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STIRRING ADVENTURE  
IN  
AFRICAN TRAVEL.

*GREAT EXPLORERS—HUNTING EXPLOITS—  
SHIPWRECK—CAPTIVITY—  
BOMBARDMENT.*

BY

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## CHAPTER VII.

HENRY M. STANLEY.

HAVING returned safely from finding Livingstone, Stanley could not resist accepting an offer made him to undertake another expedition to Central Africa, to investigate various geographical problems which the Doctor had left unsolved. He started in November 1874, from the east coast, at the head of 300 men, which included three Englishmen,—Frederick Barker, and Francis and John Pocock. The following year, reaching the Victoria Nyanza, he circumnavigated and explored it; he visited the Albert Nyanza, then Ujiji, and examined part of Lake Tanganyika. Striking the Lualaba at Nyangwé in October 1875, he proceeded down stream. Now commenced the most difficult and dangerous portion of his great journey; for almost every mile of the way had to be contested. Writing to one of the papers, he thus interestingly describes his journey, dating his letter 10th August 1877, from Emboma, near the mouth of the Congo:—

## CHAPTER X.

### BUFFALO AND RHINOCEROS.

IN that 'paradise of hunters,' South Africa, the hunting of the buffalo is not always unattended with danger, sometimes it has even proved fatal. The bull proves the most ferocious and formidable, and frequently places his assailant in an awkward position, and many are the stories extant illustrative of this. Selous on one occasion came upon an old bull buffalo lying beneath a tree, having been wounded by a lion, which rendered his irritable nature more irritable still. While gazing at him, one of his Kafirs threw an assegai from behind him; the weapon struck him slightly in the thigh, and in a moment he was on his feet, head up and nose extended, looking for the disturber of his peace. The Kafir, after throwing his spear, had darted behind the trunk of a large tree, so the infuriated animal made straight at the hunter, who, being at that moment unarmed, and knowing

two-and-a-half inches in extreme length, while round the thickest portion of its body the girth was nearly three feet, thus proving, I believe, to be the largest serpent that was ever authentically heard of.

The rhinoceros, too, is another of the large game of Africa which it is not always easy to kill, and when wounded very apt to become dangerous. One sportsman gives the following account of his first encounter with one of these formidable creatures:—‘I had followed the two monsters for about an hour or more, with not a dry thread upon me; when, reaching a little knob, right in the midst of one of the most powerful thickets, I involuntarily grasped my gun,—not twelve yards’ distance before, I heard a sharp and loud-sounding noise, resembling the sound a frightened stag gives in the woods, only far, far louder, more like the escape-pipe of a steamboat. While watching the track, I had not looked upon the bushes, and there, so close before me that I could have thrown my cap upon the huge mass of flesh, I recognised—only half-hidden in the thick and drooping foliage of the bushes—the immense dark body of one of the old fellows I had been after since yesterday. I could just distinguish the outlines of the huge bulk of this rhinoceros, when, seeing his head turned towards me, as if to make out what little creature had been daring enough to follow him to his mountain fastness, I

raised my gun and pulled the trigger. So much for percussion caps, in wet weather, which have not a little copper plate over the white substance inside. Snap, said the right—Snap, said the left barrel, as the cocks struck, without igniting the caps; and nearly at the same moment Peter's gun—a double-barrelled fowling-piece—at some distance behind me in the bushes, went off,—by itself, I expect, for I heard the ball strike a tree close by rather high.

‘The rhinoceros, hearing the strange clicking sounds, and the crack of the gun, blew as if with a trumpet, and commenced stamping the underwood down under his feet. I looked round quickly for a tree—for I did not expect anything else, after the dreadful tales they had told me about the animal, but to see it come rushing upon me to stamp me under foot; observing one about ten yards distant, I thought I would reach it and wait the result. But the monster came not; he seemed intent only on amusing himself with smashing the bushes, as if clearing out an improvement for himself. My first thought was to clear the tubes, and have another aim at the animal; but remembering that one barrel of Peter's gun was still loaded, I looked around to make him come up to me. But where was Peter or his companion? Taking the alarm, I think, as soon as the rhinoceros began to rear and tear, they had fled to some place of security. I

had no choice but to take out my turn-screw, in sight of the enemy, and use it,—always ready, though, at a second's warning, to fly to the nearest tree, should the animal make a motion to have a stamp of me. But the rhinoceros, apparently far too peaceable a customer to have any such ideas, gave me a last look, and, dashing again into the bushes, soon disappeared, leaving me pricking away at my tubes, raving mad, to get them open again, so as to be able to pour in some fresh dry powder. I did it as fast as I could, of course, but it took me at least five minutes, and now nothing was left to me but to push on after the flying game.

'There were two of them, and they seemed to choose nearly impassable thickets, breaking down old logs and trunks like reeds. Away we went, through branches and sloughs,—I followed in a monstrous rage at not being able to come up with them, the giant beasts just rolling along, as it seemed, at their common pace, to get out of harm's way. Several times I was near enough to hear them blow, when they got the wind of me; but I never halted a minute to ascertain their exact direction, as I had only to keep the trail, rush down the slope, and storm them up. All my efforts were in vain, the ground was so rough I could not get nearer, at least not in sight of them: and only by following down hill, as it seemed,

upon reaching a little more open wood, I gained on them just enough to come in sight of the black hide of the hindermost.

‘I had heard that they rushed invariably upon the hunter if they were wounded; but not in a humour just then to consider what they might do after I had shot, I raised my gun at the first chance,—knowing that the next moment would bring them behind the thick curtain of the bushes,—and, pulling trigger, this time at least I could hear the ball strike the black hide, penetrating it, of course, as I used pointed slug balls, which go through nearly anything. There was a sudden pause in the monster’s flight; I darted behind a trunk, reloaded my gun, and then peeped out to ascertain the position of affairs. The rhinoceros seemed undetermined what to do, whether to rush forward again, or turn and revenge himself upon his foe. The position in which he stood was, however, so favourable for a good shot, that, raising my piece to my shoulder, I aimed just beneath the fore-leg. It turned directly, but in attempting a mad rush in my direction, plunged head first into a thicket. A convulsive struggle and all was over, much to my satisfaction; for after so long a chase to return empty-handed would have been galling in the extreme, especially as this was the first rhinoceros I had bagged, and I had no wish to be regarded as a novice.’

Mr. Anderson, a name well known in the African hunting world, had on one occasion a far more terrific encounter with a rhinoceros, which, at one critical moment, seemed likely to have a fatal termination. He had fired at and wounded a white rhinoceros, which had retreated into a thick wood, and when in the act of reloading with the intention of following, a black female rhinoceros suddenly made her appearance, evidently intending to have a drink from a pool close by. The hunter fired, but her position being bad, he merely succeeded in disabling her; but the wound served to infuriate, for she rushed wildly forward on three legs, when another shot startled her, and made her hesitate, but only for a moment; then resuming her mad pace, she disappeared in the thickest part of the bushes. Knowing how dangerous an animal would be in such a condition, Anderson refrained from taking up the chase, and resolved to wait till the next day, judging that she could not travel very far with one leg disabled. Unfortunately for himself, in taking a turn in the same direction, he once more encountered her, but again her position was unfavourable for a good shot, and thinking to make her shift her ground he took up a stone and threw it violently at her, when,—

‘Snorting horribly,’ says Anderson, ‘erecting her tail, keeping her head close to the ground, and raising

clouds of dust by her feet, she rushed at me with fearful fury. I had only just time to level my rifle and fire before she was upon me, and the next instant, whilst instinctively turning round for the purpose of retreating, she laid me prostrate. The shock was so violent as to send my rifle, powder flask, and ball pouch, as also my cap, spinning in the air, the gun, indeed, as afterwards ascertained, to a distance of fully ten feet. On the beast charging me, it crossed my mind that unless gored at once by her horns, her impetus would be such—after knocking me down, which I took for granted would be the case—as to carry her behind me, and I might thus be offered a chance of escape. So, indeed, it happened; for having tumbled me over—in doing which her head and the forepart of her body, owing to the violence of the charge, was half-buried in the sand—and trampled on me with great violence, her forequarter passed over my body. Struggling for life, I seized my opportunity, and, as she was recovering, I scrambled out from between her hind-legs.

But scarcely had Anderson regained his feet before, swiftly turning, she knocked him down a second time, and, with her sharp horn, ripped up his right thigh from the knee to the hip; and with her fore-feet struck him a terrific blow on the left shoulder, near the back of the neck. 'My neck,' he says, 'bent

under the enormous weight and pressure, and for a moment I must, I believe, have lost consciousness,— I have, at least, very indistinct notions of what afterwards took place. All I remember is, that when I raised my head I heard a furious snorting and plunging among the neighbouring bushes.'

The beast had evidently missed her prey, or, satisfied with what she had already done, was disinclined to renew the contest; so the unfortunate sportsman, with exceeding difficulty, contrived to raise himself to his feet, and hobble away to a large tree near at hand for shelter. There, binding up his wounds as best he could, he remained for the night.

Very early the next morning his half-caste boy came in search of him, for the purpose of carrying the guns and other things to the encampment. He was much surprised to find his master in such a sorry plight, and listened with open mouth to a recital of the adventure. Anderson told him to take one of the guns, and go in search of the wounded rhinoceros, which, he concluded, must be dead by this time. But the boy had not been gone long, when a cry of distress, shrill and loud, reached the hunter's ear. Seizing his rifle, he scrambled to his feet, and made his way as fast as he could in the direction from whence the cry came. In a short time he came

upon a scene which remained present to his mind for many a long day after.

‘Amongst some bushes, and within a couple of yards of each other, stood the rhinoceros and the young savage; the former supporting herself on three legs, covered with blood and froth, and snorting in the most furious manner; the latter petrified with fear—spellbound as it were—and riveted to the spot. Creeping, therefore, to the side of the rhinoceros, opposite to that on which the boy was standing, so as to draw her attention from him, I levelled and fired, on which the beast charged wildly to and fro, without any distinct object. While she was thus occupied, I poured in shot after shot, but thought she would never fall. At length, however, she sank slowly to the ground, and imagining that she was in her death agonies, and that all danger was over, I walked unhesitatingly close up to her, and was on the point of placing the muzzle of my gun to her ear to give her the *coup de grace*, when, to my horror, she once more rose on her legs. Taking a hurried aim, I pulled the trigger, and instantly retreated, with the beast in full pursuit. The race, however, was a short one, for just as I threw myself in a bush for safety, she fell dead at my feet, so near me, indeed, that I could have touched her with the muzzle of my rifle. Another moment, and I should probably

have been impaled on her murderous horn, which, though short, was sharp as a razor.'

Truly, hunting large game is not always so productive of pleasure as very many suppose. Doubtless the excitement of the chase, and the exultation produced by a successful shot, thrills the heart, and makes the blood run like fire through the veins; but adventures such as the above lead to the conclusion, that at times the risk outweighs the pleasure and excitement.