

# ADVENTURES

ON THE

# HIGH MOUNTAINS

ROMANTIC INCIDENTS & PERILS  
OF TRAVEL, SPORT, AND EXPLORATION  
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

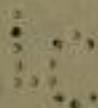
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*WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS*



PHILADELPHIA  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

LONDON: SEELEY & CO. LIMITED

1908

[1907]



## CHAPTER III

### ON THE WAY TO SRINAGAR

Mr. Daniell, a noted artist, travels in India, three-quarters of a century ago, in company of a clergyman friend—Through the mountains on the way to Srinagar—The Coaduwar Ghaut—Bad tidings from other travellers met—Mountains on fire—The conflagration extinguished by a deluge—A huge rhinoceros on the path—The artist coolly sketches the beast—An escort arrives from the Rajah of Srinagar—A land swarming with dangerous beasts—Trouble with the Rajah's men—The effect of a sound thrashing—The mountain torrents and their dangers—A man whirled off by one—Palanquins with jointed poles—At the bottom of an awful defile—The stars in broad daylight—A memorable and terrifying thunderstorm—A portmanteau dropped into an abyss—Its plucky rescue at the risk of a man's life—A frail rope-bridge and its terrors—An elk shot—A shooting-party—A bear suddenly appears—Its hostility—"Don't fire!"—A novel plan carried out by the natives—Bear enticed into a tree, then shot into space, as if from a catapult—The tiger country at length reached—One of the brutes reported to be about—A tiger-trap—A fall into the pit—Royal rage of the baffled beast—Desperate attempts to escape—Fearful yells—Seven bullets required to give the tiger his quietus.

It is now almost exactly three-quarters of a century since Mr. William Daniell, a noted artist in his day and a Royal Academician, went on his travels to India. He was accompanied by Mr. Caunter, a clergyman, and the two friends spared no pains to see the great Eastern



## TRAVELLING IN INDIA

peninsula thoroughly. They visited many a notable city, but did not neglect the wilder parts of the country. They traversed interminable plains, and threaded awful mountain passes and gorges; now they were ferried across the wide waters of lordly rivers, and now they were risking their lives in the passage of some frightful mountain torrent.

Not the least interesting of their experiences were those that accompanied a journey to Srinagar, far away among the remotest fastnesses of the stupendous mountains of the north. No reader needs to be told that so far back as the early part of the nineteenth century India was not so well provided as it is to-day with magnificent high roads, fine bridges, wayside inns, and other resting-places for adventurous travellers. Moreover, the wilder parts of the country were often very unsafe, except for a numerous and well-armed company.

As our travellers entered the Coaduwar Ghaut, and thus the mountains proper, they received from men they met a dismal report as to the difficulties of the mountain district before them, and they were especially discouraged by the news that the snow had already begun to fall. Plucking up their courage, nevertheless, Mr. Daniell and Mr. Caunter kept on their way. They had scarcely cleared the first narrow glen when they were surprised and alarmed to see apparently the whole range of mountains before them in a blaze. "The fire swept up their sides to the extent of several miles, undulating like the agitated waves of the ocean when reddened by the slanting beams of the setting sun. It was like an ignited sea, exhibiting an effect at once new and fearful."



## SKETCHING A RHINOCEROS

The travellers could hardly be said to be in any real danger, situated, as they were, at the bottom of a deep ravine, along which tumbled a brawling torrent. They learnt that these mountain fires are often caused by the swaying of the tall and dry bamboos, the violent and long-continued friction at last kindling a flame. The conflagration was extinguished as suddenly as it had begun, a mighty deluge of rain coming on, and drowning the flames with its floods.

An adventure of a different sort soon came their way. They were in a country filled with all kinds of game, and sheltering not a few dangerous animals. Mr. Daniell and his friend had just turned the corner of a precipitous hill, when suddenly they found themselves in the presence of a huge rhinoceros, the brute being separated from them only by the narrow torrent, though it was on a somewhat higher ledge than that on which the men were standing. To the hunter pure and simple this would have been a godsend. And so it was to the artist. Not less plucky than the hunter, he clambered up to the animal's level, and proceeded coolly to sketch the beast. Strange to say, the rhinoceros stood still, showing no signs of either anger or fear. In short, Mr. Daniell finished his sketch with composure, notwithstanding the risks he ran. Then, unwilling to rouse to fury an animal their guns could not damage, they fired a shot only with the view of frightening the brute away. To their great relief, the rhinoceros did depart, but only with the utmost deliberation.

A halt had to be made in the defiles till permission could be obtained from the Rajah of Srinagar to proceed to his capital. The Prince, in reply to the messengers



## A TROUBLESOME ESCORT

sent by the Englishmen, not only granted the required permit, but also sent an escort to protect the party on the most arduous and hazardous portion of the way. Presently, passing a village with a small detachment of troops, they were fairly in the Rajah's territory. This pass, or *ghaut*, the Englishmen learnt, had to be entirely abandoned by the soldiery in the rainy season, the defiles being then infested by an immense multitude of savage beasts which took shelter there—tigers, leopards, bears, hyenas, and other beasts of prey.

Notwithstanding the fact that the attendants and bearers had been sent by the Rajah himself, our travellers soon found they were likely to have some trouble with the fellows. They were a lazy lot, and refused to carry the burdens assigned to them. Before long the majority of them deserted, and left the Englishmen to do as best they could. The situation was a serious one, and the travellers had to supply the places of the deserters without delay. With immense difficulty they succeeded in gathering a few of the country fellows, but what was their chagrin when these also showed signs of defection! Thereupon the Englishmen administered a sound thrashing to the worst of the offenders—a strong measure, and one they were most reluctant to adopt. Strange to say, it had the desired effect, and they were no more troubled by the laziness of their followers, though it was necessary to keep a constant and vigilant watch over them.

The character of the country through which the party passed was such as to baffle description. As they say, “to look down some of the gaping gulfs which arrested our gaze as we passed them required no ordinary steadiness of



## DANGERS OF MOUNTAIN TORRENTS

brain ; and the road by which we had to descend was frequently so steep that we were obliged to cling to the jagged projections of rock, or to the few stunted shrubs that appeared here and there in our path. . . . Impediments began to multiply upon us." Their worst trouble was with the *nullahs*, or mountain torrents, which they often had to cross. The difficulty of crossing some of these was only equalled by the danger. The least slip would have meant great peril, and probably death, for such is the force of the torrent, and so many are the cascades and falls in its course, that a man would be swirled over rock after rock before any attempt could be made to save him, if, indeed, it were possible to save him at all.

In one spot, where the roar of the streams was deafening, and the reverberations amongst the rock-faces absolutely stunning, one of the party was whirled from his feet in mid-stream. For a few moments there was excitement and to spare. The man was carried down at a furious rate, and it seemed as if nothing could save him. As it happened, fortunately, farther down the torrent a tree had fallen across the waters. The drowning man had the presence of mind to clutch a branch of this, and to hang on for dear life, till he could be rescued.

The travellers pursued their journey for the most part "in silence and weariness." Each of them was carried in a palanquin, as a rule ; but so wild and dangerous was a good deal of the country, that they dared not make use of the vehicles. In many and many a place the narrowness of the ledge on which they were progressing, and the abruptness of the turns to be made, rendered it impossible



## STARS IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

to use poles of the ordinary kind for the palanquins. In those mountain districts jointed poles took their place, making it possible to turn sharp corners; but it may well be imagined that our Englishmen were not very willing to trust themselves to their bearers in such spots.

So far the weather had been favourable, but the inevitable storm was at hand. The cavalcade, if such the travelling party could be called when there were no horses, had reached the most forbidding part of the whole mountain area. They found themselves at the bottom of a ravine shaped like a funnel, to the depths of which the sun never penetrated. There was at the best but a dismal twilight down there; so dark was it, in fact, that as they looked up from the profound depths of the gorge they could see the stars in the sky, though it was the middle of the afternoon. The sky seemed to be "one uniform tint of the deepest purple, while the brilliancy with which the stars emitted their vivid fires altogether baffles description. Nothing could exceed the splendour of the scene."

The brightness of the day above became now suddenly overcast, and almost without the least warning the storm was upon them. The darkness at the bottom of their awful defile became in a moment or two intense. Then the rains began to descend, and the travellers and their servants were fain to take shelter under a huge projecting rock which they found hard by. The lightning was appalling in its frequency and its intensity. From the spot where the men stood could be seen many tall, needle-like peaks above, "which seemed to plunge their tall spires into the skies, and absolutely to prop the firmament." These peaks at every flash were lighted up in a way that would have



## A PLUCKY RESCUE

been grand had it not been also terrifying. As for the thunder, it resounded from rock to rock, and from flank to flank, till it became, as it were, one continuous and tremendous crash. When there did come a second or two of silence it was so intense as to be absolutely painful. The storm did not last many minutes, and did no damage to the travellers, luckily, but it made on them an impression that would never be effaced. The tempest ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and in a few moments after the skies were bright again.

Continuing their journey, the party found themselves on a narrow shelf; above, the mountain towered to an enormous height; below, the precipice fell away sheer into the depths below. At this point one of the porters dropped a bag or small portmanteau, which, of course, fell into the gulf. The Englishmen looked upon their property as lost for ever, but to their astonishment, and indeed dismay, the man announced his determination to fetch the lost article again. "A stout cord, composed of hair, was passed round the limb of a tree that projected over the precipice. The end was firmly tied to a thick bamboo, about fifteen inches long, upon which the man placed his feet, and, grasping the rope in both hands, was slowly lowered into the void. As the face of the precipice sloped gradually inward, he was not within reach of it during the whole of his descent. When about fifty yards below the summit, he was swayed in an alarming degree by the wind, which, pouring down the chasm and not finding a ready vent, was forced back again in strong eddies that seemed at times to whirl him round with dangerous velocity. He, however, still maintained his hold until he appeared but a speck,



## A FRAIL ROPE-BRIDGE

when, the cord slackening, it was clear he had reached his destination. After a short time, upon a signal being given from below by a sudden jerk of the cord, the men above began to haul up their companion, who, from the additional weight, had evidently recovered his burden. They pulled him up much more expeditiously than they had let him down, and he soon reappeared uninjured, with the portmanteau upon his shoulders."

That afternoon the travellers came upon the first of the rope-bridges so common in the mountain districts of Northern India. They gazed with alarm upon the frail apparatus, but there was no help for it, and they resigned themselves to the inevitable. The ropes—there were two—were made of twisted creepers, and were an inch and a half in diameter. A sort of hoop spanned these ropes, and on the lower rim of this the adventurous traveller seated himself; then, holding a rope in either hand, he proceeded to pull himself across. To the hillmen the business seemed easy enough, and not in the least terrifying, but the case was different with the Englishmen. To be thus suspended on such a crazy apparatus, a hundred feet above a boiling torrent, the whole machine vibrating violently in the strong wind the while, tried the nerves of both. Fortunately the passage was made by all the party in safety, and the terrors of it were at once forgotten in the excitements of the chase. The last man had scarce crossed, when an elk, or moose-deer, was started, and a helter-skelter after it at once took place. Finally the elk was shot, and proved to be a very fine animal.

Sport of a more exciting character presently appeared. Mr. Daniell went off with his gun into a side ravine,



## ENCOUNTER WITH A BEAR

in search of jungle-fowl, the birds being fairly abundant in the place, but exceedingly shy. There were with him two of the hillmen, and after a very stiff and risky climb, they had just gained the top of a precipice, when a bear was observed hastening towards them. It was evident the brute was bent on mischief, and Mr. Daniell was about to fire, regretting, however, that his gun was loaded only with large shot. At this moment one of the natives intervened, and begged the master to leave the bear to him, and he would attack it unarmed. The Englishman was astounded, but seeing the coolness and confidence of the hillmen, agreed to let them try their skill, holding his weapon ready, should it after all be needed.

Almost on the very edge of the precipice grew a tree, whose branches stretched over the abyss, and seemed to be very pliant but very strong. Without a moment's hesitation the hillman approached the bear, and, exciting it, drew its attention from the Englishman to himself. In a rage the bear made after the man, who thereupon climbed with astonishing agility into the tree, the bear as nimbly following. The fellow now selected one of the longest of the upper branches, and attaching to the end of it a strong cord, threw the other end down to his companion below. The branch was speedily pulled down with all the man's force, till it projected far over the edge of the precipice.

The chief operator now crept cautiously along the branch as far as he dared, the bear following. Then, seizing the rope, the fellow slid like a monkey to the ground. The bear, thus unexpectedly deprived of its victim, attempted to turn, in order to retrace its steps. No sooner, however, had it relaxed its grasp of the bough



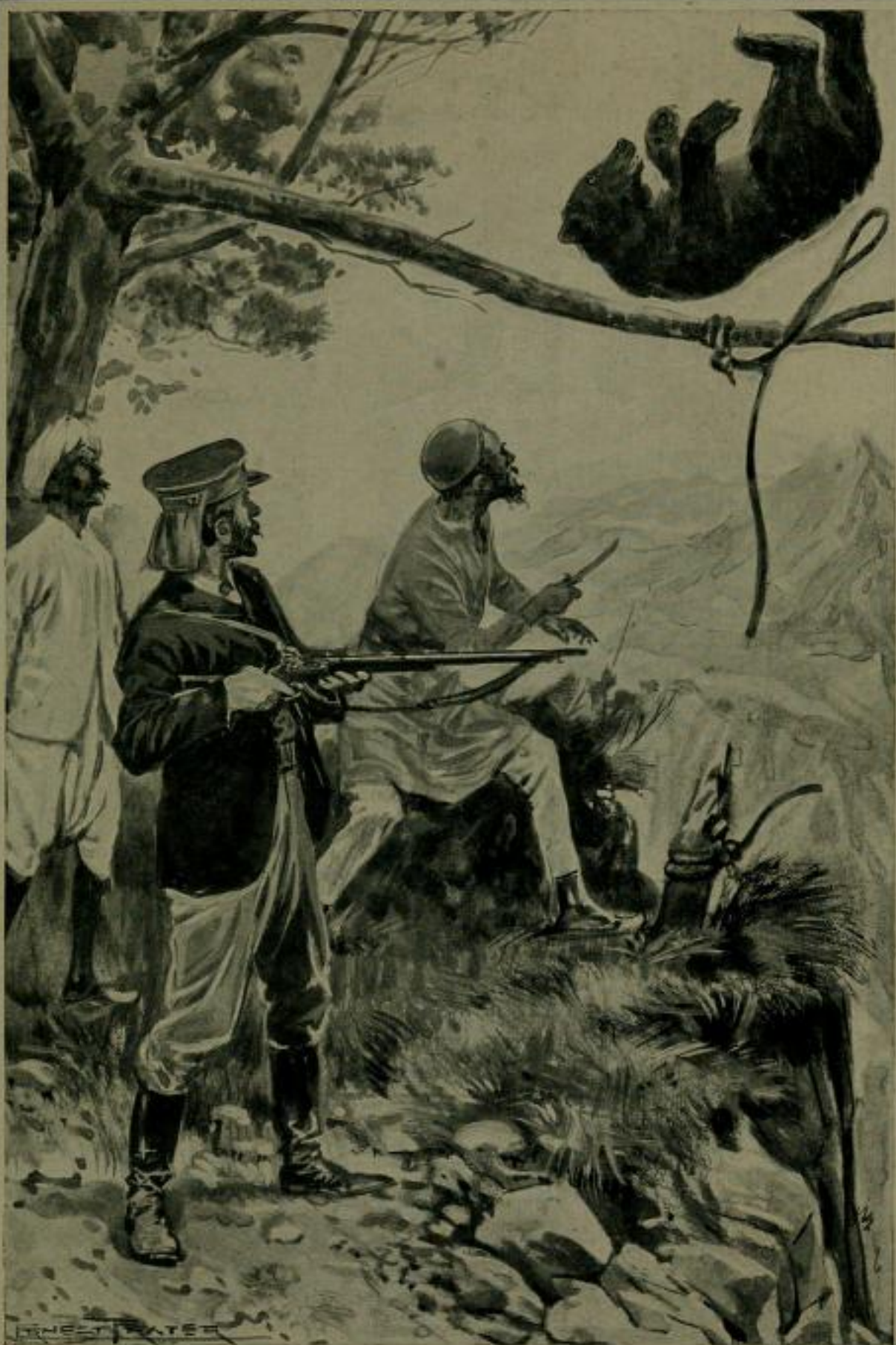
## THE TIGER COUNTRY REACHED

for this purpose, than the hillman suddenly cut the cord, which had been securely tied to the stump of a tree, and the depressed branch instantly gained its original position with an irresistible momentum. The suddenness and vigour of the recoil shook the bear from its hold, launching it, like the fragment of a rock from a catapult, into the empty air. Uttering a stifled yell, it was hurled over the precipice, and, falling with a dull crash upon the rocks beneath, no doubt soon became a prey to the vultures and jackals. The address with which the bold highlander accomplished this dangerous exploit was as astonishing as it was novel.

It was not till after the visit to Srinagar had ended, and the travellers had got almost clear of the mountains again, that they saw anything of the tiger, the most dreaded of all the wild beasts of India. The chief of the district, who showed himself most friendly and hospitable, promised his guests an exhibition of tiger-trapping as performed in the locality. As it happened, one of these animals had been discovered in a wood not far away within the last few hours. So the Englishmen stayed to watch the operations, in which, as the course of events showed, there was little risk to the spectator.

A large hole was dug in the ground, with sides sloping inwards, to a depth of twelve feet, the area of the hole at the surface being about a couple of yards square. The pit was now concealed by a slight framework of bamboo, on which a quantity of grass was strewn. At the approach of evening a goat was tethered on the top of the pit, the covering being strong enough to support its weight, but nothing heavier. Everything being now ready, the





### A NOVEL METHOD OF KILLING A BEAR

One of the hill men attracted the bear's attention to himself, then swarmed out on the branch of a tree, to which a cord had been attached. The bear followed, the man promptly slipped back to safety on the rope, which was then pulled so as to make the branch a strong spring. When the rope was cut the bear was shot into space.



## A TIGER-TRAP

watchers concealed themselves behind a few trees to await the result. The night was unusually dark.

It was not till towards morning that their wishes were gratified. "We observed the beautiful beast rush from its lurking-place, and, when within about five yards of the devoted goat, spring upon it with a yell so ferocious that I trembled where I stood, though removed from all chance of danger. The platform instantly gave way with a crash, and the tiger and goat both fell into the hollow beneath. As soon as the former found itself a prisoner, it howled with rage, lashed its sides with its tail, erected the fur upon its back, and exhibited fearful demonstrations of fury. It made the most desperate efforts to escape, springing up the sides of the shaft, and occasionally clinging to the very edge. The earth, however, was so soft that there was no hold for its claws, so that it always fell back; but upon reaching the ground and finding its efforts at release invariably foiled, its fury redoubled. Its yells were dreadful. The goat was quite dead, but remained untouched by its destroyer, which at length lay upon its belly almost exhausted with its exertions. At this moment our host advanced and fired at the dreaded captive as it lay panting and powerless. The ball took effect, but not mortally. The sudden pang only roused the tiger to renewed exertions, in order to retaliate upon its assailant, who deliberately loaded and fired until the excited beast was destroyed." So tenacious was it of life, that it received seven balls in different parts of its body before it finally succumbed.



## CHAPTER VIII

### BIG GAME IN THE CASHAN MOUNTAINS

A bit of splendid scenery—The Cashan Mountains in Southern Africa—Captain Cornwallis Harris, a keen sportsman—He and his men meet a band of Matabele warriors on the mountains—Savages insolent and hostile—A critical time—The Matabele and the Hottentot—"He found his tongue"—Other bands of savages met—Harris shoots a water-buck—Piet stumbles over a lion—Lions prowling around the camp all night—Lingap and his master—Three lionesses asleep—An infuriated rhinoceros—"I threw my cap at him"—A spotted hyena killed—More water-buck—Two miles barefooted over sharp flints—A white rhinoceros rushes the camp—"A perfect panorama of game"—A buffalo charges on three legs—A splendid specimen—Hottentots gorged with flesh—A disgusting spectacle—The buffalo and the captain—A near thing—A tremendous fire—Whole district in danger—A lucky deluge—Every spark extinguished—More hurricanes—Camp flooded—An elephant's footmark—A herd of elephants—A dam shot—A whole valley full of elephants—A sublime and soul-stirring picture—Manœuvring—A parade of elephants pass the Captain—Leader shot—A scene of indescribable confusion—Three other herds—A whole troop crashes through the camp.

"HERE the scenery was beautiful. Three cascades fell brawling over descents of several feet within a quarter of a mile of each other, flanked by stately timber trees of splendid growth and graceful foliage, which, leaning their venerable forms over the limpid stream, were reflected on its glassy bosom. Huge isolated masses of rocks reared



## A KEEN SPORTSMAN

their stupendous heads at intervals, as though cast there by some giant hand in sportive derision of the current which foamed and bubbled round them. Upon the tops of these, cormorants were sunning themselves in hundreds, while scaly alligators were basking on the lower tiers, amid flowering bushes and evergreens."

Such was the kind of country to which Captain Cornwallis Harris went in the year 1852. The gallant officer was no mean naturalist, but probably he would have called himself a sportsman merely. He was approaching the Cashan Mountains, which were destined to furnish him with enough excitements and dangers to last an ordinary man a lifetime. His keenness after game was extraordinary, and was surpassed only by his coolness at critical moments, and his utter disregard of risks and dangers.

He and his men were at the foot of the Cashan heights, and were proceeding towards a rift or pass in the mountains, when suddenly there appeared a band of Matabele warriors, numbering several hundreds altogether. Now, these Matabele had just been engaged in plundering and murdering certain white men, so that when the host closed round the traveller's waggons in hostile fashion there was cause for no little alarm. The manners and the speech of the savages were alike insolent, as they fiercely ordered the drivers to stop, a number of men standing in front to bar the passage. The Hottentot servants of the Englishman were frightened almost out of their wits; and when a number of wounded Matabele warriors were presently borne past on their shields, one of the Hottentots fainted right off. The situation soon



## HOSTILE MATABELE WARRIORS

became critical. None of the waggon party knew a word of the Matabele tongue except one gigantic fellow, Andries by name, and he, for some reason, made no attempt to help his master out of the difficulty. Every moment the crowd of savages pressed closer around, and some of them climbed into the waggons, where they turned over and examined every article. What was about to follow it was not hard to foresee. But suddenly there was a turn of fortune. One of the Matabele, a huge, brawny fellow, sprang upon Andries, who in his terror managed to stammer out a few words, to the effect that the Englishman and his companions had just had the honour of being entertained by the King Moselekatse. Marvellous was the change in the attitude of the Matabele at the mention of the name of their King. In a moment they ceased their hostile demonstrations, and even became suppliants, begging humbly for tobacco and beads.

This was not the only band of savages met that day. Parties great and small made their appearance from time to time, till before night the total must have reached six or seven thousand. Presumably the word had been passed round the tribes that the travellers were under the protection of their King, for none of them disturbed the hunter and his men. A camp was made on the mountain near a streamlet, and the Hottentot servants began to fence it in, according to custom. While this was going on, the Captain went out with his gun, and was lucky enough to shoot a water-buck, a rare and splendid antelope; he believed himself to be the only Englishman who had ever shot one of the species. It may be added, by way of parenthesis, that he managed to bring down two



## LINGAP AND HIS MASTER

more the next day. The noise of the report disturbed a lion and a lioness which happened to be close by, but the pair slunk into the jungle. On his return to the camp, he found that one of his men, Piet, had also been out to try his luck, and he had actually stumbled over a lion. It was evident that these beasts were particularly plentiful in the neighbourhood, and the leader gave orders that the fence should be strengthened. It was a lucky thing that this precaution was taken, for all night long lions were prowling about outside making efforts to get at the cattle.

One of the best of the Captain's followers was Lingap, a good warrior with assegai and shield, and a good sportsman to boot. The master and he had an exciting time of it on the Cashan slopes the following day. The two men were looking down upon the skeleton of an elephant lying not far below, when Lingap suddenly pointed with his assegai to a bush, and whispered, "Tao!" (lions). And there, in truth, were three lionesses, all asleep. Lingap hid behind his shield, while Harris fired into the middle of the group, immediately afterwards springing behind a tree. Instantly the three animals leapt to their feet, and with angry roars dashed into the bushes. The men scampered in the opposite direction, not unnaturally. A few minutes later several shots were heard not far off, and then "an infuriated rhinoceros, streaming with blood, rushed over the brow of the eminence that we were ascending, and was within pistol-shot before we were aware of his approach. No bush presenting itself behind which to hide, I threw my cap at him, and Lingap, striking his buckler and shouting with stentorian lungs,



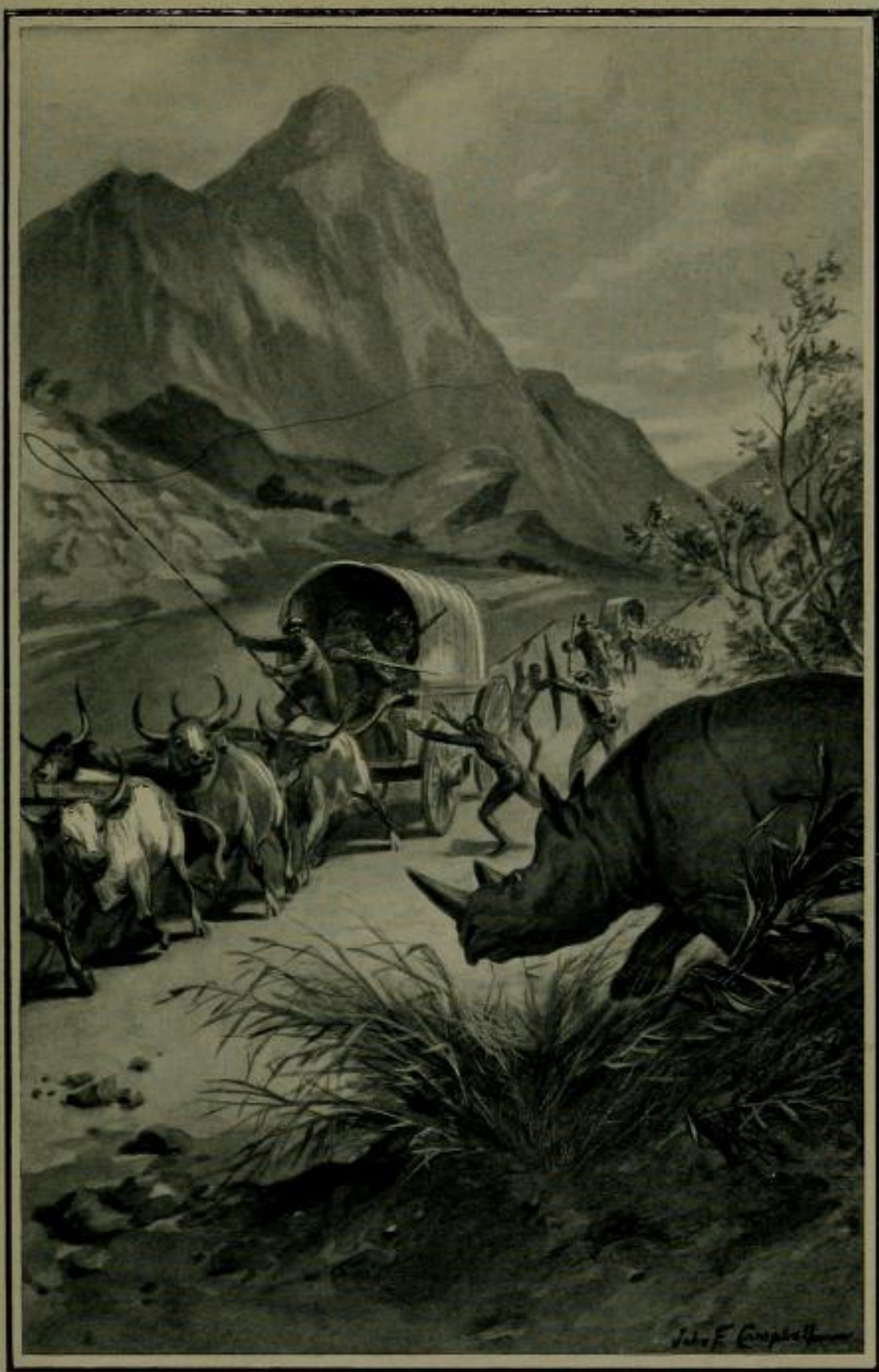
## BIG GAME PLENTIFUL

the enraged beast turned off. I saluted him from both barrels, and he was immediately afterwards overturned by a running fire from the Hottentots, every one of whom, I now saw, had left the waggons at the mercy of the oxen."

Skirting the mountains in search of grass for the cattle, the hunters found the big game more plentiful even than before. The night was hideous with the horrid moaning sound of the hyena, the dismal yelling of the jackal, and the roaring of the lion. However, at early dawn Harris was astir, and managed to get a little revenge on his disturbers, bringing down a spotted hyena. He was presently following hard after a water-buck, when the sole of one of his boots came off. Nothing daunted, and heedless of thorn and rock, he dashed along barefoot for more than two miles, the ground thickly strewn with sharp flints. He secured his buck, and then made for the waggons, which were moving on towards their next stopping-place. Just before he overtook the waggons an immense white rhinoceros, roused from his snooze, dashed furiously at the first of the vehicles, crashing noisily through bushes and reeds, and snorting loudly. The oxen were half mad with fear, but a volley from the drivers saluted the aggressor, and he turned away into the scrub. He was promptly followed and dispatched.

But Captain Harris had long been wanting to reach the vast elephant grounds, and he made all the advance he could each day. At last the desired territory was at hand, and eagerly he pushed on ahead, taking with him Piet, and leaving the Hottentots to bring up the rear. A fine roan antelope rose before the hunters, but they





### AN UNWELCOME INTRUDER

An infuriated rhinoceros, streaming with blood, rushed towards the wagons



## THE BUFFALO AND THE CAPTAIN

refrained from firing. A pair of white rhinoceroses next appeared on the mountain slope directly in their way. These brutes they had a good deal of difficulty in getting rid of. They did not wish to make any noise as yet. But the procession of wild animals was by no means at an end. Presently a herd of wild swine, with whip-like tails erect, came trooping along, and they were followed by two buffaloes. "It was a perfect panorama of game," the Captain exclaims, and difficult he found it to keep his followers from firing. The thing was bound to come sooner or later, and it did. Suddenly a loud report rang out from some of the Hottentots behind, and instantly there was confusion in the covert. A whole herd of buffaloes appeared, and dashed helter-skelter past. Harris could no longer contain himself, but fired, wounding one of the buffaloes in the hind-leg. The hunter immediately mounted his horse, but not too soon, for the buffalo charged on three legs. Two or three times did the wounded beast return to the attack, and Harris had an exciting time of it. At last he managed with a well aimed bullet to bring down his quarry. The buffalo was a splendid specimen, standing sixteen and a half hands at the shoulder, while "his ponderous horns measured four feet from tip to tip, and like a mass of rock, overshadowing his small, sinister grey eyes, imparted to his countenance the most cunning, gloomy, and vindictive expression."

Leaving his Hottentots to gorge themselves on the flesh—always a disgusting spectacle, the Captain tells us—he mounted to the top of the hill, from which point of vantage the view far and near was of the most striking



## A TREMENDOUS FIRE

and extensive character. He marked a big herd of buffaloes quietly chewing the cud under some trees. His first shot brought down one, but the loud report, reverberating among the mountains, alarmed the whole herd. Fifty of them, panic-stricken, and crushing everything underfoot in their mad stampede, made straight for the hunter, and he was within an ace of being trampled to death. It was the narrowest escape. His waggons had been moving on, but, seeing by the smoke where his men had pitched the camp for the night, he bent his steps towards the spot. A spectacle to create loathing and disgust it was that met his eyes. His followers were absolutely *intoxicated* with the gorging of much flesh, and perfectly incapable of any sensible action or behaviour, while the ground around, and the bushes, looked like nothing but a filthy slaughter-pit.

Nor was this all that angered their master. In their senseless folly the Hottentots had set fire to the surrounding grass and bush, and already the blaze had become alarming. For hours before he went to bed Captain Harris sat on the heights watching the progress of the flames below—a splendid spectacle—as the fire rushed along, devouring everything on its course. But he began to fear for his prospects of game if that enormous conflagration should spread over the whole district, a thing it appeared likely enough to do. There was only one hope: a storm was coming up rapidly. The night was dark and gusty. Presently thunder sounded among the mountains, vivid forked lightning was seen, and a few preliminary drops of rain fell. Meanwhile “a strong south-east wind, setting towards the hills, was driving the



## CAMP FLOODED

devouring element with a loud crackling noise up the steep grassy sides in long red lines, which, extending for miles, swept along the heights with devastating fury, brilliantly illuminating the landscape and threatening to denude the whole country of its vegetation. Suddenly the storm burst over the scene. The wind immediately hushed; a death-like stillness succeeded to the crackling of the flames. Every spark of the conflagration was extinguished in an instant by the deluge that descended, and the Egyptian-like darkness of the night was unbroken even by a solitary star."

Next afternoon, the camp, having moved on a few miles, was pitched under the shelter of an overhanging hill-side, another hurricane having been observed approaching. Hardly was the camp arranged, when "a stream of liquid fire ran along the ground; and a deafening thunder-clap, exploding close above us, was instantly followed by a torrent of rain." The rain came down in continuous streams, and soon horses and oxen were knee-deep in water. The men in the baggage waggons, which leaked, passed a bad night; luckily for him, the Captain's own waggon-cover was water-tight. But sleep was out of the question for master as well as man. "The earth actually threatened to give way under us;" and so vivid and blinding was the lightning, that he was glad to cover up his eyes with his pillow. The results were seen when daylight came: the torrents were swollen and impassable, and the only path onwards, an exceedingly narrow pass in the mountain-side, was full of surging water.

Leaving the floods below, Harris took with him some of his men, and ascended the heights in search of elephants.



## AN ELEPHANT'S TRACK

Long had he been wanting to reach their feeding-grounds. He gained the highest peak, and gazed around. Not far away he came across the mark of an elephant's foot; it was of enormous size. Eagerly he measured the impression, and then made his calculation, "twice the circumference of the foot always giving the height of the animal at the shoulder." He found that this particular beast must boast a height of twelve feet, which the hunter believed to be the maximum for an African elephant. A tramp of eight miles along the crest of the mountain was required, however, before a sight of the herd could be seen. There, for the first time in his life, the Englishman saw the elephant in his own home. "With intense and indescribable interest" the men looked down at the sight, while the gigantic Andries, with straining eyes and quivering lips, stammered out, "Dar stand de olifant!"

The men now went round to drive, with much rattling of shields, the elephants towards the master. All unconscious of the presence of an enemy, the animals slowly walked in Harris's direction, and soon a report made the hills resound. The first of the herd fell, and the rest of the elephants—they were all females—fled up the mountain slope at an incredible speed. Mounting their horses, the hunters made for the wounded dam. She was furious, and in spite of the sharp rough stones that cut her feet, she made for the aggressors. She was received at each charge she made with a volley, and at length the poor brute fell dead, causing the very ground to shake with the thud.

The Captain had now time to gaze about him a little



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## VALLEY FULL OF ELEPHANTS

more. He found himself, to his surprise, looking into a second valley, whose existence he had not previously noted. The sight that met his eye was one to beggar description, to use a common phrase. "The whole face of the landscape was actually covered with wild elephants. There could not have been fewer than three hundred within the scope of our vision. Every height and green knoll was dotted over with groups of them, whilst the bottom of the glen exhibited a dense and sable living mass—their colossal forms being at one moment partially concealed by the trees, which they were disfiguring with giant strength; and at others seen majestically emerging into the open glades, bearing in their trunks the branches of trees, with which they indolently protected themselves from the flies. The background was filled by a limited peep of the blue mountain-range, which here assumed a remarkably precipitous character, and completed a picture at once soul-stirring and sublime."

What was to be done in the presence of all this marvellous abundance of majestic game? Harris was very anxious to see whether there were any males amongst the enormous herd, and he sent Andries to manœuvre amongst the beasts. The man contrived so that a large number of the elephants filed slowly in front of the master, who had placed himself in a position of advantage on a little ledge above. All that paraded proved to be females or calves. Harris could have killed any one of them had he been so disposed, but he was waiting for the males. Things were precipitated before long, however, by the firing of a gun by some blundering native in the vicinity. Instantly the whole concourse of animals was on the move. Hardly had the



## A SCENE OF CONFUSION

men time to get themselves behind the trees before a score of elephants with their young ones were upon them, filling the air with their loud trumpeting. With the utmost deliberation Harris steadied his rifle against the tree, and dropped the leading elephant instantly. In a moment the other animals rushed upon their assailants, and the men had a risky time of it, dodging behind trees, flying pell-mell over the rough stones, and ever and anon running right up to some group of the infuriated beasts. The scene of confusion that was witnessed, the hunter in his fearless way, calls amusing, but it was about as dangerous a position as could well be imagined. However, after some time of this hurly-burly, all the animals got clear away, except the dam that had been shot. To it Harris and his man once more made their way, and put the creature out of its misery.

The two men now made tracks for the camp—that is to say, they began the search for it, being quite ignorant as to its whereabouts. In the course of their wanderings they encountered no fewer than three other groups of elephants, one of them obstructing their line of route. They chased the herd for a mile over the roughest and sharpest of stones. “Much has been said,” writes the Captain, “of the attachment of elephants to their young, but neither on this nor on any subsequent occasion did we perceive them evince the smallest concern for their safety. On the contrary, they left them to shift for themselves.” The natives assegaied one calf that was left behind in the flight. The last of the three herds was not encountered till the hunters were near their waggon. On being disturbed, the whole troop rushed down below, and crashed



## A FATIGUING DAY'S WORK

right through the camp, "causing indescribable consternation amongst cattle and followers. But, fortunately, no accident occurred, and after the fatiguing day's work we had undergone, we were not sorry to find ourselves at home."