THE STORY OF AFRICA AND ITS EXPLORERS

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VOL. III

THE LAST OF A LONG TALE—THE SAHARA—THE MISSIONARIES—
THE HUNTERS—THE INTERNATIONAL EXPLORERS

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CHAPTER VII.

The Hunter's Paradise: Early and Late: A Contrast.

The peculiar Plants and Animals of Africa—South Africa—Its Special Features—Changes brought about by Man—Decimation of the Great Game—Causes—Sportsmen—Colonists—Natives—Traders—Professional Hunters—Prospects of the Future—The Elephant—Thunberg—Sparrmann—Unfortunates Astray—A Bogged Herd and what befell Them—Great Bags—Rhinoceros—Black and White—A Legend of the Salt River—Numbers killed by Oswell, Vardon, and Others—What Sir Andrew Smith Saw—Hippopotamus—Its Confined Range—On Lake Ngami—Lions—Cape Buffalo—Giraffe—Zebra—Quagga—Wart Hog—Leopard—Cheetah—Antelopes—Species still holding their own in diminished Number—Koodoo—Lechwe—The Duke of Edinburgh's Drive—Species on the Wane—Klipspringer—Springbuck—What Gordon Cumming Saw—What is not now to be Seen—Blesbuck—Tsessebe—Hartebeest—Others Dying Out—Natal Redbuck—Bontebuck—Reedbuck—Pallah—Pookoo—Waterbuck—Eland—What Le Vaillant Saw—Cape Town in 1780—Apes on Table Mountain—Herds of Bontebucks—Hartebeest, Ostriches, and Zebras within a Week's Travel of the Capital—Buffalo Elephants at Plettenberg Bay—Hippopotamus, Buffalo, and Elephants at the Gamtoos River—A Hunting Costume—Lions, Jackals, Buffalo, and Guinea-Fowls at Algoa Bay—Gnu and Bustards at Little Fish River—Leopards and Lions at the Platté—Kolben—Paterson—Barrow.

The animals, and, to some extent, the plants also, of Africa are for the most part peculiar to it. The continent constitutes the Ethiopian region of zoologists, though from the life characterising them its different areas are capable of subdivision. South of the Sahara there is, however, a certain similarity. But the desert fauna, which is extremely limited, graduates insensibly into that of North Africa on the European side of the Atlas Mountains. Here—in the Barbary States—the animals and plants are closely akin to those of Europe on the other side of the Strait of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean.

But it is in a very limited portion of South Africa that the most remarkable features of the life of the continent are found. Roughly speaking, its limits as a typical region are the narrow strip of territory limited by the mountain ranges which form the boundary of the Cape Colony and Natal, though, perhaps, in a wider sense it may be considered to include Mozambique. Perhaps the Kalahari desert and the Limpopo river, or even the Zambesi, form its most natural boundaries on the north. Into this triangle, which ends in the Cape of Good Hope, a most extraordinary collection of plants and large animals would seem to have been driven and, being unable to go farther south, to have huddled and developed here; and the farther south the country is examined, the more remarkable in character and variety do the *ferœ naturœ* become. The flora alone is the most interesting in the world, its Cape heaths, shrubby pelargoniums, proteas, many bulbous plants, euphorbias, welwitschias, thorny shrubs of the "stay-a-bit" type, stapelias, orchids, and a host of other species, imparting to this dry area features which would alone make it notable were not the quadrupeds that graze upon them of still greater moment in the popular eye. In no other part of the globe are there so many genera and species of plants congregated in the same space, and nowhere else are so many peculiar forms found. A similar richness and specialisation characterise its zoology, though animals not being so closely dependent on soil and climate as plants, there has been a greater intermixture of immigrants from the north than we find in the sister kingdom of Nature. Still its fauna is, to a marked degree, isolated—South Africa being, from the naturalist's point of view, closely akin to an oceanic island; though, from a geological point of view, there is no evidence that it ever held that relation to the rest of the continent immediately north of it. This peculiarity applies to the animals of all groups, though it is solely with the larger that the

The fauna of South Africa.

have learned (Vol. II., p. 139), is practically the slave trade "writ small," and the slave trade means war, murder, and kidnapping; so that it is almost with pleasure that we hear of travellers going to Tanganyika and back again without as much as sighting a tusker. This destruction, however, is not a modern incident. It began with the utter extermination of the herds which, less than twenty centuries ago (Vol. II., p. 227), wandered through the forests which then covered the region north of the Atlas Mountains; and, curiously enough, it next set in at the extreme southern part of the continent, a land, in the day when Pliny wrote, not even dreamed to exist.

Little more than a century ago the elephant roamed all over the Cape Colony. Thunberg, in his second journey into Kaffraria* in 1773, tells us that he met with a man who assured him that "in his younger days the elephant was very numerous" near Cape Town; that, in travelling to and from that place, one might kill such great numbers of them that he himself had often shot from four to five in a day, and sometimes twelve or thirteen; and that twice in his life, when he was out in pursuit of these animals, "he had shot with his own gun twenty-two each day." Sparrmann, a traveller of about the same date,† confirms this astounding tale; for, so writes this early voyager, "in the country near the Cape, elephants are sometimes seen in large herds, consisting of many hundreds, and in the more remote and unfrequented parts of the interior they are still more numerous."

But little by little, and latterly very fast indeed, with the hunter on their trail, they have retreated northwards and eastwards, though always in diminished numbers, and never able to find any safe retreat; until it is questionable if any have a permanent home in parts of the Cape Colony where, not many years ago, they were quite abundant. At the beginning of this century one of the earliest of the Dutch hunters stood at the Kuruman Fountain, and there collected sufficient ivory to enrich himself speedily. Sechele's country in Gordon Cumming's time—1846–49—was still plentiful enough in elephants to afford employment for many seekers after tusks, though most of that great hunter's exploits were performed in the hills about Shoshong, where game existed in quantities almost incredible to this generation. Livingstone saw elephants in extraordinary numbers along the Zouga river—now more generally called the Botletli—as late as 1849, and round Lake Ngami not less than 900 are mentioned as having been shot a year or two after his first journey thither. Baldwin had good sport there in 1858, but the trek-Boers of 1877–78 finished most of them in that region. Still following them up without mercy, the hunters have left very few along the Chobe river and Zambesi, where early in his "jäger" life Selous found them so numerous. A troop, partially preserved by Khama, the enlightened chief of whom we have already spoken (Vol. II., p. 178), still frequents the almost impenetrable jungle—so dense and thorny that even the elephant-hunter hesitates to enter it—between the Zambesi and Linyanti roads; but even there they will not always be permitted the immunity they at present enjoy.‡ Mr. Bryden mentions a strange event that happened a few years ago at Molepolole (Kolobeñ), in Bechuanaland. A troop of nine or ten elephants, presumably from the northern part of the Kalahari or from the Botletli river, had by some accident strayed from their usual haunts, and were discovered on the hills near the town. But they never returned; for the entire population turned out, and in a short time every one of the hapless beasts—mostly cows and calves—were hunted down. A still more wanton case of destruction is related by the

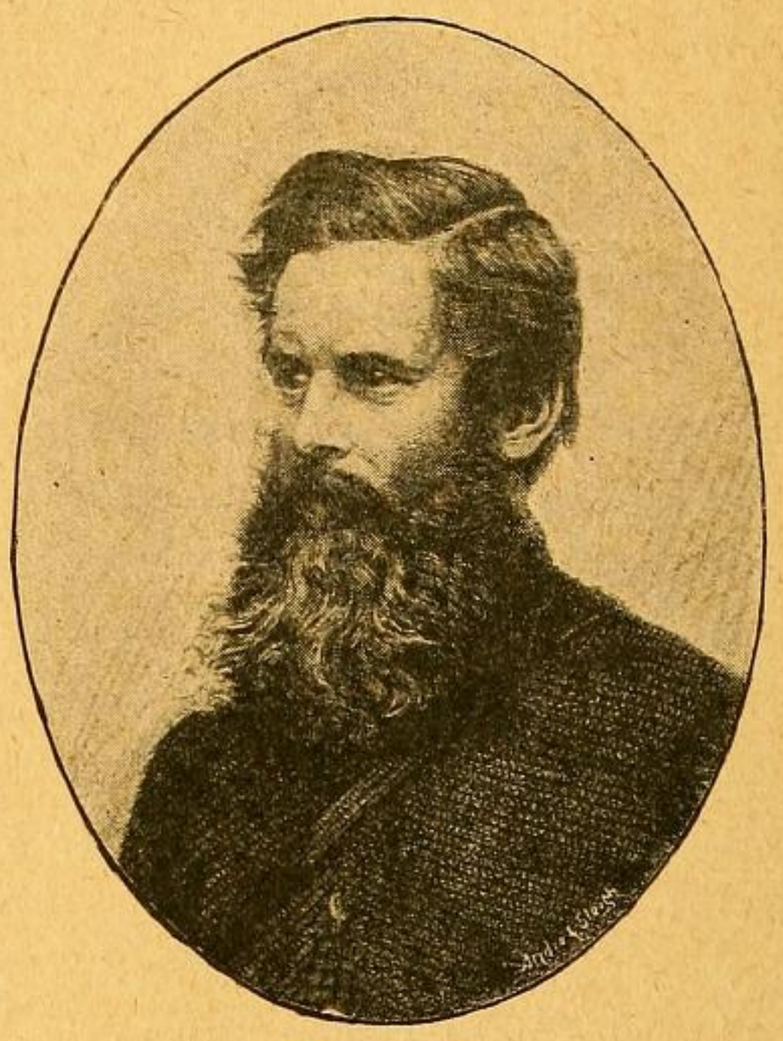
* "Voyage au Japon par le Cap de Bonne-Espérance, les Îles de la Sonde," etc. (1796). In English 4 vols. (1795).

† "Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope towards the Antarctic Circle, and round the World, but chiefly into the Country of the Hottentots and Caffres, from 1772–1776," 2 vols. (Engl. trans.), 1785; another 2 vols., 1789.

‡ Bryden, "Gun and Camera in South Africa" (1893), p. 489; and Nicolls and Eglinton, "The Sportsman in South Africa" (1892), p. 59—both admirable works, to which the writer is under obligations for most of these facts regarding the modern range of South African animals.

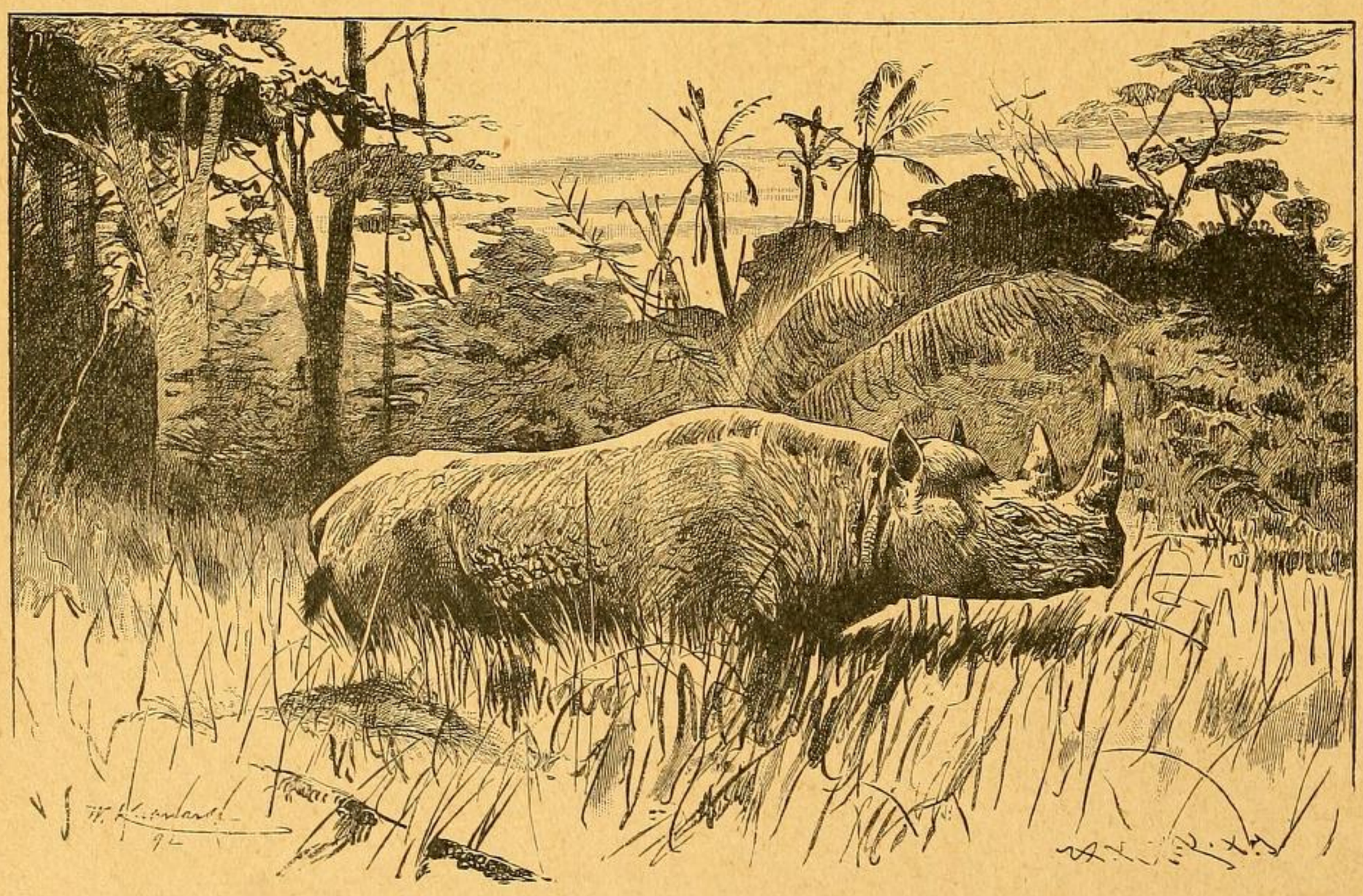
same writer, himself one of the most successful of the hunters who fell on the dull days of South African venery. About fifteen years ago some Boer hunters—and many of the best of the professional ivory seekers are natives of the country, though, not being authors, their exploits are seldom known outside the immediate circle of their acquaintances—came upon a morass in the region between Lake Ngami and the Upper Okavango, in which they witnessed what was to them a welcome sight. This consisted of 104 elephants bogged and helpless. Many of the unfortunate beasts were calves, tuskless or poorly provided with these attractive features; but that did not matter to the Dutch "hunters." They were slaughterers, and not sportsmen; and before the sun went down the marsh was full of the carcases of elephants, few of which were profitable, and none of which could ever be utilised for food.

The result of this ceaseless massacre—inevitable, if undesirable—is that, with the exception of a few scattered herds in the least frequented parts of Matabeleland and North-east Mashonaland, the impenetrable bush of the low-lying country near Sofala Bay is about the only part of South Africa where this great wild animal is now to be found in comparatively large numbers. The Colonial



WILLIAM CHARLES BALDWIN.

Government is trying to preserve it in some of the forests in the eastern provinces of the Cape. A permit to shoot a single specimen costs £20, and even then is difficult to obtain; but, as the elephants are seldom seen, the payment is generally made in vain, the intended victim declining death on any terms. At all events, it is no longer to be pursued on horseback: the hunter who is ambitious of laying one low has to take to foot, and run the risk which a pedestrian suffers when the elephant reverses the *rôle* of hunter and hunted. In earlier times it was not thought anything extraordinary to kill sixty elephants in one hunting trip of four guns, as Baldwin did on

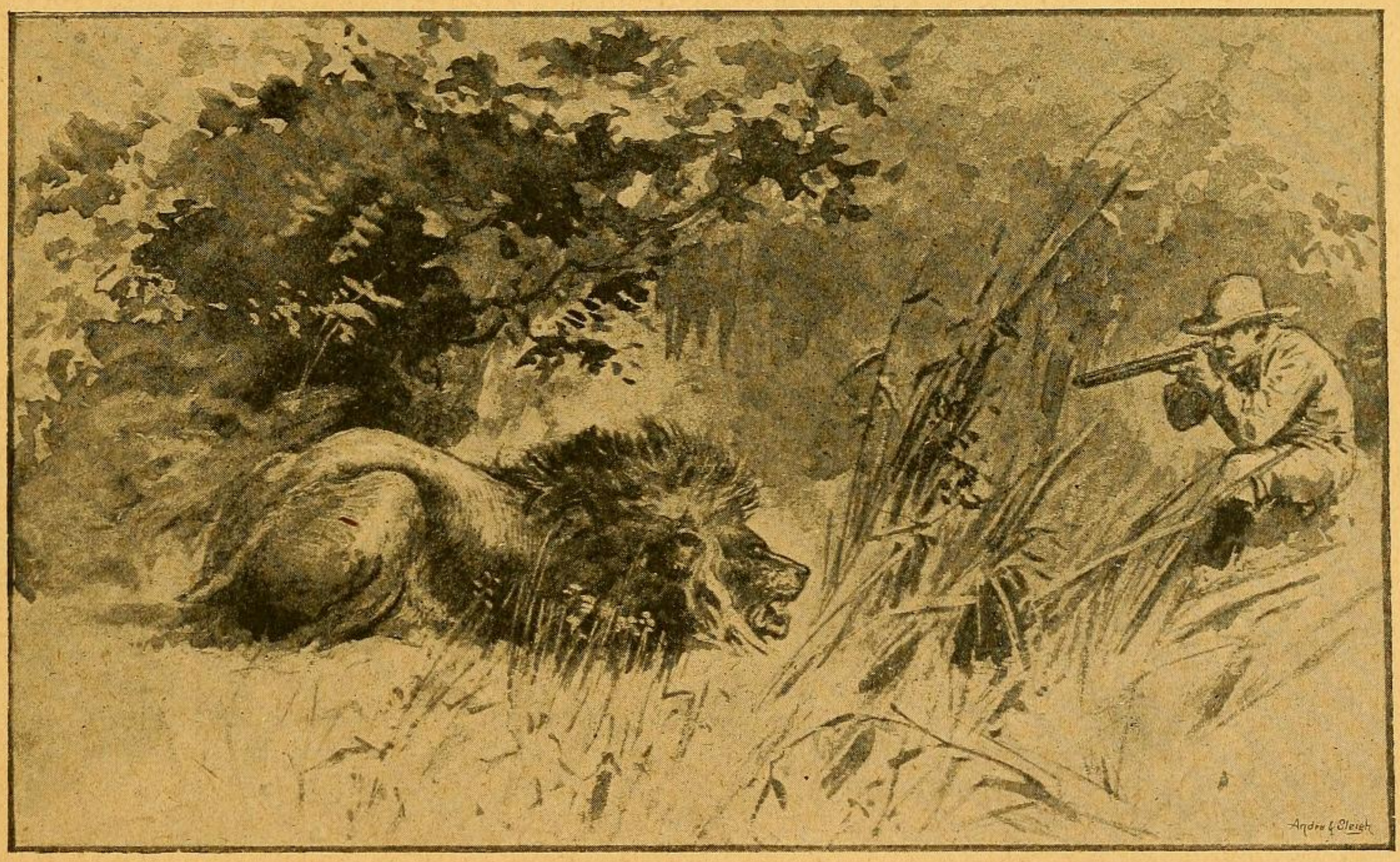


TWO-HORNED RHINOCEROS.

his last expedition—in 1860—to the Zambesi; and about the same date the famous Boer hunters, Jan Viljoen and Petrus Jacobs, slew in a single raid ninety-three elephants.

Rhinoceros and hippopotamus.

In the days when Harris and the earlier hunters took tithe of the South African game the two species of rhinoceros which until lately frequented that region were so abundant as to be almost a positive nuisance to the sportsman in pursuit of nobler quarry. The black one* was "very common in the interior," and the white species† "very common after passing Kurrichane." At one time, like all other South African game, the rhinoceros was found in the near vicinity of Table Mountain; and in connection with this fact an absurd legend is said to be preserved in the archives of the colony. Once upon a time, so runs the tale, some country-folk found a huge rhinoceros mired in the quicksands of the Salt River, not over a mile from Cape Town. Attacking it with all manner of improvised weapons, they gradually approached nearer and nearer, as the impossibility of the brute extricating itself became more and more evident; until, finding that their efforts to compass its death were ineffectual, a sage proposal was made to cut a hole in its almost impenetrable hide, and thus get at its vitals more readily. Here the story ends, as such a story should; and it would be spoiling the point to question its veracity, except that in the Dutch version the Englishmen are the heroes, while the slow-moving Hollanders are credited with the tale in its rival edition. Be it fact or fiction, it is certain that a rhinoceros will never more be seen near Cape Town or anywhere else in the more settled portions of the Cape Colony. A few linger in the Chobe river swamps and in the neighbouring Zambesi region. Until Mashonaland was overrun with prospectors it was quite common there. Some are still to be seen in Matabeleland, in the district which Lo-Bengula called his "preserve," while it is reported as frequent in the country about Sofala Bay; but it



A CRITICAL MOMENT.

* *Rhinoceros bicornis* (p. 166). † *R. simus.*

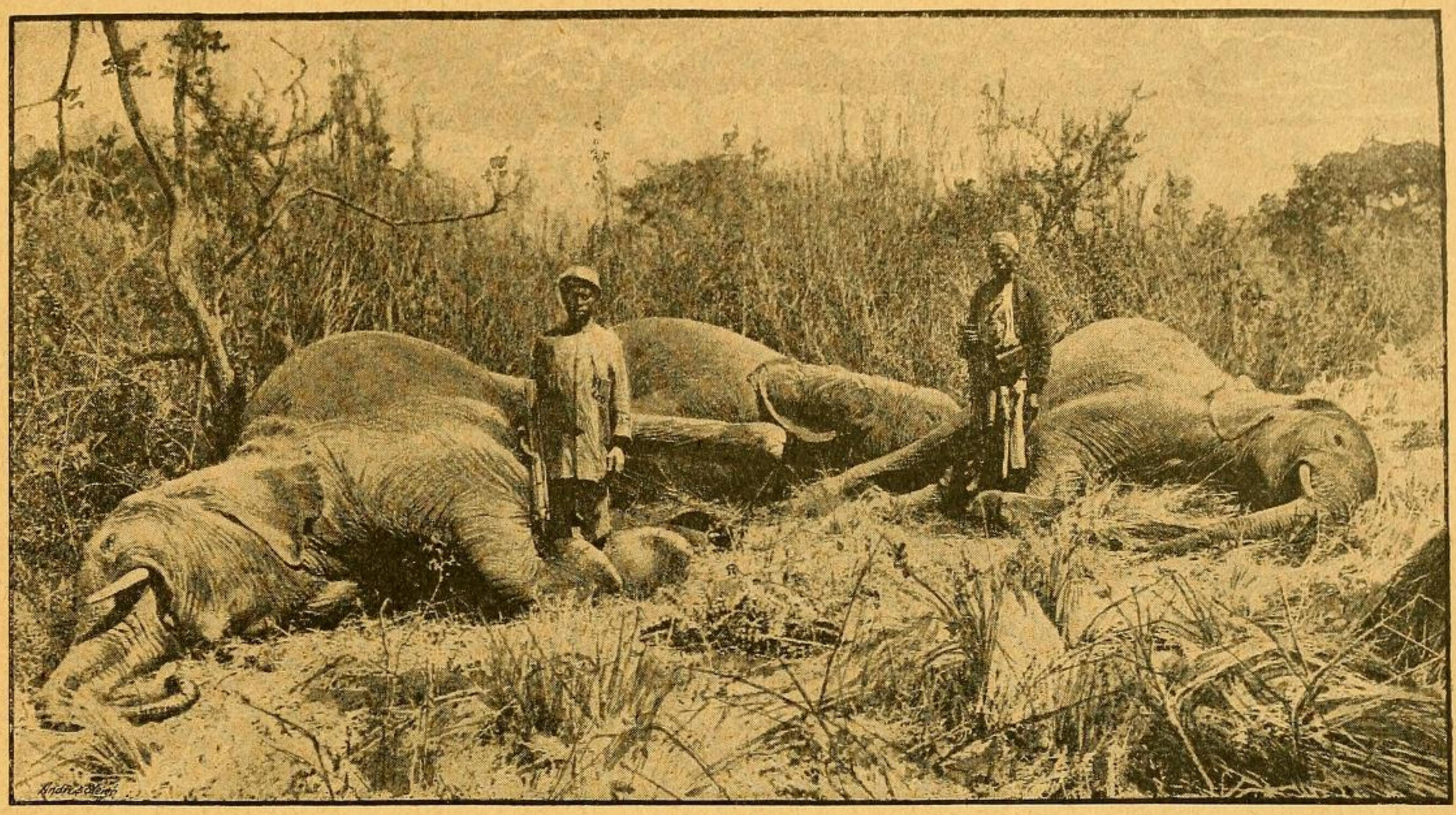
is now idle to search for the rhinoceros about Lake Ngami, where a few years ago it was abundant. They swarmed round every desert fountain and water-hole, and could be shot any night by the half-dozen. Oswell and Vardon, in Livingstone's time, killed eighty-nine in one season, Andersson upwards of sixty in a few months, and others a number not much less. The Dutchmen and Griquas also, as soon as they found a market for its hide, slaughtered it indiscriminately—the "rhinaster" not being a very difficult animal to bag—with the results described.

This, however, was the black species. The white one, if not extinct, is on the verge of disappearance, and before these lines are published it is probable that it will have gone the way of the quagga, at one time as abundant. If a few—and they must be few indeed—still survive, Mr. Selous is confident they are confined to a small tract of country in Northern Mashonaland. Even from there they would have vanished, had not the occupation of that country by the British South Africa Company kept all native hunters out of Matabeleland to the west of the Umniati river. In former times it wandered over most of South Africa, though early in this century it had retreated north of the Orange River, and tradition affirms that at a still earlier date it frequented the open wastes of Great Bushmanland also. By 1890, when Mr. Bryden was hunting in that region, this huge brute, sometimes standing six feet and a half high, and measuring between sixteen and seventeen feet in length, had disappeared from Ngamiland and the North Kalahari, one of the last refuges of the great game of South Africa; and there is no ground for believing that the white rhinoceros ever existed north of the Zambesi. Yet though on occasions active and swift, the species in question was as a rule sluggish and not so keen of eyesight as its congener, the black rhinoceros. Hence it fell an easier victim to the hunter, and when we consider the abundance of this beast not many years ago, the slaughter of it since the professional hunter began to penetrate its haunts must have been more than usually indiscriminate. Sir Andrew Smith, during his scientific expedition in 1835,* saw in one day's travel in Bechuanaland between one hundred and one hundred and fifty rhinoceroses, and in the same day one hundred giraffes, though that part of the country was never specially noted for troops of the latter animals.

The hippopotamus (Vol. II., p. 113) at one time swarmed in all the South African rivers. It is now extinct south of the Limpopo, or Crocodile, and, though a few are said to exist still at the mouth of the Tugela on the east coast, it is many a year since the last was killed in the rivers of the Cape Colony. Even the Botletli and Tamalakan, in which they were plentiful not long ago, are the homes of only a very few wary old animals, and in the Limpopo it is not until Selika's is past that any great number are seen. But in the Chobe and Zambesi they are still plentiful, and in Lake Ngami they may yet be seen in herds of twenty or more. Naturally cautious, emerging only from its strongholds to feed at night, Messrs. Nicolls and Eglinton are of opinion that the "hippo," still so abundant in intertropical Africa, may continue to haunt the rivers of South Africa long after the elephant and rhinoceros are mere legends of the country on their banks. It would, moreover, appear that this huge beast, so powerful in the water, and so helpless on land, is becoming extremely wary of the seeker after its hide for sjamboks or riding-whips. At all events, the Kaffirs, though better armed than of old, are much more afraid of an encounter with the "sea-cow." So marked is this that it is no uncommon spectacle to see herds passing unmolested up and down the open water in broad daylight right in front of Moremi's old town on Lake Ngami. In Andersson's day† they would have attacked

* "Report of the Expedition for Exploring Central Africa from the Cape of Good Hope, 1834" (1836): *Journal Roy. Geog. Soc.*, Vol. VI., p. 394; "Zoology of South Africa" (1849), etc.

† "Lake Ngami" (1856); "The Okovango River" (1861); "The Lion and the Elephant" (1873), etc.



A GOOD BAG.

(From a Photograph by Mr. Ernest Gedge, by permission of the Imperial British East Africa Company.)

CHAPTER VIII

Beast and Man: Some Campaigns of a Long War.

Game and Travellers—Influence of a Change of Masters in South Africa on Exploration—Trutter and Sommerville—Cowan and Denovan—Campbell—Moffat—Visitors to a Pool—Rhinoceroses and Hippopotami—A Boy's Mishap—A Tale of a Man and a Lion—A Chief Devoured—Burchell and Others—Captain Alexander in Namaqualand—Traces of Le Vaillant—Baboons and other Wild Animals—Running down Zebras on Foot—Bushmen and Lions—A Plethora of Game—The Black Rhinoceros—Its Friend and its Enemies—Walvisch Bay and the New England Whalers—Game among Flocks—A Story of Men and Monkeys—The Land of Lions and Leopards—Captain Harris—Rumours of Lake Ngami—Journey from Port Elizabeth over the Snowy Mountains—Vast Herds of Springbucks—Moselikatse—A Landscape Alive with Game—A Natural Preserve—"Dar Stand de Olifant"—A Fairyland of Sport—A Landscape Black with Elephants—The Young One and its Dead Dam—The Hippopotami and Crocodiles of the Limpopo—An Unfenced Menagerie—A Pest of Rhinoceroses—Giraffes, etc.—Rustenburg District in 1837—A New Antelope—The Vaal River—The "Emigrant Farmers"—Nearing Civilisation.

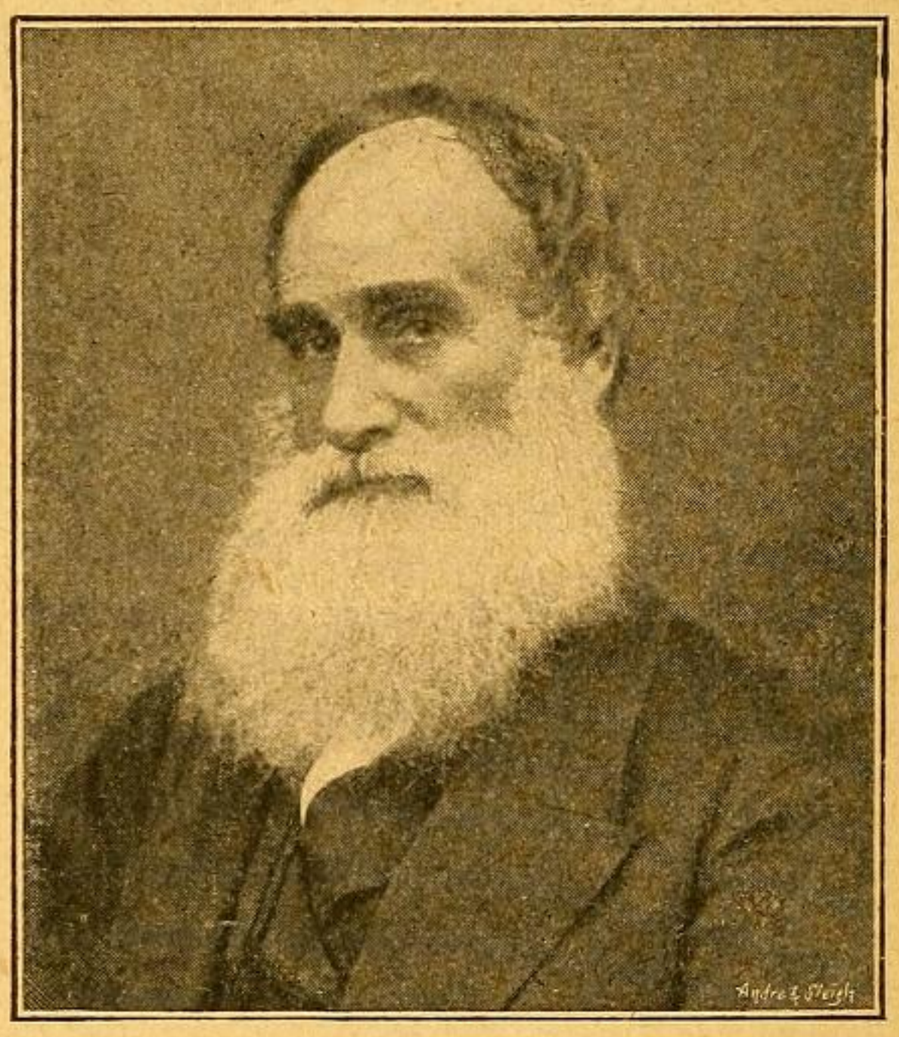
It would not appreciably serve our purpose, which is to trace the gradual progress of the African hunters from the known into the unknown, and the rapid diminution of the wild animals which fled before them, to spend much space over the earlier explorers of the country now comprised in Cape Colony, Orange River Republic, Transvaal, and Natal. At a later date we may have occasion to revert to them whilst speaking of the colonisation of South Africa. But even during the Dutch occupation the exciting amusement which the vast swarms of animals afforded, and the abundance of food which they supplied tempted many enterprising travellers to penetrate into the then little-known Kaffir countries. Most of these explorers were either military officers or naturalists; but very few, if any, of them were, as might have been expected, of Dutch nationality. Thus Le Vaillant was a Frenchman, Sparrmann and Thunberg were Swedes, and Lichtenstein, though a native of Holland, was, like Kolben, of German extraction. Henry Lichtenstein * accompanied Governor

* "Travels in Southern Africa, 1803–6" (Eng. trans., 1812).

Janssen in his progress through Cape Colony to the Orange River just before it passed into the hands that now hold it. He was the first person to visit the Batlapings. This was in 1803–6. His descriptions are, like those of his predecessors, full of notes regarding the vast herds of antelopes—one of which (*Bubalis Lichtensteini*) bears his name—elephants, and other wild animals; but the greater number of South African travellers were, and have continued to be, Englishmen. Barrow and Paterson were of that nation, and no sooner had the Dutch lost their hold on the Cape than the missionaries took up their position in a land where they had hitherto either been excluded or regarded with cold sympathy. In 1801, the Colony labouring under a scarcity of cattle, Messrs. Trutter and Sommerville "trekked" through the Great Karroo and across the Orange River as far as Lithako, in Bechuanaland, in order if possible to obtain a supply from the natives. They heard of the "Barrolongs," but were too terrified by the tales told them to penetrate their country. In 1807 Captain Denovan and Dr. Cowan, in attempting to traverse the Bechuana country to the Portuguese colony of Mozambique, were lost sight of, and, though their fate has always remained a mystery, they are believed to have died of fever in descending the Limpopo river. Other native accounts, however, insist that they were murdered in the country of the Wanketzens.

Some early explorers.

Campbell, one of the early missionaries was also one of the most active of those who reached the remoter parts of the Colony after it became a British possession. Elephants and zebras had in 1812, the year when he arrived, suffered no diminution from what the travellers of the preceding century had to tell of, and fires had to be lighted at night to scare away lions and other wild beasts. On the shores of Burder's Lake—so named from the then secretary of the London Missionary Society—the missionary party shot nine "bucks," a quagga, and an ostrich, and on their way to the Orange River the journey was rendered exciting by the travellers' hourly risk of falling into the traps and pitfalls constructed by the natives for the capture of elephants and lions. Campbell's second journey, which began in 1820, was shared in by the celebrated Robert Moffat and his wife, the parents of Mrs. Livingstone, during which they reached Kurrichane, the chief kraal of the Marotsi people, and Kuruman station, or New Lithako, the future scene of Moffat's labours, was established. Interesting though this and other missionary journeys were, the plan of this volume, which is to trace the opening up mainly of unexplored Africa, compels us to dismiss them with this brief notice.* In the Karroo and other now colonised districts springbucks, quaggas, and ostriches were extremely abundant. Halting by the borders of a pond in the Barolong country, not far from the village of Sebateng, Moffat had not long to wait before several lions came to lap the water. Then a buffalo arrived. It was succeeded by two giraffes and a troop of quaggas. The male leader of the herd, however, scenting danger, gave a



THE REV. DR. MOFFAT.
(*From a Photograph by J. Moffat, Princes St., Edinburgh.*)

The hunting adventures of Robert Moffat.

* Campbell, "Travels in South Africa" (1815–22); Philip, "Researches in South Africa among the Native Tribes" (1828), etc.

peculiar whistling signal, and set off at full speed without drinking. A huge rhinoceros was the next visitor, and, receiving a mortal wound, moved off without troubling the hunters. The white species* was in those days quite numerous, and considered so fierce that it feared no enemy but man, and when wounded or pursued not even him. The lion flew before the rhinoceros like a cat, and it has been known to kill even the elephant by thrusting the horn into his ribs. Hearing the approach of more lions, the watchers thought it better to make off; but on the way to the village at which they were encamped they passed by herds of other animals on the way to the drinking-place.

Gnus, springbucks, hartebeests, and ostriches crowded their path in countless numbers, and increased daily as the waggon trundled farther and farther away from the thinly-peopled settlements into the region where there were no settlements at all and, in places, almost no natives. In parts of Griqualand baboons were still disagreeably numerous, and even dangerous when a hundred or more of them were encountered in a narrow defile; for, if one was wounded, the others were safe to attack the hapless hunter and tear him to pieces. The hippopotamus also might often be encountered in the Orange River; but, from having been frequently hunted, was by no means so inclined to tolerate man's presence as in more remote waters. A native with his boy was hunting the animal in this river not long before the period of which we speak. Seeing one at a distance below an island, the man passed through a narrow stream to get nearer the object of his pursuit. He fired, but missed, and the hippopotamus instantly made for the island. Then the hunter, seeing his danger, ran to cross the river-banks; but before reaching it, the "sea-cow" seized him and, it is said, severed the body in two with its monstrous jaws.

A hippopotamus adventure.

Lions were encountered almost hourly, and, among other scenes, an attack upon the giraffe was a common spectacle. One of these animals was lying browsing at ease under the shade of a camel-thorn-tree,† when a lion, approaching from behind, stealthily sprang upon it; but just at that moment the giraffe turned its head, and the lion, missing its aim, fell upon his back among the thorns. Next day its body was found transfixed by the sharp, spike-like prickles on which it had been impaled. At the Rhenish mission-station of Bethany, on the Modder river, where a lion is never seen nowadays, this characteristic African animal was so common that it would sometimes be met with in the outskirts of the village.

Lion stories.

A Kaffir from this place, visiting some friends at a distance, was horrified while resting near a small pool to see a large lion watching him from the other side. Unfortunately, the man had laid his loaded gun beyond his reach, and, at any sign of reaching for it, the lion roared in so menacing a fashion that the wretched Kaffir was glad to purchase neutrality by a cessation of this constructive hostility. The situation now became extremely painful—if not for the lion, at least for the man; for, putting aside the imminent prospect of being devoured, the rock on which he sat, exposed to the glare of an African sun, was so hot that he could scarcely bear to touch it with his naked feet.

But the enemy was inexorable. Any exhibition of an intention to seize the weapon was followed by a warning roar; so that the man had all day long to temper the almost intolerable heat of the rock by placing one foot on another, until by evening both feet were so roasted that he had lost any sense of pain. The lion seemed to have only recently dined; otherwise it is extremely unlikely it would have displayed such tolerance to its helpless *vis-à-vis*. At noon it walked to the pool to

* Dr. Moffat mentions that the Bechuanas distinguished four species; in reality, there are only two (p. 169), *Rhinoceros oswelli* and *R. keitloa*, the distinction being based on the shape of the horns in different individuals.

† *Acacia giraffæ*: the Dutch settlers know the giraffe as the "cameel"—hence camelopard.

drink, looking round every few steps to watch the Kaffir, and, when he reached for his gun, turned in a rage, and was on the point of pouncing upon him. Then quenching its thirst, the vigilant brute came back to its old post. Another night passed, but whether the Kaffir slept or not he could not tell. All he knew was that it must have been at very short intervals, and with his eyes open; for he always saw the lion at his feet. Next forenoon the animal went again to the water, and while there, hearing apparently some noise in an opposite quarter, disappeared in the bush. The man now made a strenuous effort to seize his gun, but on attempting to rise he fell, his ankles being apparently without power. However, he got the musket, and crept to the pool to drink, determined, if the lion returned, to discharge the contents of his weapon into it.

But it did not appear. Then, unable—with his toes roasted by the sun and the hot rock, and his legs flayed by the sharp-edged grass—to walk, he crawled along the nearest path on his hands and knees on the chance of some traveller passing that way. This hope seemed destined to disappointment, when a countryman came up and took the famished and crippled Kaffir to a place of safety, where he recovered, though he was lame for life (p. 188).

The lion was indeed in those days, and for many years afterwards, the king of the South African wilds. His presence had always to be calculated on; for at night the oxen would tremble at hearing his roar, and, if the traveller failed to keep his camp-fire burning, or his thorn stockade up, the chances were not very remote that, before many hours elapsed, he would be disturbed by that royal visitor. The progress of colonisation soon diminished his numbers. Yet in 1835–37 the lion was so abundant on the route between the Orange and Vaal Rivers that the "Voortrekkers," or emigrant Boers, are said to have killed as many as two hundred.

A Batlaping chief, chasing a giraffe, wandered so far from home that he had to pass the night in the bush without his tinder-box, which, in a day when lucifer-matches were unknown, was an essential portion of a traveller's equipment. The want of this implement cost him his life; for next day an attendant found the chief's horse killed by a lion, but scarcely touched, at the spot where they had encamped for the night. Of his master, however, nothing could be seen except his skull. Saddle, bridle, and clothes had all been devoured, while the traces around showed that a number of lions had revelled on the ghastly meal, which, for some reason, they seem to have preferred to any other, if, indeed, they had not been alarmed before the horse could be eaten.

As for less noble beasts, they were so numerous in the earlier part of this century that the good missionary does not think it worth while mentioning them, except casually. But all of the antelopes named in the preceding chapter, zebras, quaggas, ostriches, and elephants were still abundant even within the limits of Cape Colony as then circumscribed, while in the native territories, long ago absorbed into it, they were everyday sights.

A more scientific traveller than Moffat, whose contemporary he was, appeared in 1812 in the person of Dr. William Burchell, whose name is likely to live, for some time at least, in Burchell's zebra, a species which, we have seen, is generally mistaken for the extinct, or all but extinct, quagga, and in the also extinct white rhinoceros which he discovered. He penetrated Bechuanaland as far as Chuë, one degree north of Lithako, to the country which he calls "Karrikarri," but which is more familiar as Kalahari, hunting the wild animals which were everywhere abundant in the route he took, and observing their habits with the eye of a trained naturalist. It was his intention to penetrate through the Kalahari desert so-called—though in reality it possesses many grassy spots, trees, and an abundance of juicy bulbed plants—to the Portuguese settlements south of the Congo. If he had succeeded in this design, Dr. Burchell would have anticipated

Dr. Burchell.

Livingstone by more than forty years. Less familiar, however, with the natives, and less fortunate in those who accompanied him, he failed to persuade any of them to go with him, the result of which is that this meritorious hunter is now almost solely remembered by the plants and animals brought back by him.* Among naturalists, however, Dr. Burchell deserves a high place, and, though the country traversed by him was only new to a very small extent, he is not without a reputation in the history of geographical exploration.

Under the British rule Cape Colony and the neighbouring countries were so rapidly ransacked by a host of travellers that we have been able to name only the principal of them. There were, for example, Thompson† in 1827, David Hume and Robert Scoon, two Scottish ivory traders in 1835–36, and Dr. (afterwards Sir Andrew) Smith in 1835–36, who penetrated far enough north to cross the Orange River nearly 400 miles from its mouth, and added considerably to our knowledge of the geography and zoology of that region. But it is unnecessary to recall the work of them and others in addition to the names already mentioned, since the tale they had to tell is pretty much the same as that of their predecessors, so far as the abundance of animal life is concerned. This region is now largely threaded by railways and roads, and the seat of a thriving population; but in those days the war between beast and man had still left the victory with the former. Few of the natives had firearms, and the Boers, keen hunters though they always have been, had up to that date scarcely affected the swarms of wild animals, elephants, perhaps, and lions alone excepted; for these were undoubtedly getting fewer, being killed whenever possible for profit, and in defence of the crops and the flocks, not to speak, as far as the lions were concerned, of the flockmaster also. But large portions of Cape Colony were still little known, and regions just outside its limits were about as unfamiliar as Central Africa was until the last twenty or fewer years.

Among those who essayed to explore those regions was Captain James Edward Alexander, a Scottish officer‡ whose good fortune it was to live so recently that he witnessed the settling and exploiting of a large portion of the country which he traversed in 1836–37. Leaving Cape Town, he slowly proceeded with the usual waggon and pack-oxen outfit up the western part of the Cape Colony, on the seaward side of the mountain ranges which guard the interior of that region, through the country now known as the Western Province, Malmesbury, Clanwilliam, and Namaqualand to the Kowsie or Buffalo River, which then formed the boundary of the colony in that direction. Crossing this stream, Captain Alexander continued in the same direction, across the Orange River, until, bending seaward, Walvisch Bay formed a limit to the northern course hitherto taken. The waggons were then driven eastward into the country of the Hill Damaras, through a region sufficiently indicated by the name applied to that branch of the mixed Hottentot and Kaffir races.

James Edward Alexander.

From Ni-ais, a kraal of these people and the Namaquas, Captain Alexander again turned southwards, taking a course roughly describable as about parallel with his northward one, but in general over a degree farther east, and arrived in Cape Town a little more than a year after having set out on this interesting journey.

* Burchell, "Travels in the Interior of South Africa," 2 vols. (1822).

† "Travels and Adventures in South Africa," 2 vols. (1827).

‡ General Sir J. E. Alexander, K.C.S.I., died at Westerton, Bridge of Allan, in 1885, at the age of eighty-two, after a distinguished career as a soldier and traveller in many parts of the world, which he had described in numerous works. It was he who, in the evening of his life, obtained the Khedive's permission to transport "Cleopatra's Needle" to England, and to his influence with Sir Erasmus Wilson the world is mainly indebted for saving that obelisk from being broken up. He was knighted for the journey he made in South Africa; but though it was performed under the auspices of the then newly-founded Royal Geographical Society, Alexander's name does not, strangely enough, appear among medallists of much less merit. But in 1837 there were giants in the land.

Throughout the whole of his exploration he was seldom out of sight of big game. Even within Cape Colony large animals were so plentiful that the worthy Captain takes credit to himself for not attempting a feat of which he had heard some of his friends boast—namely, the "killing of four elephants in one day, or the same number of hippopotami with the same gun"; while Boers were more frequently seen in pursuit of steinbuck than engaged in avocations that might have been more lucrative, if less exciting.

At the Heere-logement, or Gentlemen's Quarters, he came upon the trace of a predecessor; for among other names carved on a tree overhanging the cave which has received that title was that of "F. Vailant, 1783," which shows that this traveller chose, like Shakespeare, to enjoy a variation in the orthography of his patronymic. The very names on Captain Alexander's map indicate the abundance of wild beasts. Here, for instance, on his route northwards are the "Lion's Mountains," and "plains with elands." Near the mouth of the Orange River, so full of hippopotami that it was dangerous to take a boat or canoe into the places where they were most abundant, "plains with leopards," "plains with lions," "plains with ostriches," "hills with springbok"; "lions, rhinoceroses, zebras, koodoos, springboks, etc.," "hills with baboons," and "plains with gemsbok," all appear among his memoranda before Walvisch Bay is reached. "Plains of brindled gnu" occurs on the way to the Ni-ais, while on the route back to Cape Town there is frequent mention of plains haunted by rhinoceroses, koodoos, hartebeests, ostriches, lions, and other animals now seldom or never seen in the localities where within the memory of man still living they were so common.

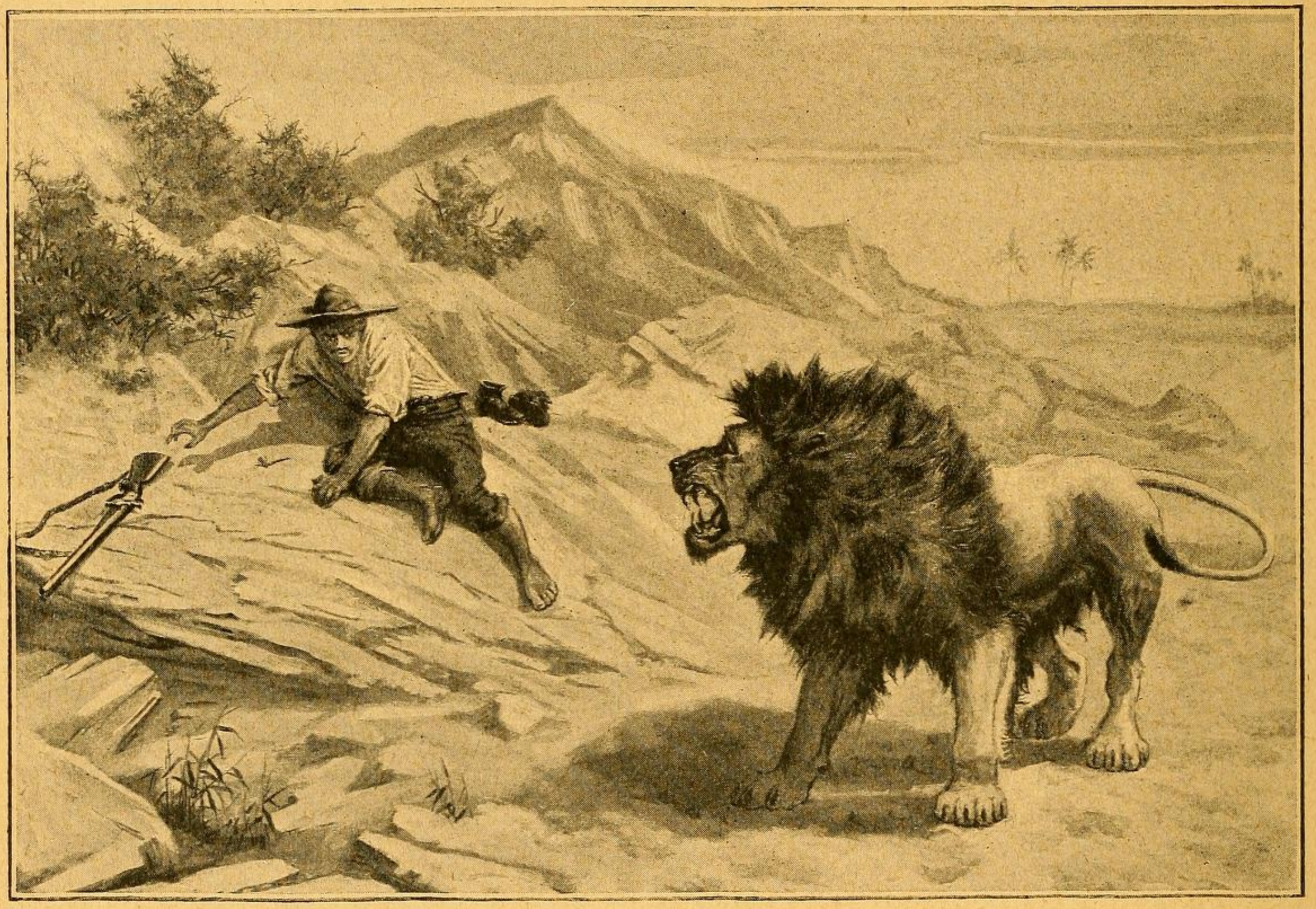
But of all the African animals of that day —more than lions and panthers, more than lurking Bushmen with their poisoned arrows —Captain Alexander says that baboons were most to be dreaded. This large dog-faced brute,* five feet in height, very strong, and covered with black hair, seemed to dread no animal except leopards, which prey on it. It lives on scorpions, spiders, lizards, bulbs, and gum, with which its paws are usually smeared. In the days of which we speak they could be seen almost anywhere in groups of a dozen or more, headed by a large male, the females bringing up the rear with their young clinging to their backs. In the morning they would descend from the holes in the rocks, where they had slept, to the cover of the trees on the river banks, where grows the juicy gourd called "naras,"† on which it, like nearly every other animal, feeds. Then its disagreeable "Quah, quah," is heard on every side, and, at the date of Captain Alexander's visit, the borders of the Orange River were not altogether safe to traverse; for this hateful brute never hesitated to attack a man, if he found him alone, or even to carry off a woman or child. If wounded, its ferocity knows no caution (p. 183): woe betide the unfortunate who encounters an enraged baboon.

Lions, the Namaquas declared, had been at one time more numerous; troops of half a dozen were not then so frequently seen as some years earlier. There were, however, no longer any elephants by the River Olifant, which had derived its name from their former abundance on its banks, and in the Namaqua country they had retreated several days' journey east of the Fish River. But lions, if less frequent than of old, were found everywhere, and of numerous shades from almost white to black, which led hunters to insist on there being several species in South Africa, whereas it is fully ascertained there is only one. The two species of rhinoceros were plentiful on the upper part of the Fish River; and zebras, spotted hyænas, giraffes, koodoos, gemsbucks, elands, hartebeests, klipspringers, springbucks, and other antelopes swarmed,

* The species referred to here and elsewhere in these chapters is *Cynocephalus porcarius*, Ishakma or Chacma.

† *Acanthosicyos horrida*, belonging to the Cucurbitaceæ.

brown hyænas, wild boars, jackals, being equally abundant. Game birds, such as bustards, of which there are four species, "pheasants"—as the francolins are called—and guinea-fowl could be had almost without the sportsman moving from his waggon. Unfortunately, however, venomous snakes were also so frequent that the traveller carried a little air-pump



THE KAFFIR AND THE LION (*p.* 183).

to suck their bites, should any of the party get wounded.

In those days the assegai, or spear, was the native's main reliance; but so skilful were some of them that a man named Henrick and his son were able, when gunpowder ran short, to run down a zebra on foot, and spear the fleet animal as they came alongside of it. Yet it takes a good horse to overtake either a zebra or a giraffe. The Bushmen (p. 189) choose a less dignified part; for, like the little jackal, which may often be found

A swift runner and a lion's parasite.

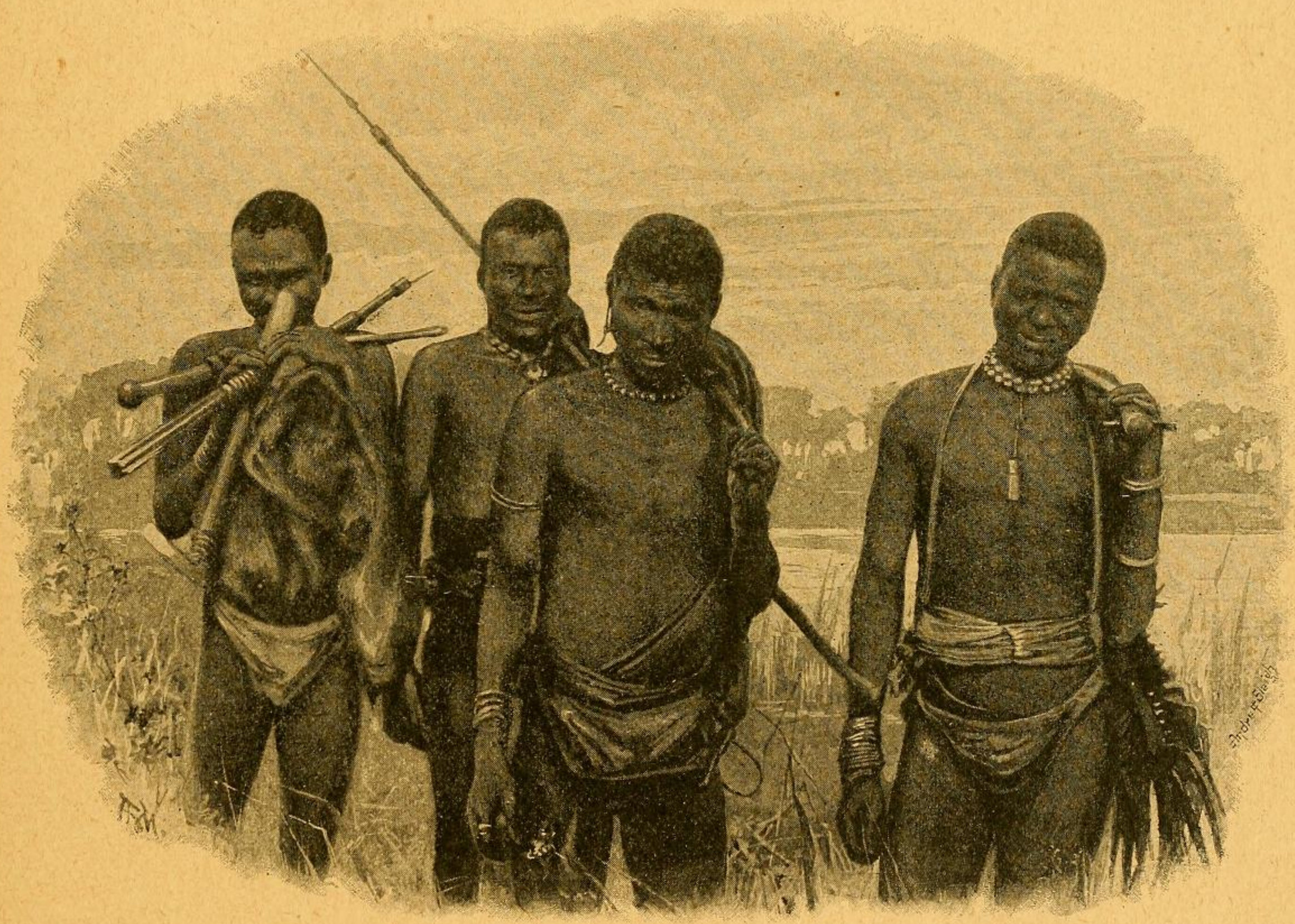
humbly feasting on the same carcase as the lion, these persecuted aborigines of South Africa have the art of frightening away a lion after it has eaten a full meal, leaving to them the remainder of the animal. "I live by the lions" was the boast of one of them; "I let the lions follow the game, kill it, and eat a belly-ful. I then go near, throw about my arms and my skins; the lions go away grumbling, and I get what they leave. I never kill lions." Yet on one fateful day a lioness killed him. She was making a meal of a wild horse—many of which were at that time at large on the veldt—and he did not observe that she had whelps with her. Beginning to halloo in his usual way, she looked up, growled savagely, and, before he had time to retreat, she sprang at him and destroyed him on the spot.

At places, reputed to be "sharp for lions," Alexander used to lie down with a dust-man's bell—we are speaking of the first year

of Queen Victoria's reign—at his head, not for the purpose of summoning anyone to dinner, but with the intention of frightening the lions from approaching what might be theirs. And, indeed, it was only when game had temporarily left the country that this dreaded marauder became troublesome; for at ordinary times man and oxen need not be attacked.

A plethora of game.

Antelopes and zebras and giraffes were to be had for the taking; at the foot of the mountains especially these animals were rife. One day—and it was not a white-letter one—a cloud of dust ahead heralded the passage of a large troop of wild horses, some of which fell to the hunters' bullets. While the natives, for lack of water, were squeezing into their mouths the moisture of the half-digested grass in the horses' stomachs, cutting shoes from the warm hides, and roasting the livers for breakfast, a herd of the magnificent koodoo antelopes made its appearance. Then, before any of them approached within firing distance, a dancing flock of springbucks engaged attention, and anon two black rhinoceroses, covered with dried mud from the pools of the Chuntop, in which they had been wallowing, tempted a shot; albeit, this thick-skinned brute will run away with a bushel of bullets in it, if they are fired at any other portion of his body except the backbone or behind the jaw. Finally, just to vary the programme, a female rhinoceros that had been wounded came snorting along with a furious rush, and, driving her horns under a bush, tore it up, covering herself with dust and gravel, all the time closely followed—as the black, unlike the white species, always is—by her offspring, occasionally



WANDERING HUNTERS (MASARWA BUSHMEN), NORTH KALAHARI DESERT.

(*From a Photograph by Mr. H. A. Bryden.*)

ploughing the ground before her, and evidently bent on mischief. What might have happened can only be guessed at; for the hunters, wheeling to the right, doubled on the rhinoceroses, which, with their deep-seated eyes and limited field of view, cannot see except right before them. This afforded the opportunity for giving the dam a bullet as she passed and the young the chance, which they embraced, of disappearing among the bushes.

The black rhinoceros, though not to be attacked with impunity, is, however, not quite so ferocious as has been sometimes described, its "charges" being just as often a desire to escape some real or fancied danger as an exhibition of actual vengeance towards an enemy. Still, amiability is so far from being one of its virtues that, excepting the rhinoceros-bird (*Buphaga africana*), it has no friend in its native wilds; but this bird, seated on the brute's back for the purpose of picking the parasitic insects infesting its hide, acts as a sentinel, and, when any danger threatens, by flapping its wings and uttering piercing cries, warns its friend of the peril menacing both of them. When the rhinoceros and the elephant have a difference, the former avoiding the trunk of the latter, makes a dash at the latter's belly and rips it open (p. 183). As for the lion, it instinctively avoids the horned beast, and the Bushmen affirm that, although found in the same haunts, they give way to one another. Yet the hyæna, if hungry, will sometimes follow the rhinoceros and, by dint of its superior agility, bite it in the rear, until it falls and dies of hunger or from the attacks of an enemy so cowardly that a cow can successfully defend her calf against it.

In the Bull's Mouth Pass rhinoceroses, buffaloes, baboons, and other animals were plentiful in 1837. Indeed, they were so almost everywhere throughout the journey, although much of it lay over so dry a portion of country that the traveller often suffered severely from thirst, even within a short distance of Walvisch Bay, now the only portion of that region that has not fallen into German hands. But at the time of which we write the shore was entirely uninhabited by white men; yet the New England whalers even then frequented the bay for killing the animals from which it derives its name, the English whalers being heard of only at Angra Pequena; and elephants were reported at the mouth of the Swakop or Bowel River, a little farther north.

From Walvisch Bay, along the arid route eastward, game did not seem to be so abundant; though in the valley of the Humaris rhinoceroses and zebras often trotted in front of them, and too often the miserable inhabitants were destroyed by lions, elephants, and other wild beasts. Among the Damaras it was quite common to see their herds and flocks grazing in company with zebras and steinbucks, both of which could be shot by stalking them from behind an ox. When a lion killed any domestic animal, all the people of the village accompanied the owner of the property, in order to look on while he slew the marauder, so familiar had the Damaras become with lions and the like. They owned thousands of sheep and cattle, and every night, in order to protect them from lions, they were driven up close to the village, though not a season passed without men and oxen being killed by the most powerful, though not the most dreaded, animal of that part of Africa.

The natives were full of tales of encounters, and many of them bore on their persons ample evidence that these adventures were not quite imaginary. It may, however, be judicious to exercise some scepticism towards another story told by the Namaquas of a man who, not long ago, had brought up a young baboon and made it his shepherd. "It remained by the flock all day in the field, and at night drove it home to the kraal, riding on the back of one of the goats, which brought up the rear. The baboon had the milk of one goat allowed to it, and it sucked that one only, and guarded the milk of the others for the children. It also got a little meat from its master." The monkey held this office for twelve months, and then, unfortunately, was killed in a tree by a leopard, the hairy

Men and monkeys.

shepherd having apparently not acquired among his other accomplishments the art of shooting

Another anecdote quite as interesting, if true—and those who have the requisite faith may credit it—is of a little boy who was carried off by the baboons and kept by them for more than a year. When recovered the child was quite wild, and tried to run away to the baboons again. It was not for some time that he regained his mother tongue, and then only to praise the monkeys for their kindness to him. They ate scorpions and spiders themselves, but, seeing he left these dainties alone, they brought roots, gum, and wild raisins for him, and always allowed the boy, in acknowledgment of his superiority, to drink at the water pools first. If some of the stories of baboon-stolen children are true—and some of them unquestionably are—the captives' treatment is by no means always so humane.

On both sides of the Ukanip river huge fires had to be kept burning in order to scare off the large number of lions which roamed that country. Men were often snatched from their sleeping-places. Hence, in addition to the fires and dogs, a watch had to be set at night; yet, in spite of all this care the ravenous brutes approached and killed one of the oxen.

A lion land and a leopard land.

Between the Hoons and the Kubieb river, where "much iron ore" was noticed, the country was uninhabited and entirely given over to lions, after which another track seemed to be equally the monopoly of leopards. The latter were even more destructive to sheep, sucking a little blood from twenty in a night, and if brought to bay sprang from one hunter to the other, and clawed their faces. This was avoided by the experienced covering themselves with their karosses and sitting down, the leopard in that case probably springing over them to pursue the fugitives.

Captain Alexander's journey was thus important, not only for the geographical points which he noted for the first time, but for the many natural history observations which were made and new species of animals and plants discovered.*

About the same time that Captain Alexander was engaged on his expedition along the western side of South Africa, another British officer — Captain (afterwards Sir) William Cornwallis Harris, of the Bombay Engineers†—was hunting through Cape Colony and Bechuanaland to the Limpopo or Crocodile River in Zululand, returning by an unexplored route across the head of the Vaal River, where Moselikatse was at war with the "trek-Boers" who founded the colony of Natal. On this journey he heard, as Dr. Smith and others had, of the "great lake" in the north, which some ten years later Livingstone was to reach and render familiar to the world as Lake Ngami; but Harris's journey was not an exploratory one, in so far that most of the country over which he travelled was already more or less imperfectly known. He was a sportsman, and one of the most intelligent and successful of his order, who in following up the still abundant but retreating wild animals, penetrated and made known regions which before many years had elapsed were to be the homes of thousands and the scenes of flourishing mining and other industries.

William Cornwallis Harris.

But in 1836 Harris had little in view except the slaying of wild beasts; and these he found on the eastern side of the continent even more abundantly than his friend Alexander had discovered in the opposite direction. Nowadays it is a long voyage from Bombay to Cape Town which takes more than six weeks with a fair wind. Harris, however, was eleven weeks on board a "fast-sailing"

* "An Expedition of Discovery into the Interior of Africa, through the hitherto undescribed Countries of the Great Namaquas, Boschmans, and Hill Damaras," etc., 2 vols. (1838).

† In 1841—soon after his return from the expedition he made into South Africa—Major Harris, on the Royal Geographical Society declining to send him in search of Lake Ngami, was despatched to Shoa at the instance of the Governor-General of India. Having concluded a treaty of friendship with Sahela Selassye, the king of that country, he was knighted.—"The Highlands of Ethiopia," 3 vols. (1844).

East Indiaman before he reached Simon's Bay. Here the pictures which Dr. Smith painted for him of the vast herds of game in the interior fired the latest sportsman to be off. Cape Colony, at least in the extreme southern part, was, however, by this time getting thinned of the larger wild animals, and so Port Elizabeth, in Algoa Bay, was long to wait for game. Grahamstown had scarcely been passed before large herds of springbucks fired the ambition of the inexperienced dogs. From Graaff Reinet, then a picturesque little Dutch village, the Sneuwberg, a lofty range of mountains immediately to the north, was crossed by Sir Lowry Coles's, Pass during weather so cold that on the

PARTY OF GIRAFFE HUNTERS.
(*From a Photograph by Mr. H. A. Bryden.*)

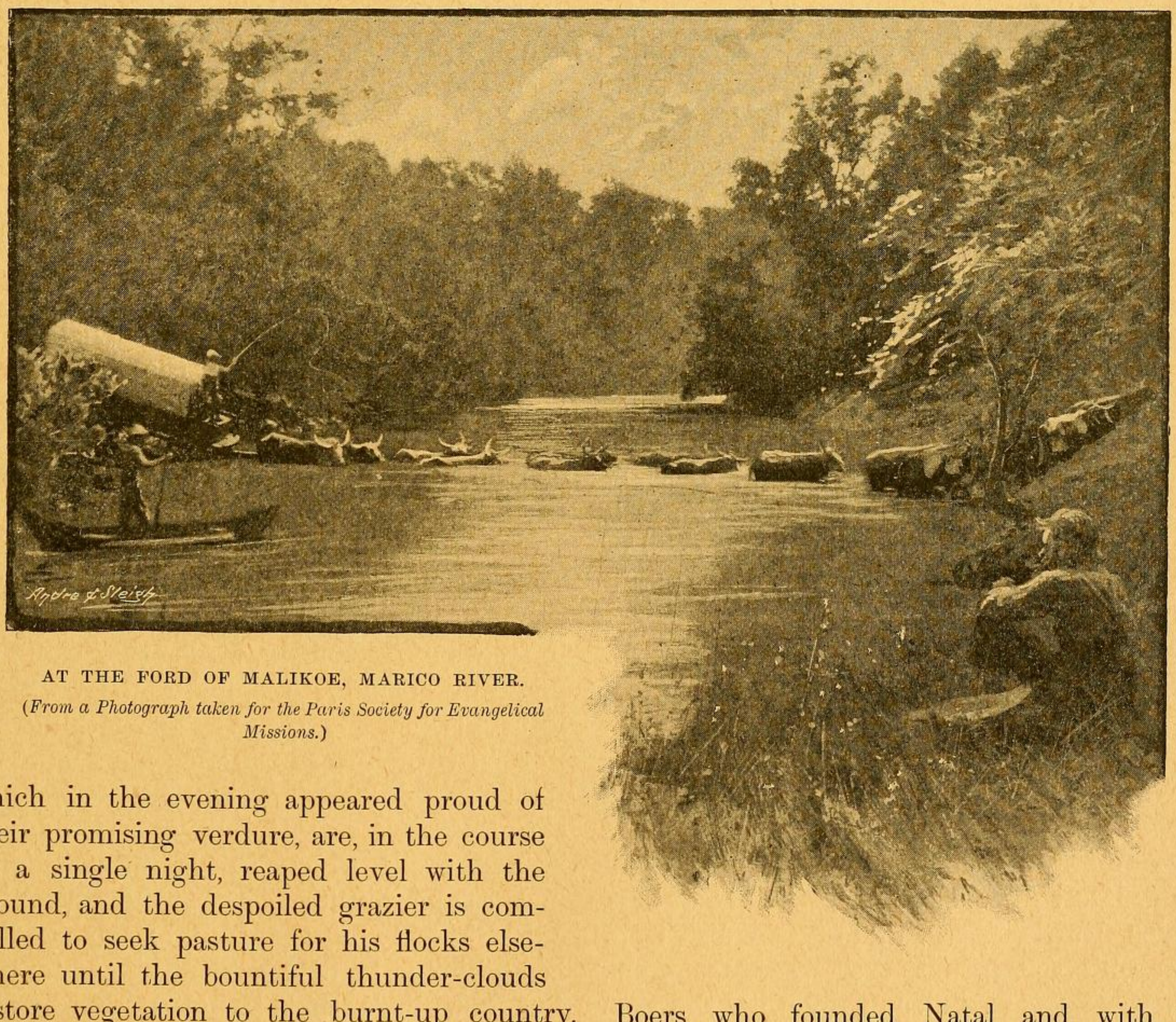
selected by Harris and his friend William Richardson, of the Bombay Civil Service, as their starting-point for the interior.

It is scarcely necessary to describe their outfit and mode of travelling. The pack-ox and the lumbering Cape waggon, dragged by many teams of bullocks (Vol. II., pp. 169, 180), and driven by a Hottentot armed with a huge whip, who, in his turn, is preceded by the "voerlooper," or "boy" in advance, are now tolerably familiar to every reader of the literature of South African travel. Nor had they

morning of the 5th September the mercury stood at 18° F., and the manes of riding-horses were decorated with icicles. But in Vogel Valley large troops of the gnu were seen for the first time, and soon the face of the country "was literally white with springbucks, myriads of which covered the plains" near Boksfontein. They were then on their way from one part of the country to another better grassed. These "trek-bokken," as the occasional immigration of countless swarms of this species of antelope

A migration of springbucks.

are called by the Dutch colonists, were, however, by no means welcome. To offer any estimate of the numbers would be impossible. Pouring down like locusts from the endless plains of the interior, whence they have been driven by protracted drought, lions have been seen stalking in the midst of this compressed phalanx, and flocks of sheep have not unfrequently been carried away by the torrent of life that has descended on the pastures through which it passes. "Cultivated fields,



AT THE FORD OF MALIKOE, MARICO RIVER.

(From a Photograph taken for the Paris Society for Evangelical Missions.)

which in the evening appeared proud of their promising verdure, are, in the course of a single night, reaped level with the ground, and the despoiled grazier is compelled to seek pasture for his flocks elsewhere until the bountiful thunder-clouds restore vegetation to the burnt-up country. Then the unwelcome visitors instinctively retreat to their secluded abodes, to renew their attacks when necessity shall again compel them." Trading seemed in those days to have been not unprofitable. Three fat oxen were bought at Campbellsdorf for a glaring red table-cloth, and a small canister of gunpowder was considered ample pay for a sturdy beast trained to the waggon.

At Kuruman, Mr. Moffat was visited and valuable information obtained regarding the travellers' proposed visit to Moselikatse, chief of the Matabele, Amandebele, or Abaka Zulus, as they were then called, whom he formed into a nation. This celebrated savage—father of the noted "King" Lo-Bengula (Vol. II., p. 178)—played havoc with the emigrant

Moselikatse, Chief of the Matabele.

Boers who founded Natal and with the Bechuanas. He was the son of a chief who, being attacked and defeated by another tribe, took refuge with Chaka, the Zulu tyrant, predecessor of the still more terrible Dingaan, uncle of Cetewayo. Moselikatse (or Umziligazi), however, succeeded in gaining the favour of Chaka, who had just

made a powerful nation of the Zulu tribe, and in process of time was entrusted with the command of an important post and a large number of cattle. With these he and his people fled to the north-westward. Every tribe on his way was "eaten up," and he soon became so formidable that his very name inspired terror throughout a vast extent of country. Having completely subjugated or destroyed every enemy from whose opposition he had anything to fear, he ultimately selected the country near the sources of the Molopo and Marico (p. 193) rivers—not far from the present Marico district of the Transvaal—for his permanent residence, and there at his then capital of Mosega, or at Kapain, a little farther north, he was residing in 1836, the terror of the surrounding nations.

On the way from Kuruman to Little Chüe, troops of ostriches were seen feeding on the boundless ocean-like expanse of country, the monotony of which was broken solely by clumps of bushes and ant-hills; and at Little Chüe, the extensive salt lake which bears that name was found surrounded by ostriches, springbucks, and other animals, attracted thither by the luxuriant "sour" grass, which the cattle refused to eat, and a small pond of water so intolerably alkaline that it was found impossible to purify it.

Acacia trees, gaudy with yellow blossoms, and perceptible at a distance by their overpowering aromatic perfume, formed the favourite food of hosts of giraffes, while small troops of quaggas and brindled gnus enlivened a landscape more pleasing than any which had immediately preceded it. In 1836 the quagga (which Harris is careful to distinguish from Burchell's zebra) was everywhere common, and seldom seen in company with the true zebra, which haunts mountain regions, while Burchell's species was generally followed by troops of the brindled gnu. The Chüe Desert, twenty miles across, was succeeded by a fine game country. Every hour brought the traveller into regions where hartebeest, quagga, and brindled gnu became more abundant. Near the Maritsani River (p. 197), troops of gnus, to be succeeded by first one herd and then another of zebras, sassabys, and hartebeests, poured into the valley from every quarter, until the landscape literally presented the appearance of a moving mass of game. "Their incredible numbers," this early hunter tells us, "so impeded their progress, that I had no difficulty in closing with them, dismounting as opportunity offered, firing both barrels of my rifle into the retreating phalanx, and leaving the ground strewed with the slain. Still unsatisfied, I could not resist the temptation of mixing with the fugitives, loading and firing, until my jaded horse suddenly exhibited symptoms of distress, and shortly afterwards was unable to move."

A landscape alive with game.

In many of the trees, thatched houses, resembling hay-ricks, were built. These the traveller imagined were shelters from the lions, many of which haunted the neighbourhood; but they were simply the habitations of large communities of the social grosbeaks (*Philæterus socius*), whose architecture forms one of the most interesting features in the ornithology of South Africa. On the Molopo River game was equally plentiful. To "pass under the nose of three rhinoceros" was not unusual, and lions were met with in troops of five or six, while other game was plentiful enough, in spite of the clouds of locusts, which ate up every green thing, and, in their turn, formed the welcome food of the wandering Bushmen. Moselikatse received the travellers with civility, not unmixed with a greed which, in the circumstances, had to be gratified. For his power was only limited by the fear of what might befall him if he behaved badly to white men. Yet how little that troubled him may be inferred from the fact that he had attacked several parties of "emigrant farmers" and traders, and had the murder of several of them, not unjustly, laid to his charge. On their way from Kapain to the Marico River the mazes of the shady parasol-topped acacias were filled with the same abundance of large

game, guinea-fowls, and bustards, and a plain on the opposite side of the river was dotted over with trees, beneath which gnus, sassabys, and hartebeests were reposing. Giraffes were frequently seen crossing the level in little troops, and quaggas passed in such cavalcades that one of them would sometimes fall at each discharge of the rifle, affording, with the still more welcome white rhinoceros—which is not white—an ample supply of flesh to the lazy natives, who hung about in the hope of feeding without the trouble of hunting for their food. Groups of large deep pits for catching rhinoceroses were noticed. Each of them was dug at the end of a narrow path, cut through the bushes, and fenced with thorns—a sharp turning leading directly upon the trap, so that an unwieldy animal, being driven furiously down the avenue, could have little chance of avoiding the snare. The pits seemed to have been constructed as much for the sake of destroying the wild beasts as of catching them for food; for at the bottom of many of them the whitened skeletons of the animals lay, evidently on the spots where they had fallen alive and been left to starve to death and their carcases to rot.

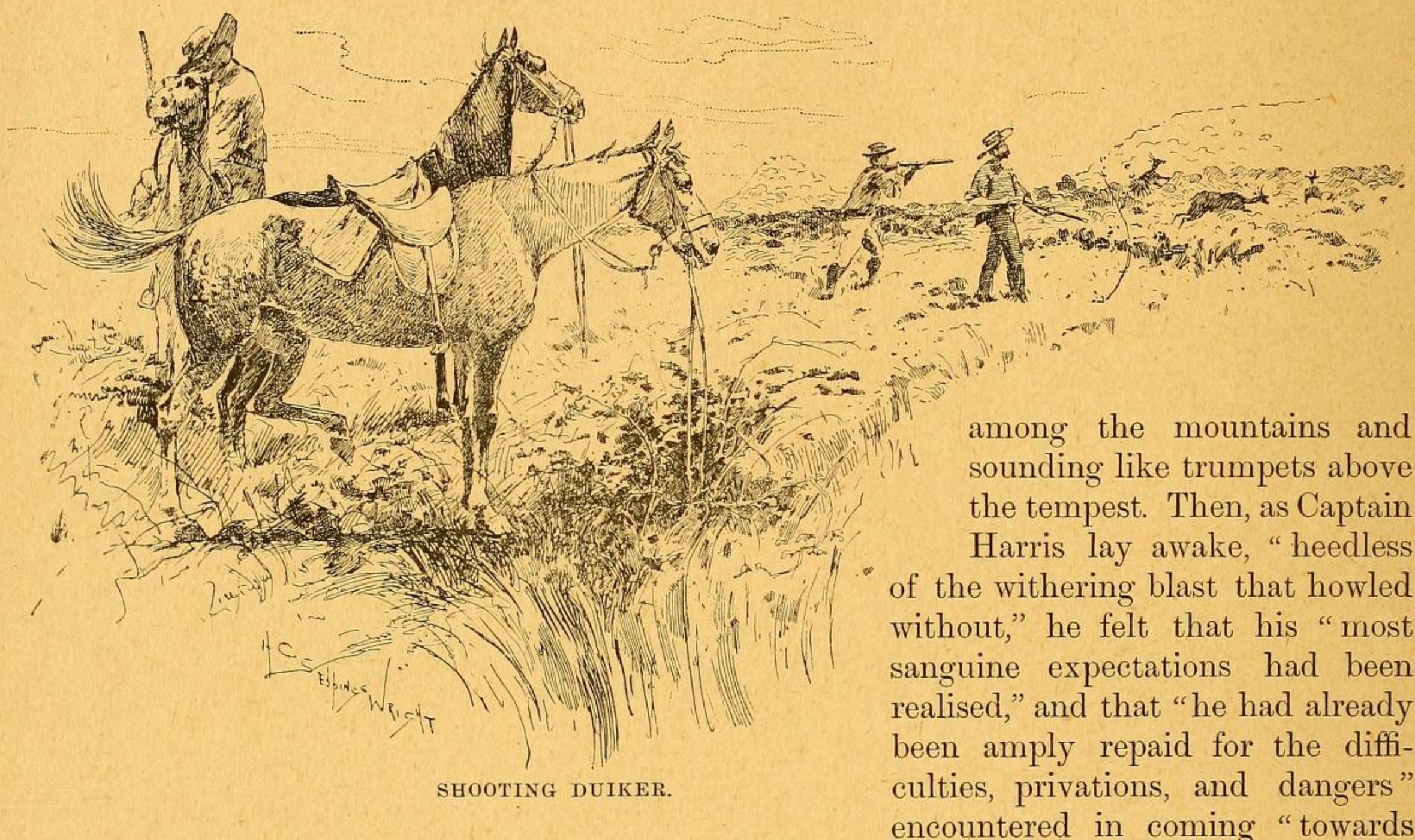
A natural preserve.

On the banks of the Similakati, the fresh tracks of lions fired the eagerness of the hunters, not yet satisfied with slaughter, though the capture of two dogs, which had rushed to the river-side to quench their thirst, by a couple of enormous crocodiles warned them that an enemy even more cruel than the "king of beasts" had to be encountered by the unwary. Not content with devouring the dogs, these loathsome reptiles crawled out of their lairs at night, and ate up a portion of the leather of the waggon furniture, besides the shoes of the men, and would doubtless have disposed of the men also had they been accessible.

On the banks of the Bagobone River, in the Cashan—or Magalies—Mountains, the first traces of the elephant were seen in the shape of acacias torn up by the root, and hundreds of deep holes made by the heavy hoofs of these quadrupeds during the time the ground was softened by the rains; and the perfect skeleton of an animal which had apparently died on the spot, and close by three lionesses lying asleep. A little farther on, the banks of the Limpopo were swarming with buffaloes, pallahs, Guinea-fowls, and ostriches; and the lions were so plentiful that a stockade had to be erected to protect the camp. The remains of an elephant calf devoured by them proved the boldness of the brutes, as well as the presence in the neighbourhood of tuskers, which the natives tried to drive out of their shelter by firing the long grass on the borders of the stream. Hyænas, wild hogs, jackals, waterbucks, rhinoceroses, and roan antelopes were equally plentiful. And such a superabundance of meat hung from every tree that it was hard to keep it from the flocks of obscene vultures that hovered overhead, or the more cunning hyænas, which, undeterred by the fate of those of their comrades that were slain, crept up at night to steal it or to hamstring the cattle. From darkness to daylight their dismal howls mingled with the bolder roars of lions—a melody with which the only surviving dog never failed to chime in.

"Dar stand de olifant."

The daring of the beasts in this part of the country showed that they had been very little disturbed. A white rhinoceros, not the most ferocious of its kindred, was even so irritated at being aroused out of its slumber that it made for the leading waggon, alarming the cattle by its loud snorting and hostile demonstrations, until a volley of bullets persuaded it to retire to a suitable bush, to be there despatched. From elevated places in the Cashan Mountains great droves of buffaloes could be seen in the valleys below, and in the narrow paths that were traversed an elephant, trumpeting in amazement at being interrupted, was a not infrequent fellow-traveller. At length, for the first time during these travels, the sportsmen saw a large herd lazily browsing on some grassy hillocks. A few minutes later the whole face of the landscape was "literally covered" with elephants. "Dar stand de olifant," the Dutch-speaking

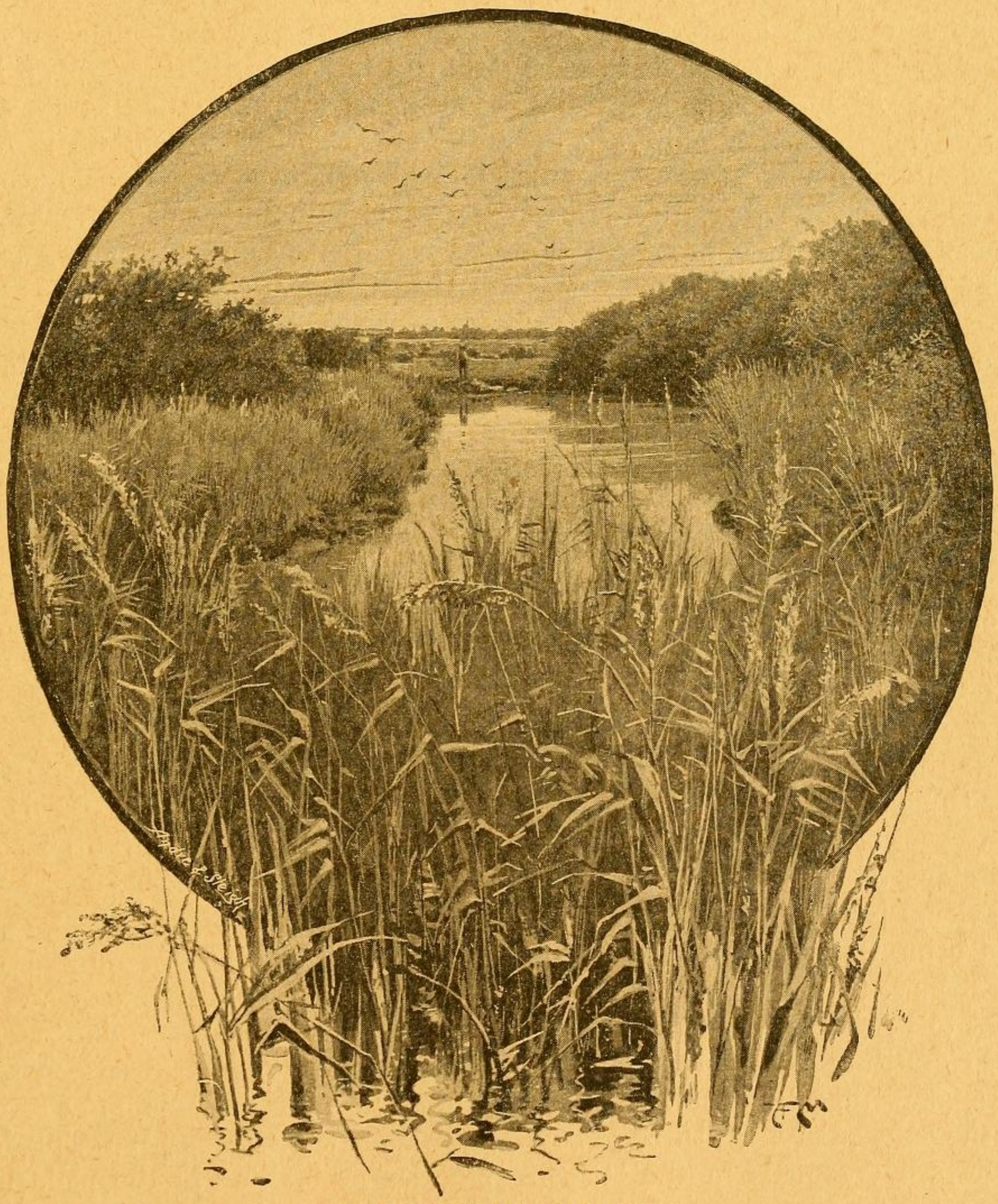


SHOOTING DUIKER.

Hottentot whispered. And at the smallest computation they must have "stood" to the number of three hundred. Every height and green knoll was dotted over with groups of them, while at the bottom of the glen all that met the eye was a dense and sable living mass, moving among the trees, or majestically emerging into the open glades, bearing in their trunks the branches with which they protected themselves from the flies. All of them were females, many with calves following them, and, in spite of a volley fired into them from a safe place—for the hunter of those days was not without the instincts of a mere slaughterer—grazed for a time without apparently being aware of anything unusual going on. It was only when the first herd seen came thundering up the valley that they followed suit, leaving one of their company as a victim to the white man's craze for "killing something" which could be of no use even for food in a camp already over-supplied, and of little value to a wealthy sportsman whose trade was not the collection of tusks. Before many hours, three other large herds were passed, in which another old female and a calf were butchered; and during the storm with which the night closed in, troops of them passed close to the waggons after dark, their wild voices echoing among the mountains and sounding like trumpets above the tempest. Then, as Captain Harris lay awake, "heedless of the withering blast that howled without," he felt that his "most sanguine expectations had been realised," and that "he had already been amply repaid for the difficulties, privations, and dangers" encountered in coming "towards this fairy land of sport," where two cow elephants and a calf had been killed rather more easily than the same number of bullocks in a butcher's yard. However, Captain Harris acted only as many others did after him. He might, indeed, have killed many more, and takes credit to himself that one of his quarry was too old to be a mother, so that only one and not several elephants were lost to Africa by her death.

On returning to cut out the tusks of the fallen brutes, not one of the great herd seen the day before was visible. Only a solitary calf stood by the carcase of its mother, saluting her murderers with mourning, piping notes. Unconscious of how little any such attentions were due to them, the calf entwined its little trunk about the hunters' legs, demonstrating its delight by a thousand ungainly antics, as it enticed them to reach the body of its mother quickly. Already the corpse was swollen to an

enormous size, and surrounded by an inquest of vultures, whose beaks had been unable to penetrate the tough hide. Little recked the young elephant of this unsightly scene. It ran round its mother's corse with such touching demonstrations of grief, wailing all the time and vainly attempting to raise her with its tiny trunk, that even the rude Hottentots were affected by the conduct of this affectionate



ON THE MARITSANI RIVER.
(From a Photograph by Mr. H. A. Bryden.)

little brute. Then for the first time Captain Harris began to regret that, in firing at the herd yesterday, he had not felt greater compunction, and divested him of the idea that he was shooting, as he had so often shot before, a merciless tiger in Guzerat. Finding that its mother heeded not its caresses, the miniature elephant followed her tusks to the waggons. It died, however, in the course of a few days; as did two others, much older, that were afterwards captured, demonstrating the cruelty and wastefulness of life that follows the slaughter of nursing-elephants.

The Cashan Mountains seem in those days

to have been what our hunter described them—a "fairy land of sport." Elephants were often observed climbing, with the agility of goats, to the very summit of the chain, until at length they stood out in bold relief against the blue sky. At the sound of a shot a tribe of pig-faced baboons would emerge from their sylvan haunts to display anything but sympathy with the intruder; and the lions took frequent advantage of stormy nights to visit the cattle-fold. At that time, too, the Limpopo was full of hippopotami, dividing the lordship of the river with the crocodile, which gave an alternate name to that stream, and all along that part of its valley visited by our travellers the country presented the appearance of a huge unfenced menagerie—the host of rhinoceroses that daily exhibited themselves almost exceeding belief.

"A fairy land of sport."

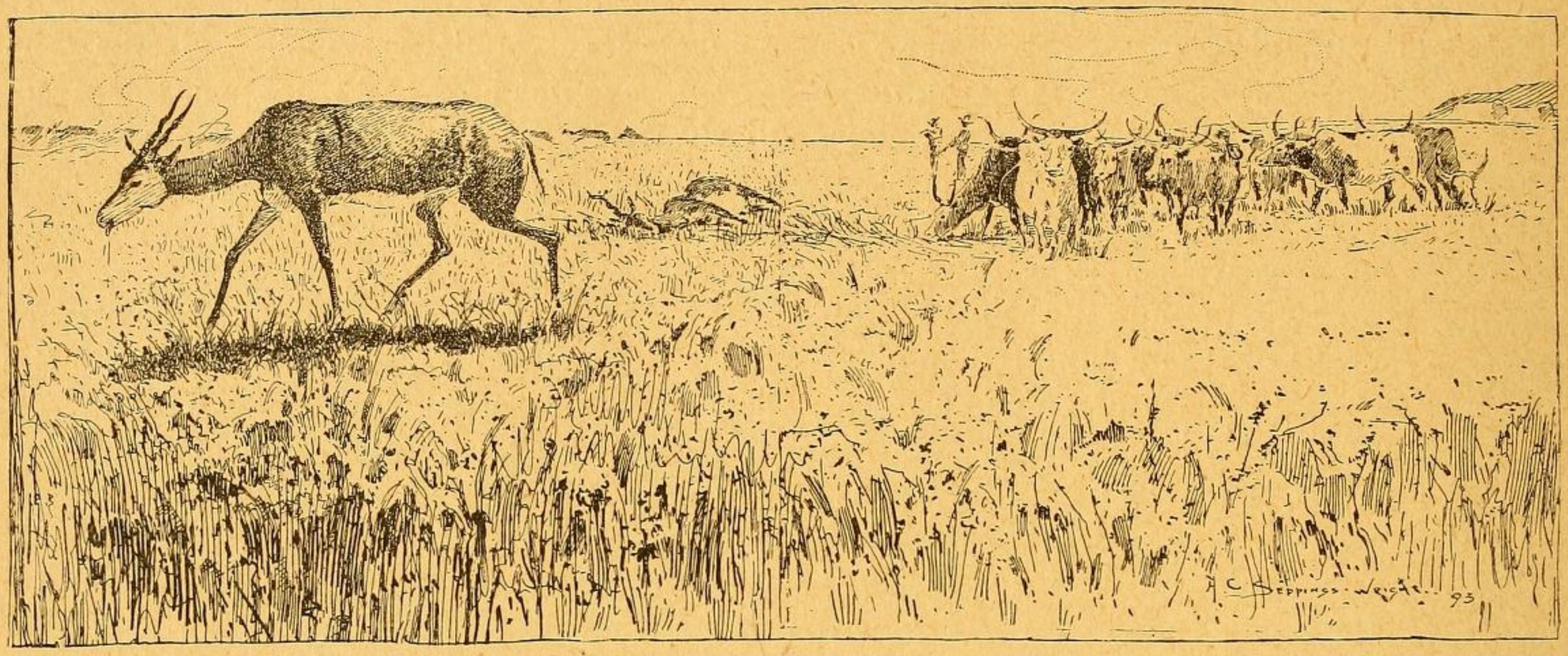
Not half a mile from where the waggons stood the white rhinoceros was so numerous that twenty-two could be counted in view, four of which had to be killed in self-defence. On another occasion Harris was besieged in a bush by three at once, and had some difficulty in beating off his assailants. Buffaloes in troops might also be seen from the camp, glaring with "malevolent grey eyes" under shaggy brows at the intruders on their domains, and at times charging with the fury which makes these beasts, if wounded, among the most dangerous of all the African animals. The roan antelope, or gemsbuck, will also at times charge viciously when unable to continue its flight, and being the size of a large horse, with robust, recurved, scimitar-shaped horns, its fury is not to be despised. This antelope is, however, so destitute of speed that it may be ridden to a standstill without difficulty: it is then that the exhausted beast turns at bay.

In those days every glade in the Cashan Mountains, not very far from where the capital of the Transvaal now stands, abounded with brindled gnu, hartebeest, sassaby, quagga, ostriches, and wild hogs. And among the sedge-bordered rivulets, the reedbuck, now extremely rare in the Transvaal, was common, while in the mountain range and its grassy environs, klipspringers, rhébuck, ourebi, steinbuck, and duiker (p. 196) swarmed. But with the exception of the garrulous guinea-fowl, whose nightly cackle might be heard as they ascended the trees to roost, feathered game was comparatively scarce; a few bustards of different species, and sand-grouse—the "partridge" of the colonists—were about the only birds observable, from a sportsman's point of view. On the banks of the Limpopo, a buffalo was killed as it was swimming across, and a black rhinoceros, as it got pent up in a *cul-de-sac* formed by an old stone enclosure; while, to vary this amusement of slaughter, a troop of brindled gnus, being pursued by a rhinoceros, dashed into a defile in the hills, at the outlet to which, the "hunter" relates with some gratification, he stationed himself, and "disposed of two with each barrel."

Rustenburg in 1837.

As the party proceeded towards the junction of the Marico with the Limpopo game became scarcer, and the few miserable remnants of the Bakwarris, who had fled here from the fury of Moselikatse, were disinclined to hold any communication with the travellers. Even the offer of a pinch of "Irish blackguard" snuff, of which a plentiful supply was carried, failed to dissipate the suspicion of strangers engendered by much misfortune in these timid people, emaciated and even starving in a land so swarming with game as the country immediately north of them, and even in the close vicinity.

In going south-east from the Cashan Mountains, through a region characterised as "beautiful beyond description" in its flower-spangled meadows between rich stretches of grove and forest, herds of elephants were seen from the waggons, browsing in indolent security or bathing in the pellucid streams. Upon being attacked, they would rush, a hundred strong, down the ravines with up-raised ears and swaying trunks, "trumpeting" wildly and levelling everything before them. Nor did scarcely a day pass without the party seeing two or three lions, which invariably



STALKING BLESBUCK BEHIND OXEN.

CHAPTER IX.

Man and Beast: the Beginning of the End.

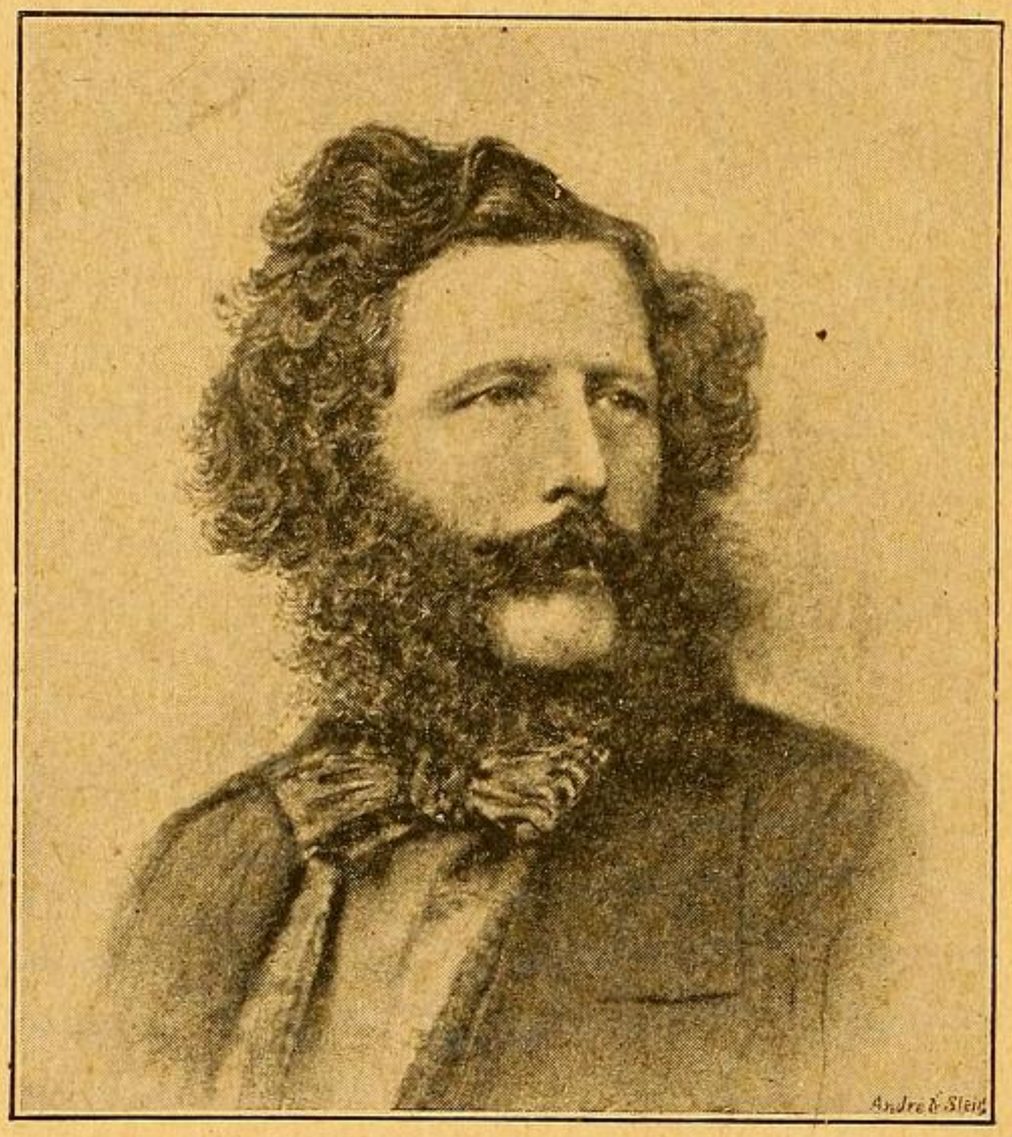
Influence of Harris's Tale on the Decimation of South African Game—Early Traders—Their Ways of Life—Gordon Cumming—His History—Boers and Englishmen—A Hunter's Kit—Cumming's Journeys—Herds of Game in Bechuanaland—Meets with Moffat and Hume and Hears of "a Missionary named Livingstone"—Cumming's Various Journeys in Bechuanaland and into the Limpopo Valley—His Feats with the Hippopotamus—A Vision of Blesbucks—Return—Reception—Foolish Incredulity—Livingstone's Testimony—Oswell and Murray—Oswell's Exploits—The So-called Rhinoceros oswelli—The Kobus vardoni Commemorative of Major Vardon and the Antelopus roualeyni of Cumming—Lake Ngami and the Hunters and Explorers who Made for it—Galton and Andersson's Attempt to Reach it from Walvisch Bay—Andersson's Success—Green—Wahlberg—Hemming's Hunting Trip from Walvisch Bay to the Congo—The Chapmans and Baines—Baldwin and the Zambesi—Mysterious Initials—Decrease of Game in Ngamiland with Increase of Visits to Lake Ngami—Polson—Waddington and Aldersley—Selous—His various Journeys and Discoveries—A Hydrographic Problem, etc.

The publication of Harris's account of the swarms of animals found on the outskirts of Cape Colony marks a distinct date in the history of the battle between man and beast in South Africa. It fired, in the first place, a host of professional hunters and sportsmen to take tithes of the vast herds of elephants that swarmed in the country which he had visited. Then, after the fear of Moselikatse and his brother chieftains had abated, the traders' wagons trundled not only to the remotest farms of the "trek-Boers," who had now begun in earnest those pioneer journeys into the wilds which form so remarkable a feature in the history of South African colonisation, and into the native territories beyond. Most of the professional hunters were Dutch; but some were Englishmen, more Scotsmen, while the traders of the region with which we are concerned were for the most part of British nationality. As a merchant, the Boer has never excelled; and in a bargain with a Scot the Dutchman usually fares as fares the earthen pot when it comes into collision with the brazen one. They carried—for though the trader is still a familiar personage in South Africa, railways and towns have greatly altered his way of doing business—a little of everything; and the pedlar of the wilderness who, after he had outspanned his oxen on a Boer farm, was deficient in the capacity to persuade Mÿnheer or his vrouw to barter a few fat oxen for some of the commodities which he

The early traders.

knew this mighty Nimrod—some even that have hunted with him, and one and all agreed that he was the bravest and most daring white man they ever knew. To them I have recounted the principal episodes which he narrates in his work, and which have been condemned by many of his countrymen as utterly improbable, nay, impossible—but one and all, without a single dissenting voice, attested to their truth.

"Sicomey, the father of Khama, now king of Bamangwato, when a fugitive at Matchuping's, told me of deeds performed by Gordon Cumming which, if possible, outrivalled those he has recounted in his work; and I have often thought that these were withheld from the British public for the reason that he had not authentic witnesses to produce who could endorse his statements."*



ROUALEYN GEORGE GORDON CUMMING.

But it was not for some years after his return that Cumming received a testimonial to his truthfulness, from a quarter whence the world least expected it. When the hunter visited Bechuanaland, he received—we have seen—much kindness from Dr. Moffat and his son-in-law, Livingstone. Moffat was then a well-known man, but the name of the latter was strange to the thousands who, in 1857, became familiar with it as that of the greatest of African travellers. In his first book he bears warm testimony to the veracity of his much-maligned countryman. Letloche, about twenty miles beyond Bamangwato, was Cumming's farthest station north, and as Livingstone was frequently visited by the daring hunter, and heard from the guides who accompanied him verbal accounts of the adventures not then published, he had no hesitation in characterising his severely criticised volume as an accurate description of South African hunting. "The native guides learnt," he tells us, referring to the sportsmen who preceded or followed Cumming, "to depend implicitly on the word of an Englishman for the subsequent payment of their services, and they gladly went for five and six months to the north, enduring all the hardships of a very trying mode of life, with little else but meat of game to subsist on—nay, they willingly travelled seven or eight hundred miles to Grahamstown, receiving for wages only a musket worth fifteen shillings. Only one man ever deceived them; and as I believed that he was afflicted with greediness to a slight degree of insanity, I upheld the honour of the English name by paying his debts." Before Cumming left Africa he met, at Colesberg and other places, with Mr. William Cotton Oswell and Mr. Mungo Murray, names before long—like those of Mr. Webb (p. 210) and Colonel Steele, two other South African sportsmen of about the same period—to be linked with that of Livingstone in the exploration of South Africa. Like Major Vardon, who also had (in 1848) visited the Limpopo, these sportsmen had made their head-quarters at the mission stations in the game country. Mr. Oswell (Vol. II., p. 225) had entered the Madras Civil Service early in life, but his health failing, he was, like so many others in like case, ordered to the Cape of Good Hope to recruit. This he did to such good purpose that he lived to the age of seventy-five, one of the halest of English country gentlemen.

Oswell and Murray.

* "Shooting," November 17th, 1886.

He spent the best part of five years in Africa, hunting over tracts now the site of farms and towns, but at that time a haunt of wild beasts. When Livingstone determined to cross the Kalahari, until then supposed to be impassable (Vol. II., p. 183), Oswell and Murray returned from England in order to accompany him. They therefore deserved, and have always obtained, part of the credit due for the discovery of Lake Ngami, though, indeed, as nearly every traveller in Bechuanaland had for nearly half a century

W. F. WEBB.

(From a Photograph by D. Battenhaussen, Port Elizabeth.)

heard more or less accurate native gossip about this sheet, a less definite term than "discovery" would apply to their reaching the goal for which they set out. Oswell and Murray, indeed, bore the greater part ot the expenses attendant on the journey; and, apart from the geographical results of their travels, they opened up a region which has ever since been the only one in Africa that bears any resemblance to the country which the earlier hunters saw in the Cape, Orange Free State, Bechuanaland, Transvaal, and in the Limpopo Valley.

Unhappily for the persecuted fauna of Africa, the last of these places of refuge was from that date invaded by an ever-increasing crowd of sportsmen. Oswell was the most modest of men. No persuasion could induce him to put on record any of his interesting experiences, though every trophy from Africa, South America, and other countries in which this valiant "Shikari" had pursued wild beasts, with which his house at Groombridge, near Tunbridge Wells, was decorated, recalled an adventure. It was Livingstone and his two friends who discovered the lechwe antelope (*Kobus lechee*) in the region near the Botletli River, where it is still common. The pookoo (*Kobus vardoni*) of the same country, though now extremely rare, bears the name of another sportsman who also died without putting the world into his debt.

The kuabaoba, or straight-horned rhinoceros (*R. oswelli*), is, however, not a permanent species (p. 183), but a variety of the black one. This is to be regretted, for the man after whom it was named deserved the fame which zoology has to bestow, albeit he played sore havoc among the African feræ. For years after he left Bechuanaland the natives and the professional hunters used to talk of the courage and skill with which he hunted the elephant. No such adept ever came into the country; and when the Kaffirs wished to flatter Livingstone, they would tell him that if he had not been a missionary he would "have been just like Oswell." For up to that date he was the only European who hunted without dogs. A few yelping curs easily distract the attention of the tusker and render him incapable of attending to man. He endeavours to crush them by falling on his knees, and sometimes places his forehead against a tree ten inches in diameter, and pushes it before him. The only danger to the hunter is, that the dogs may run towards him and bring the elephant along with them.

Oswell had been known to kill four large old males in one day, bearing in their jaws ivory worth one hundred guineas. His narrow escapes were many. When on the banks of the Zouga (Botletli), in 1850, he pursued an elephant into the dense thorny bushes on the margin of the river. As he followed it through a narrow pathway, he saw

his quarry (of whose tail he had but got glimpses before) reversing the part of hunter and hunted. As the beast turned and rushed on him, he had no time to effect a passage. The hunter therefore tried to dismount; but in doing so he was thrown on the ground, with his face upwards to the elephant, which, being in full chase, still went on. Mr. Oswell, seeing the huge forefoot of the animal about to descend on his legs, parted them and drew in his breath, as if to resist the fatal pressure of the other foot, which he expected would next moment crush his body. Happily, however, the whole length of the infuriated beast passed over him, and he escaped unhurt. A similar experience is in the repertory of Mr. Selous. In both cases, it is perhaps needless to add that, as when Livingstone was thrown down by a lion, the length of time occupied by the incident seemed a good deal longer than it took in actual seconds.

The discovery of the character of the Kalahari, and of the multitude of elephants on the shores of Lake Ngami, soon brought numbers of hunters and traders on the scene, until the lake and the surrounding region became one of the best known of the Cape border-lands. Explorers also, in an age when inner Africa was far from the familiar field it is nowadays, began to think of a region then regarded with much the same feelings that the more northern lake-land was a few years later.

Lake Ngami and its hunters: Galton and Andersson.

Among these was Francis Galton,* still active in scientific work, but in 1850 only known as a young man anxious to effect an exploration from South-West Africa to the lake just discovered by Livingstone. He was not a hunter in the sense that the word has been used in these pages. But his companion, Carl Johan Andersson, was both a sportsman and a naturalist. A Swede by birth,† though, it is understood, the son of an English sportsman who, under the name of "L. Lloyd," passed many years in Scandinavia, he came to England with a large collection of living animals and specimens, by the sale of which he intended to defray the cost of a journey to the hunter's paradise of South Africa, when he heard of Mr. Galton's intended journey and his willingness to permit him to join in it.

Their travels, which began in August, 1850, at Walvisch Bay, were intended to explore the Damara and Ovampo countries, the unknown districts between Namaqualand and Benguela, and, if possible, reach Lake Ngami from the west. This programme, owing to the disturbed condition of the region nearest them, was only partially carried out. Erongo, a curiously shaped mountain, was, however, visited and examined, and a new country, not seen by Alexander and their other predecessors, entered upon in March, 1851. Finally, in spite of the warnings received and the visible evidences they were constantly coming across of the Namaquas' ruthlessness, they reached Ovampoland, then almost entirely unknown. But any eagerness they felt to explore the Cunene River, or the lands towards the east, was thwarted by the peremptory refusal of the Ovampo chief to permit his white visitors to go farther than his capital. Accordingly, to Walvisch Bay they were forced to return. This was the last essay of Mr. Galton in African or other exploration, though his pleasant narrative‡ obtained for him one of the Royal Geographical Society's medals, which had been denied to Alexander and to Harris.

Andersson, however, could not bear to return without accomplishing the feat on which he had set his heart. In this he succeeded. He reached Lake Ngami, and

* Francis Galton was born at Duddeston in 1822, and educated at King Edward's School, Birmingham. After studying medicine, he graduated, in 1844, M.A. at Trinity College, Cambridge. A visit to northern Africa stimulated him to undertake the expedition which forms his chief claim to rank among travellers. Since 1852 he has devoted himself to meteorology, the problems of heredity, finger-marks, and allied subjects, which, as a grandson of Erasmus Darwin, he may be considered to have a family claim to investigate.

† He was born in 1827, at Elfsdalen, in Wermland.

‡ "Narrative of an Explorer in Tropical South Africa" (1853; new edition, 1892).