it subsists, and utters its loud 'tcha, tcha' the moment it detects cause for alarm. This bird is, of course, a great difficulty to the huntsman, since, from its elevated vantage-ground on the top, say, of one of the buffalo's horns, it can survey the scene for a considerable distance. Buffaloes are essentially gregarious; but occasionally the huntsman comes upon a 'rogue,' or solitary bull, that has been worsted in the battle of life, and is an exile self-made, or outcast from his herd. Mr Drummond thinks he is generally one who has been worsted in the fights which are continually taking place; anyhow, this Timon of the jungle is invariably an ill-tempered brute to have to deal with.

It is a curious but well ascertained fact that the dangerousness of animals is by no means in proportion to their size—'the smallest species of leopard, lion, rhinoceros, and crocodile, all being the most savage.' Mr Drummond notices this, and also that no two buffaloes even in the same herd are ever exactly alike, or two pair of horns of precisely the same shape. Dr Schweinfurth has also observed this with regard to the central African hartebeest and eland. The remarkable strength of the buffalo is shewn as often in the way he quietly makes a path for himself through the jungle and thick forests, as it is when charging his enemies. Generally speaking, the buffalo does not charge until attacked, and a shot well aimed at the forehead of the cow is almost always fatal, as it is also behind the ear. A bull, on the contrary, is nearly if not quite invulnerable in the forehead, on account of the strength and thickness of bone. There is one vulnerable spot about half an inch just above the eyes, where the bones join, but not one hunter in a hundred succeeds in bringing down an animal from a shot aimed at this spot. Quickness of observation is essential to the safety as well as success of the hunter.

We have alluded to the wonderful skill of the African in following the trail of the animals he hunts. The requirements of their daily life are such as to sharpen this faculty to a curious point; but we may trust a Scotchman to equal, if not excel them, when any train of reasoning has to be brought to bear upon the subject. Thus, on one occasion, Mr Drummond and two native hunters started in pursuit of a wounded rhinoceros; and after agreeing that one African should accompany him, while the other kept on a parallel line on the opposite side, they entered the thicket. Soon, however, the low whistle of the solitary hunter brought the others to his side, and they found him bending over the fresh print of a rhinoceros's foot. Was it the one they were in search of? became the question, no one particularly desiring to be giving chase to two rhinoceroses at once. Mr Drummond quickly set the question at rest, having previously observed that one of the toes of the wounded animal was unusually small, and that this was undoubtedly the footprint of the same. Those who have given much attention to the natural history of these monsters know how difficult it is to determine how many distinct species are to be found in Africa. Mr Drummond mentions four—two of the so-called white, and two of the black, but objects to this distinction of black and white as misleading. He distinctly states that 'all rhinoceroses are of the same colour—a peculiar shade of brown, or if any difference does exist, it being in *R. bicornis* possessing a tinge of red.' He says, that to different observers in different localities they appear doubtless to be of different colours, but he believes all such cases may be referred to outward circumstances, such as the position of the sun, the kind of mud they have been rolling in, or to the age and sex of the animal. In exemplification of this he mentions having 'watched a bull of the *R. simus* trotting past in the full glare of the mid-day sun, when it has appeared almost white, while, after following the same animal up, and finding it feeding, with the long shadows of evening on it, its colour has then seemed to be as it really is, a deep brown.' To the four species already known to science as *R. bicornis*, *R. Keitloa*, *R. simus*, and *R. Oswellii*, Mr Drummond would put in the claim of the *Kulumane* to be regarded as a distinct species, 'though it has not yet received a distinct name or recognition from naturalists.' And he believes he can fully prove that claim. Of all the species, *R. bicornis* is the smallest, most savage, and most to be dreaded. Mr Drummond says he considers it the most dangerous of all African game, often vicious even when unprovoked; an instance of which occurred one night just as the hunting-party were comfortably ensconced round their camp-fire, at which the shoulder and legs of an antelope were roasting. A sudden succession of puffs and the heavy footfall of an animal caused every one to spring to his feet, and betake himself to a tree: this was the work of a moment. In ten seconds the camp-fire was trampled and scattered in all directions, water calabash overturned, blankets burned, and everything that could be got at destroyed by 'the trampling squealing beast.' We may be sure he was not let off easily. He succumbed at last. When wounded, these animals will often wait with the

utmost patience the pursuit of their foe, and then rush at him; and when they do catch an unfortunate being, says Mr Drummond, they knock him down and knead him with their feet, returning again and again, till nothing but a shapeless mass remains, uttering all day their shrill cry of rage. So difficult is the rhinoceros to kill with the spear (the native weapon), that one of the largest native regiments coming across one unexpectedly, the animal charged it; and four men were killed, besides others wounded, and a thousand spears pierced the huge monster's body, before it fell.

One of the difficulties encountered in tracking game arises from the presence of the honey-bird, whose attentions to the hunter are more pertinacious than pleasant, 'the game recognising their cry as denoting the human presence.' On one occasion, Mr Drummond, pestered by the little creature, turned and followed it; at the end of half a mile, it made a peculiar flutter, such as he had formerly seen it do when pointing out a big snake. He approached with the greatest caution, expecting to see a leopard, but found instead a hunter in his employ lying fast asleep.

Among the most noticeable of the fast-diminishing game of Eastern Africa stands the eland, as conspicuous for its beauty as the rhinoceros for its ugliness. The practice of killing them from horseback, in order to secure a larger number for the demands of the market, is so quickly reducing their numbers, that in a few years they will be difficult to find at all. They are beautiful and peaceful creatures, and their gradual extirpation seems a great mistake. Dr Schweinfurth describes them as having short sleek hair of a bright yellow tan colour, and says that in every district through which he passed, he observed their skin to be always marked with well-defined stripes. Mr Drummond, in common with other naturalists, says there is but one species, but two varieties—'the common and the striped, the latter found exclusively in South Africa, and gradually lessening in numbers, until, in Central Africa, it entirely gives way to the former.' The common kind, he says, exactly resembles the other, except in wanting the markings, and being decidedly inferior in size—the great striped cows rivalling the young bulls of the other variety in their immense proportions. An old blue bull will weigh from fourteen to fifteen hundred pounds. One custom commonly observed among these animals strikes us as the result of at least a very high order of instinct. When one of their number is wounded, and the rest startled, the herd retreats, but halts at intervals, waiting for their wounded companion; at such times, even allowing the hunter to approach very near, rather than desert the injured member of their community. And it is only the stronger instinct of self-preservation which at last compels them to move on without him. A similar instance of clanship, amounting to something strikingly akin to sorrow for bereavement, is recorded of the zebra, of which we read, that in any herd, when one of their number is killed, the rest utter a melancholy wail—a wail never taken up by the other herds which may be about, but uttered exclusively by the one which has lost one of its number.

As before hinted, elephants, through the greed of the hunters, are in many places becoming nearly extinct. There is one point of difference between the Asiatic and the African elephant of real importance to the hunter: 'in India and Ceylon, the forehead presents a certain mark, while in Africa it is quite impervious.' An elephant charging with his ears spread like 'studding-sails,' his trunk over his head, and trumpeting loudly, must be anything but a despicable foe to encounter. But its great weight prevents it from turning quickly, and the hunter once gaining higher ground, has the decided advantage. Some elephants have a bad habit of getting tipsy on the fruit of a particular tree, and in that condition the natives dread them. On the whole, Mr Drummond rather prefers them in that state, on the principle, that it is safer to quarrel with a drunken man than a sober one. But the game we have enumerated is far from being all that falls to the African huntsman's bag: leopards, to be dreaded more for the virus of their bite, than for any man-eating propensities, often so falsely attributed to them—cowardly, treacherous, and savage, yet so valuable for their skins as to be prey eagerly sought; lions, familiar to us from many a traveller's tale; antelopes of every variety, from the little African klepspringer, so like the chamois of the Swiss mountains, to the noble hyala, the great drawback to the pursuit of which is, that 'hyala-shooting and fever are all but synonymous.' Nor must we forget the little Blue Buck or Pete (*Perpurilla*), the smallest antelope in the world, being 'considerably less, as well as much lighter than a hare, with tiny straight horns, scarcely peeping over the little tuft of hair on its forehead.' One of the special pleasures attendant on the shooting of this little animal is, that it leads the sportsman into the very recesses of the African forest. It does not take a very vivid imagination to picture how much he may easily learn from and of Nature there, as he passes, in the cool of the early dawn, under the thick trees, with their wondrous foliage and rich network of creepers, a wild waste of beauty, on which, as if in mockery, some savage old baboon looks silently down; or utters, if he detects the intruder, even though he be 'a man and a brother,' a hoarse bark of alarm.

A LEGEND OF THE THAMES.

'FATHER,' said Ned Moffatt, 'Charley and I have been having a day's fishing in the Thames, and the young fellow Banks, who took us out in the punt, was *such* a character! I'm sure you would have liked him. He told us all sorts of stories about the place, and the people, and the fish, and all about himself when a boy, and how he had been a teetotaler all his life, and that the spot near the weir where we fished for barbel was called Marcus' Deep.—Why, father, are you ill?'

'I shall be well directly, Ned. Let Malcomb take away the dessert, and throw open one of the windows. There, there; I am better now.'

Mr Moffatt was a retired West India merchant, a widower with two sons, for whom he seemed to live, and they returned his love with all the fulness of filial affection. They were home for the holidays from Harrow, and their father was incessantly devising schemes for their pleasure during the few days left of their vacation.

'And was Charley as pleased with his sport and the fishermen as you were, Ned? What did you catch?'