

THE DIAMOND HUNTERS  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

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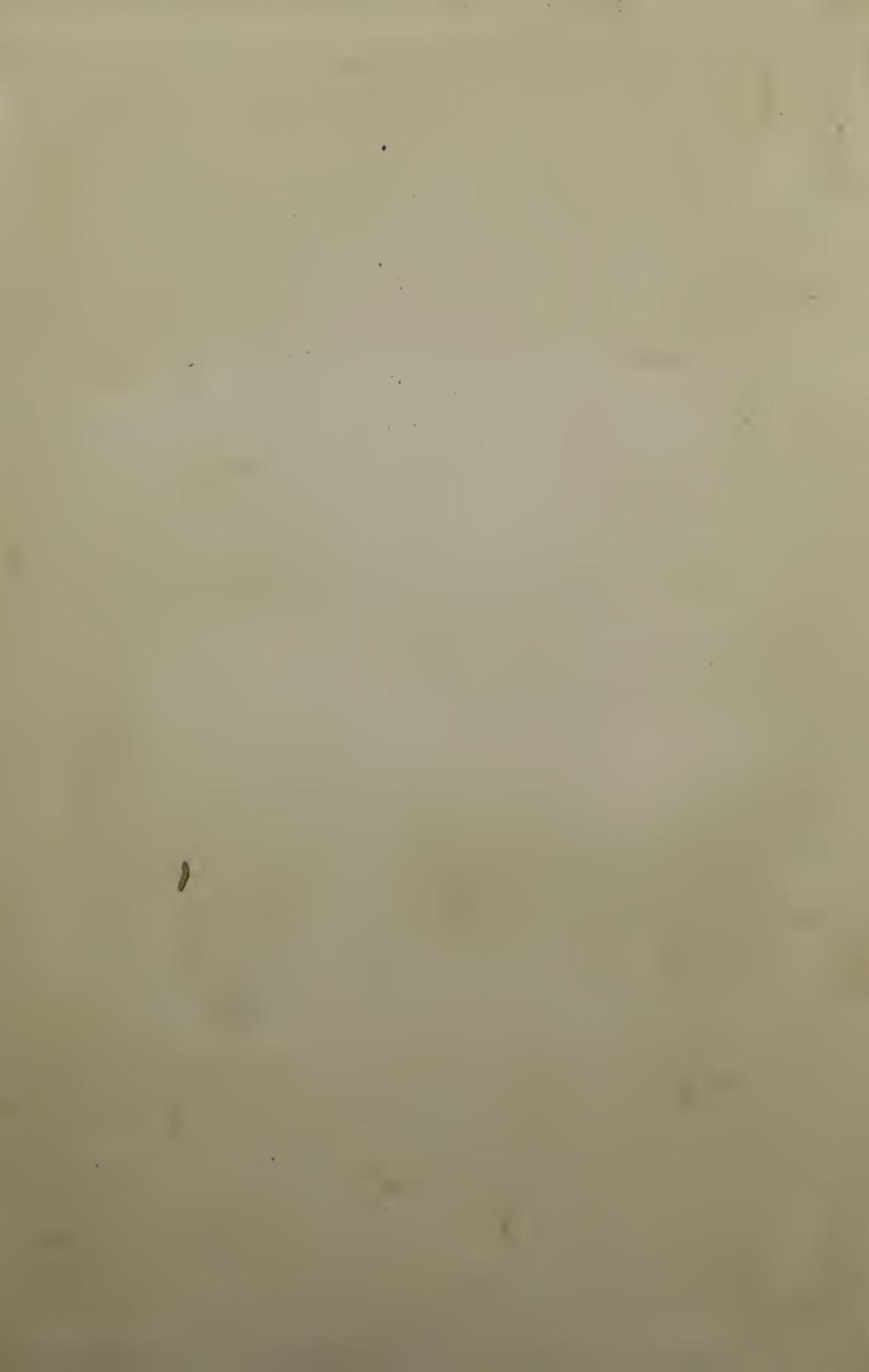
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THE DIAMOND HUNTERS OF  
SOUTH AFRICA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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THE FISTOL TO THE RESCUE.—P. 326.

# THE DIAMOND HUNTERS

OF

## SOUTH AFRICA

BY

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AUTHOR OF 'AMONG THE ZULUS,' 'TALES AT THE OUTSPAN,'

'THE WHITE CHIEF,' 'FROM KEEPER TO CAPTAIN,'

ETC. ETC.

*ILLUSTRATED BY A. W. COOPER*



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## CHAPTER I.

### D'URBAN AND NATAL BAY AS IT WAS.



PORT NATAL FROM THE BEREA.

**F**EW localities have gone through a greater change during the past fifty years than the Colony of Natal. At the date when this tale commences there were but two towns in the Colony, only one of which was really worthy of the name of a town. D'Urban consisted of a few scattered huts, built mostly of wattle and daub—that is, of a framework of wood, something after the fashion of a hurdle, plastered over

with mud ; whilst Pietermaritzburg was a town consisting of three or four parallel streets, with some well-built houses. With the exception of these two places, there were no gatherings of houses in the Colony.

There were several huts scattered about in localities favourable to agriculture or to feeding cattle ; but these had sometimes for their next-door neighbour another settler distant ten or twenty miles.

Between D'Urban and Pietermaritzburg, a distance of about fifty-four miles, there were only three or four houses, whilst the road was nothing more than a mere waggon track. The neighbourhood of D'Urban was densely wooded. A forest, termed the Berea Bush, extended from the Umlass River, some ten miles to the west of D'Urban, up to the Tugela River to the east. This forest varied in width from four or five miles to one or two, and was so dense that it was difficult for a man to force his way through it, except he followed the tracks of the large game, such as elephants and buffaloes, which were then numerous in this forest.

The greater number of the inhabitants of this district consisted of Caffres, who were independent of the great Zulu nation east of the Tugela River, and who owned as their chiefs several minor head men. These Caffres were an orderly, peace-loving race, crime being almost unknown among them, whilst the broils and fights which are supposed to be an attendant on savage life never occurred. Over fifty thousand of these Caffres resided in the Colony of Natal, and grew large quantities of Indian corn, termed 'mealies,' on which they principally lived.

It would be difficult to find any locality more favoured than is Natal. The climate is excellent—rarely too hot, and never very cold. The soil is excellent; whilst the many rivers and streams that flow through the district, and the rarity of drought, enabled those who lived on the produce of the soil to be certain of a plentiful harvest.

To the sportsman or naturalist this district was a sort of paradise. Not only did such giant game as elephants, buffalo, and hippopotamus abound, but there were antelope in the forests and on the plains. In the former there were the large black bush buck, a noble animal, nearly as large as the red deer of Scotland; the red bush buck, smaller than the English fallow deer; and the tiny bluebuck, not bigger than a hare.

On the outskirts of the bush, or in the ravines, was the duiker buck, a cunning little antelope, small in size; whilst in the more open country was the noble rietbuck, an antelope sometimes weighing upwards of 100 lbs. Pheasants, guinea-fowl, quail, and snipe were plentiful.

Every river, lake, and pond abounded with wild-fowl; whilst the brilliant plumage of the trogons and lowries was frequently seen as they flashed through the forest when disturbed by the hunter or mere traveller. Insects of every description were numerous. Butterflies and moths of rare beauty and beetles of brilliant colour abounded.

Eagles and hawks soared in the air, whilst the quaint-looking pelican or the lovely pink flamingo fished in the Bay or streams.

Less pleasant as neighbours, but yet interesting, were the snakes, which were numerous in this locality.

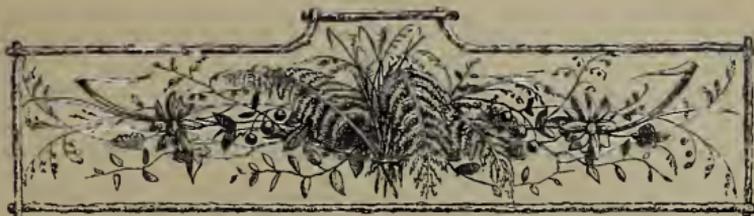
There was the Natal rock snake, a species of boa-constrictor, a monster which sometimes grew to twenty-five feet in length; the deadly puff-adder, the cobra, and many other poisonous snakes.

In the rivers were alligators, whilst at the mouth of these rivers, where the sea water entered at high tide, the dreaded shark might be seen showing his dorsal fin above the water as he rapidly glided along in search of his prey.

The forests and ravines in Natal exhibited lovely specimens of ferns and trees, whilst many sweet-scented plants grew in profusion.

Although fresh-water fish were not numerous, yet the sea abounded with many varieties. The Bay of Natal swarmed with fish, many of which were large, and excellent as food. There was the keel-back, the springer, the parrot-fish, rock cod, and mullet, so that sport with the rod and line could be obtained in abundance. Many curious fish also visited the Bay. Among these the saw-fish might be seen pursuing his prey, and lashing his saw horizontally among shoals of small fish, which he impaled or wounded by his rapid horizontal lashing, and then fed on at his leisure.

With such a climate, soil, and surroundings, with but a scanty population, the necessaries of life were easily obtained, and consequently no signs of poverty were visible. A man could live without much work; consequently in the olden time contentment reigned in Natal.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE DEANS, AND THE SPORT THEY ENJOYED AT NATAL.



THE Bay of Natal extended inland about four miles, and at its more northern end two small rivers flowed into it, viz. the Umbilo and the Umlatazane. These rivers had cut their way through the country, and in many places had high banks. It was on some elevated ground between these two rivers that an English settler had built a house, and had purchased from the native chief a large tract of ground, which he termed his farm. The house was only one storey high, built of wattle and daub, and thatched. It contained several rooms of good size, and was furnished in the style of a country house in England.

The name of this settler was Dean, and his family consisted of three daughters and two sons; the boys, at the time to which we refer, being eighteen and sixteen years of age, whilst two daughters were older, one younger, than the boys.

Around the house, but at some distance from it, were several Caffre kraals, in which lived the Caffres,

their wives and families, who attended to the farm and the duties of the house. Mr. Dean, although not wealthy, was yet sufficiently well off to have provided himself with several horses, and also with a large herd of cattle and an extensive stock of poultry. People who lived in this temperate climate did not require as much animal food as do those who reside in a cold climate.

Eggs, fish, Indian corn, and all the vegetables that grow in England, were plentiful on this farm; whilst bananas, pine apples, oranges, and grapes flourished luxuriantly. As far as the absolute wants of a family were concerned, nothing more could be required; and the occasional sale of fowls, cattle, and fruit to the merchant ships that entered the Bay supplied these residents with sufficient ready money to purchase clothes, powder, and lead—the only other things required.

Living as they did among a peaceful and friendly race, their lot seemed to be cast in a charming locality. They had enemies, it was true; for the crafty and treacherous leopard was very common, and sometimes committed sad havoc with the poultry, and occasionally killed a calf.

A herd of wild elephants also sometimes invaded the mealie gardens, and even ventured so near the house as to damage the fruit trees. Poisonous snakes also were not unknown, even in the house, whilst flights of locusts sometimes came in their millions and destroyed the young crops. In spite, however, of these obstacles to repose, things prospered at Sea View, as Mr. Dean's house was called; and though

society, as recognised in more civilized lands, was unknown to the family, yet their life was peaceful and happy.

To the two boys this condition of affairs was a kind of paradise. Their education, when compared with that existing in England for boys of the same age, would have been considered 'neglected.' They could read and write, their father having taught them; also they could calculate sufficiently well to enable them to know how much should be paid for two dozen fowls at fourpence each. Of Latin and Greek they knew nothing. How many kings of England had reigned since the Conquest they had not the slightest idea. Of such things as equations they were as ignorant as the cattle on their farm; and so they would have been looked upon as sad dunces had they suddenly been transferred to a school in England.

What they could do, however, was not without its value in such a wild country as Natal. They could ride the most determined buck-jumping horse, even without the aid of a saddle. They could hit with a bullet a running buck, and bring down a snipe on the wing, to a certainty. They could make traps of various kinds, by which antelopes and birds were captured, and also construct a trap for fish, which was a sure source of supply for the table. They could follow the spoor of any animal over the most difficult ground as easily as a bloodhound could do so by aid of scent. They could tell how many days or hours had elapsed since the animal had left the impression of his foot-prints on the ground. They could throw an assagy more than sixty yards, and at that distance could hit a

comparatively small object. A knob-kerrie was in their hands a formidable weapon, and many a bustard and quail had been knocked down when on the wing by their knob-kerries. With the good and bad qualities of a horse, a bull, or a cow they were well acquainted. And though ignorant of the classics, they could speak Caffre and Dutch as well as though they had been Caffres or Dutchmen.

Such an education fitted these boys for the life they led, and for the future which was before them; and had some of our English boys, who had gained the highest honours at an examination, suddenly found themselves at Natal with the young Deans, they would have discovered that all their cram knowledge was utterly useless in a new and wild country.

'George,' said the elder boy to his brother, 'Eondema tells me that to-morrow morning, soon after sunrise, he is going to the Bay to spear fish, as the tide will suit.'

'All right, John,' replied George; 'we will go. I will give my assagies a sharpening, and then on our return, as the tide will be low, we can examine the fish kraal and see what there is in it.'

To understand this sport of fish-spearing, the nature of the ground where it took place must be described.

At the upper part of the Bay of Natal there was a bed of hard sand which was quite dry at low water; when the tide rose, which it did to the amount of about six feet, this long strip of sand was covered with sea water about three feet deep. Various fish would then swim in this shallow water in search of food. Some of these fish were large, weighing ten or fifteen pounds,

and were very good eating. The sport was carried on as follows.

Some Caffres would form a semicircle, each man being about twenty paces from those on his right and left, and armed with some half-dozen assagies, the spear being barbed something like a fish-hook. When a fish was known to be near, a fact easily discovered by the ripple made in the water, the Caffres quickly surrounded this, and hurled their assagies at their prey. When an assagy struck the fish, the barbed end stuck fast, and the fish could make but little progress. He was therefore soon captured, a stick passed through his gills, and one of the Caffres carried him on his shoulders.

This was a favourite sport of both John and George, who were very expert with their assagies, and rarely returned from these expeditions without bringing with them as proof of their skill three or four fine springers, and sometimes the keel-back, a sort of salmon.

Eondema, who usually accompanied them, not only on these, but on other sporting trips, was a young Caffre chief about their own age, his father being the chief of the district east of the Umlass River, and near the coast. This chief—Umnini—was a fine old fellow, who, with his tribe, had kept at arm's length the armies of the Zulu chief Dingaan when the latter invaded Natal.

It was a bright, clear morning when John and George started for the head of the Bay, where they found Eondema and about a dozen other Caffres. The whole party kept on land till they had gone along about a mile on the side of the Bay, so that they

might cut off the retreat of any fish from the deep water.

In this wild country, and for such work, the boys had dressed themselves very much in the Caffre style ; they wore skin shoes and a flannel shirt, a straw hat completing their costume. This was very similar to the dress of the Caffres, except that the latter dispensed with shoes, shirt, and hat. The Caffres entered the water very quietly, and spread across the Bay till they came to the deep channel, which was about half a mile from the shore ; they then, at a signal, all moved slowly up towards the end of the Bay, the line extending nearly three hundred yards.

The party had not moved more than fifty yards before a ripple in the water showed that a large fish was in front of them. Assagy after assagy was hurled in the direction of this ripple, and very soon one assagy, instead of showing the wooden end, remaining still, was seen to be carried rapidly through the water. The fish had been struck.

Closing round this assagy, the Caffres sent spear after spear, John and George being as busy as their black friends ; and it was soon seen that the fish could not move through the water, being hampered by the spears by which he had been transfixed. He was soon captured, and a fine springer was hoisted on to the shoulders of one of the Caffres.

The line was re-formed, and the same proceeding was adopted ; and, by the time the party had reached the shallow water at the end of the Bay, eight fine fish had been captured.

On the farther shore, where the beach sloped down

more rapidly, there were two fish-traps, which had been constructed by John and George with the help of the Caffres. These traps were very simple, but very effective.

Bamboos, about eight feet long, were split and driven into the sand, at intervals of about an inch. They were driven in just far enough to have their tops about a foot or eighteen inches under water when the tide was at its highest. When the tide went down, the bamboos were out of the water, and at low tide they were three or four feet out of the water.

In these cages the offal of animals was placed, and attracted the fish, which remained feeding until the tide went down, when the retreat of the fish was cut off, the opening between the bamboos which allowed the water to run through not being large enough to admit of the fish escaping. Sometimes some large fish would spring over the bamboos and escape, but usually a large number were found in the cage, and were easily speared by John and George.

These traps were visited after the spearing of the large fish, and several mullet were captured, so that the two boys returned to their house by breakfast time with enough fish to supply the family with food during several days. When an extra quantity of fish was thus captured, the boys usually cut the fish open, rubbed them with salt, and exposed them to the sun, when they became dried, in which condition they might be kept during several days. Then being soaked in warm water they were cooked, and were not unlike salted cod, eaten largely by good Christians on fast days.

Another sport in the way of fishing which these boys practised was to dig up a root which grew on the Natal and Umlass flats, and was termed by the Caffres 'Il-o-zarni.' This root was something in shape like a small carrot. Several of these roots having been procured were fastened on the end of a long pole and then bruised.

On the shore near the bluff at Natal there were several holes in the rocks as large and as deep as a good-sized room. In these holes were several kinds of fish, which, having entered at high tide, could not escape when the tide went down. The poles were pushed down to the bottom of the holes and stirred about.

The effect of this root was to so muddle the fish that they would dart about wildly for a minute or two, and then come to the surface of the water, where they would lie motionless, and allow themselves to be taken by the hand, and thrown on dry land.

If these fish were put into sea water that had not been saturated with the root, they soon recovered ; but as the fish were not rendered unfit for food by being made drunk with Il-o-zarni, very little trouble was taken with them after they had been captured.

At the mouth of the Umganie River, about five miles from Sea View, another kind of fishing sport was sometimes indulged in by John, George, and their Caffre friends.

When the tide rose, great numbers of small shark entered those rivers, and swam about rapidly in search of prey. These sharks were comparatively small, being rarely more than six feet in length. They were, how-

ever, large enough and ferocious enough to attack a dog, if they found one in the water ; and as they swam about in shoals of forty or fifty, a man in the water would have stood a poor chance if they had attacked him, because a man can be easily pulled under water and drowned.

To capture these fish a very strong line was made fast to the iron of the assagy. On this line several pieces of light wood were made fast, so that there was great resistance when the line was dragged through the water. This line was laid out carefully on the bank of the river, where this bank was about six feet above high-water mark, and where the water was deep just below. The shark swam near the surface, and could, therefore, be pierced by an assagy thrown with accuracy. The barbed end of the assagy held firmly in the fish, and the line retarded its movements, so that in a few minutes it became exhausted, and was hauled by the line into shallow water and killed. These fish were not good eating, so that this sport was not frequently indulged in.

John and George were not the only fishers who used to frequent the Bay of Natal in order to capture their food. Early in the morning, several pelicans and flamingoes might be seen standing in the shallow water, watching for the fish to swim within reach of their beaks. These birds added to the wildness and beauty of the scene, the flamingoes especially, with their pale pink plumage contrasting with the clear blue of the water and the golden yellow of the sand.

Several ospreys, or fishing hawks, frequented the Bay and coast. These birds would soar high in the air,

uttering their shrill cries, until they saw near the surface of the water a fish of a size suitable for capture. Darting down like a bolt from the sky, this fish was seized by their eagle talons and carried to a suitable rock or elevated position, where it was quietly eaten.

With such a variety of sport in the fishing way these two lads were never at a loss as to how to occupy their spare time, for their time was not all spare. They had to look after their cattle and horses, and to see that the Caffres attended them properly. Also they superintended, under Mr. Dean, the cultivation of the land, so that their crops of vegetables and fruit should be plentiful. They had also much to do with the sale of fresh meats, fowls, etc., to the ships that came into the Bay. They had, however, plenty of time for indulging in those rare sports which are beyond the reach of royalty itself in overcrowded England.

In the times about which we write, Natal was a pleasant place for a boy; that is, if he were manly enough to enjoy sport which could not be obtained without hard work and a slight amount of danger. The climate was all that could be desired, and, with such an advantage, out-door life was most fascinating.





## CHAPTER III.

### HUNTING ELEPHANTS IN THE BEREA BUSH.

**G**EORGE,' said John, 'we must have a day in the bush to-day. It is two days since we paid a visit to our traps, and if anything has been caught and killed, it may have become spoiled for food ; so after breakfast we will take our guns and examine the bush.'

The traps set by the two lads were similar to those used by the Caffres. The first and most common trap was constructed by bending down a young sapling ; by means of a rope, making a running noose at the end of this, and making this noose fast by a kind of trigger ; a small animal passing over this liberated the trigger by a mere touch, when the sapling, by its elasticity, sprang up, drawing up the noose, and securing any animal that might be within it.

This trap was specially adapted for the capture of the buck that frequented the bush, which were frequently found suspended from the tree which had been used as the spring.

The other form of trap was a deep hole some ten

feet in depth. The sides of this hole had been made as hard as bricks by lighting a fire at the bottom of the hole. The opening at the top was covered by slight sticks, the end of which just rested on the sides, whilst the centre of these sticks were nearly cut in halves ; over this covering some light sods were carefully placed, and some soil and leaves scattered over it, so as to make it appear like unbroken ground. Such animals as the bush pig and the bush buck, if they passed over this treacherous ground, would break through the roof, and be deposited in the hole below, from which escape was impossible.

Several of these traps had been made by John and George, and were visited at least twice a week, rarely without finding in one of them some animal whose skin and flesh rewarded them for their trouble.

Sport in the present time in England has degenerated into mere slaughter. There is no attempt made to conceal this fact. We see announced in our daily newspapers that grand sport has been had in this or that locality, the proof of its having been grand sport being (so it is stated) that so many hundred head of game have been shot. We might as well claim that a certain company of gentlemen had enjoyed a magnificent dinner because they had eaten so many pounds of meat and drunk so many bottles of wine.

The true sportsman does not estimate the amount of his sport by the number of creatures he has slain. In olden times in Africa a hunter might come across herds of game in countless thousands, and if so disposed he might have slain these by hundreds, but a

true sportsman would be ashamed of such a proceeding, and no English sportsman should call such slaughter sport.

If any man were to announce that, by having certain covers beaten, he had shot fifty foxes in one day, would he dare to call this sport? Certainly not; and why? Because the real sport of fox-hunting consists in giving the fox a fair chance, allowing it to put in practice its cunning and powers of speed, and endeavouring to overcome these by the powers of the hounds that are pursuing it. Even if the fox is not killed, but a grand run is obtained, it is called a good day's sport. Yet when the average man speaks of sport, he at once shows that he does not know what real sport is, by estimating the amount of sport by the amount of slaughter.

It is to be feared that this desecration of the term sport originated on the Continent, and was introduced into England some forty years ago. Our ancestors were sportsmen, but present so-called sportsmen are mere butchers.

A day's pheasant-shooting in former times consisted in two or three men, attended by dogs, entering the covers. The pheasants were put up by the dogs, and either shot or missed. From this cover the sportsmen walked to another, their dogs hunting carefully for the birds. Probably each sportsman might shoot ten or twelve brace, and he then considered that he had enjoyed good sport, not because he had killed so many birds, but because he had seen how cleverly his dogs had hunted, and he remembered that several of his shots had been difficult but successful.

In what does a day's pheasant-shooting now consist? A party of men, misnamed sportsmen, are placed in various favourable positions, sometimes having two or three guns at their disposal. A number of beaters enter the cover, and the pheasants are driven out, and fly in crowds over the heads of these men, and are slaughtered, not by dozens but by hundreds. Then we may see an announcement in some newspaper that A B and C enjoyed grand sport at Lord X's preserves, they having killed twelve hundred pheasants in one day.

Then some other sporting snob endeavours to outdo this proceeding, and, having stocked his covers with half-tame pheasants, invites some titled friends to shoot with him, and is then enabled to announce that thirteen hundred pleasants were killed in one day on his estate. He then imagines that he is a better sportsman than his neighbour, because he has butchered a larger number of birds.

The majority of men are mere copyists, and this disgrace to the name of sport having been introduced into England by those high in rank, has been merely imitated by the unreasoning toady.

Neither John, George, nor their Caffre friends were given to this species of slaughter. They were all true sportsmen, and would not have killed a single animal more than they could make use of for food.

Sometimes they would leave their traps unset during several days if they were not in want of meat, and when they went into the bush with their guns they ceased their day's sport when one buck had been killed.

The forest, or as it was termed at Natal, 'the bush,' was so dense that it was difficult to force a passage

through it, and to attempt to do so would have caused so much noise that the buck would have been alarmed, and have made their escape long before the hunters could obtain a view of them. There were, however, visitors to this bush who made such excellent paths that a man on foot by keeping to these could traverse the forest with ease and in silence.

These visitors were wild elephants, herds of which visited this district at certain periods, and remained several months. These giants of the forest moved in single file through the bush to their drinking places, and returned before daybreak to the densest portions of the forest. They thus trod down or broke off small trees and bushes, and made the forest a sort of Rosamond's bower, containing many beaten tracks, along which a man could walk, but out of which he could make little or no progress.

These wild elephants, although useful as road-makers in the bush, were anything but agreeable neighbours to the Deans. An elephant is a great eater, and knows what is good. When the Indian corn was young and green, the elephants were very fond of it, and, as no average fence could keep these monsters out of the gardens, they would frequently, selecting a dark night, quickly break through the fence, and eat or tread down the greater part of the growing crop.

So daring did these elephants become, that one night they approached Mr. Dean's house, and two bull elephants stood on the lawn picking the oranges from the trees, and pitching them down their throats by the half-dozen at a time.<sup>1</sup> The family were afraid

<sup>1</sup> This fact actually occurred.

to disturb these animals, which sometimes were very savage, for their strength was such that they could have pulled down the house had they chosen to do so.

When the elephants resided in the forest, it was not without danger that a journey was made through it, for these monsters would not always wait to be attacked before they charged the intruder, and to escape required not only speed and a knowledge of the bush paths, but also great presence of mind to so dodge and turn as to throw the pursuers off the scent.

John and George, however, were skilled in bush craft ; their training had been carried on under the direction of Caffres, whose instinct even seemed to teach them what to do under critical conditions. The animals themselves, whose very lives were dependent on their watchfulness and cunning, were not more skilled in the art of self-preservation than were these boys and their Caffre companions.

The hurried flight of a bird, the call of a monkey, or the slightest snapping of a twig, were to them signals which were thoroughly understood, and were to be carefully attended to. In the bush the sight is limited, so that the hearing, and even the scent, were the two sentinels who kept a sharp look-out, and gave warning of approaching danger.

Armed each with a double-barrelled gun, and attended by Eondema, who carried three assagies and a knobkerrie, John and George entered the bush, by means of an old elephant path, which was about half a mile from their house. At this time the herds of elephants which had frequented this bush had moved several miles farther up the coast, and it was not expected that they

would return for some months. Eondema was allowed to lead, because the two English boys admitted that the Caffre's sight and hearing were more acute than theirs. It was worth something to see these three youths move through the bush ; their progress was slow, and made as silently as though they were three mice.

Eondema would stop every ten or a dozen paces, crouch down, and look through the branches and stems of trees in search of some moving object. John examined the bush to the right, George the bush to the left. Not a word was spoken ; a signal made by a slight wave of the hand, or a low whistle like the note of a bird, was a sufficient intimation of what was meant.

At about half a mile from the entrance of the bush there was a favourite run of the bush buck, and in this run was one of the noose traps set by John and George. To examine this trap was the first business before them, but fresh meat was required at Sea View, and Eondema intimated that he should like to eat a few pounds of venison, so a sharp look-out was kept for a bush buck, the tracks of several of these creatures being visible on the ground, though none of the footprints were so fresh as to indicate that the animals had gone over the ground during the morning of that day.

Nothing was seen except a few monkeys and birds until the trap was reached ; then, however, there was something which at once attracted the attention of the three hunters. The tree which had been bent down and held fast by the rope was found upright, whilst the rope itself hung suspended in the air. The trap had been sprung, but no animal had been captured.

This was the discovery made at a first glance, and before the three had arrived near enough to examine all the details. Not a word was spoken during several minutes as each examined the ground near the trap, and saw that which was to them a history, written as plainly as though described in large print.

On the ground was the head of a red bush buck, also its four hoofs, and a portion of its skin, but the flesh and bones of the animal had disappeared, by what means it was not difficult to discover. Stooping low, Eondema soon picked up several small yellow hairs, which he showed to his companions; it needed no word to make it known that these hairs had come off the coat of a leopard, and a second examination of the ground revealed to these experienced bush-hunters all that had taken place.

An antelope had been caught in the noose, and, whilst struggling to escape, had attracted the attention of a leopard, which had killed the buck, and had lost no time in making a feast of its flesh. This, however, was not all that was made known; the keen eyes of the Caffre noticed that there were tracks on the ground smaller than those of a full-grown leopard, and he unhesitatingly asserted that the feast had been enjoyed by a female leopard and one if not two of her half-grown cubs.

Where was this leopard now? It might be within a few yards of them, concealed among the thick under-wood, or perhaps in the fork of a tree. The latter position, however, was not likely, because, having only lately made a feast, it would be too lazy to climb a tree.

The three hunters sat down in the bush, back to back, to whisper their opinions as to what should be done next. If the old leopard could be shot, and the young ones captured, it would be a profitable business, because the young ones could be sold to the captains of some of the ships that entered the Bay, there being always a demand for these animals for zoological gardens or travelling wild beast shows in Europe. It would not be an easy matter, however, to capture a half-grown leopard except by means of a trap, for these creatures, even when small, were very vicious, and would bite and scratch in a sufficiently powerful manner to render them dangerous.

After a short consultation, the three hunters advanced through the bush towards another trap, using the same precautions as before, and reached another trap in which they found an antelope securely held by the noose, but apparently uninjured. This animal was quickly dispatched by the knob-kerrie of the Caffre, and, having been cleaned, was carried by Eondema. There were two or three other traps to examine, but there was nothing found in these.

After a rest of several minutes the party proceeded on their journey, turning towards the outside of the bush, and watching carefully for a shot at a buck or bush pig. Eondema, who was leading, suddenly stopped and pointed to the ground in front of him. His two companions looked on the ground, and there saw what caused them considerable excitement.

On a soft piece of ground was a circular impression, distinct and only lately made. It was some fifteen inches in diameter, and on it were several cracks and

marks. The impression was clear and distinct, and to these experienced hunters told its own tale. It was the footprint of a solitary bull elephant, one of the most dangerous animals in the world, especially when the creature had taken up its position in a bush as dense as was this. The party halted, and sat down to examine this footprint, and also to listen for any sounds which might indicate where this monster might now be.

A wild elephant, as a rule, is very quiet in the bush, except during the night, or when he feels sufficiently safe to feed. During the daytime a herd of forty or fifty elephants will stand in the bush without any movement except the slight shifting of their weight from leg to leg. They make no noise except by blowing through their trunks occasionally, or their vast interiors make a sort of bubbling noise which can be heard at the distance of fifty yards or more.

Any person unaccustomed to the bush would never imagine that he was near a herd of wild elephants, because he heard no noise and saw nothing to indicate their presence. An experienced hunter, however, would accept a sign of their presence, such as the snapping of a branch, or the blowing or rumbling noises which have been mentioned. It was for these signs that the hunters were waiting. No indication, however, was given that the animal was near, so they proceeded to examine the various footmarks in order to learn details about this solitary elephant.

From the size of the footprints they knew that the elephant was nearly full-grown. They saw by the other footprints that it had been walking slowly, and

by the broken branches that it had been feeding as it walked. The footprints had some marks on it, showing that the dew had fallen after the impression had been made; so it was agreed that the animal must have passed over the ground on the previous evening.

As an elephant will travel more than twenty miles a day if it is dissatisfied with the food in any locality, it was impossible to tell where this animal was on that morning. As, however, there was plenty of food such as elephants liked in this forest, it was agreed that he must be near. The fact of this elephant being alone showed that he had been probably driven out of the herd by other bull elephants, and as a consequence he would be very savage, and disposed to attack any intruder who was bold or careless enough to come near him.

The guns which John and George carried were of small bore, and not suited for shooting elephants. Mr. Dean had a large gun which carried a heavy bullet, and was specially adapted for slaying big game; so the two lads agreed that it would not do to follow up this elephant and fire at it with their present weapons, because they stood no chance of killing it, and would probably by wounding it cause the animal to track far away, where they would not be able to attack it under favourable conditions. They decided also that they would not fire at a buck even if they saw one and were certain of killing it, because the noise of a gun would alarm the elephant and cause it to travel a considerable distance from where it had heard the report of firearms. They agreed that they would tell their father what they had seen, borrow his big gun

if he would allow them, and on the morrow try what they could do to get a safe shot at this noble game.

As often happens when one has determined not to shoot, several buck were seen on the return journey, two of which could have been easily shot, as they stood in an open space for at least half a minute, and were within forty yards of the hunters.

Their journey in the bush had not, however, been without results. They had secured a buck, and had found that a female leopard with cubs was near, and that a solitary bull elephant had taken up its quarters within a few miles of their house.





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DEANS' COMPANIONS.



ON coming out of the bush John and George met Mr. Dean, who was returning from a visit to D'Urban. They told him what they had seen in the bush, and how they were anxious to make a trap to capture the leopard, and also how they would like to take his large gun and try to get a shot at the elephant on the morrow. Mr. Dean, though not being what could be termed a sportsman, and not being skilled like his sons in all the arts of bush craft, yet took sufficient interest in such matters to appreciate the skill of his two sons.

'I need not remind you,' said Mr. Dean, 'that a solitary bull elephant in a thick bush is about the most dangerous animal that you can find. You know the risk, and must take due precautions. Eondema here knows too what he is about, so I will trust you to-morrow with the heavy rifle, and we will see what you can do. Perhaps it will be as well not to tell your mother or sisters about your proposed journey; for, however sensible women may be, they are always

nervous and disposed to worry themselves when any one they care for undertakes a risky business.'

'All right, father,' said John; 'we will keep it quiet. We know there is danger, and that is half the battle. Fellows who never dream there is any danger, and who fancy it shows how plucky they are by being careless and reckless, are those who come to grief. We know what a wild solitary elephant is, and we won't give him too many chances.'

On their way home they had a long conversation with Eondema about constructing a trap for the leopard. Eondema did not think that one could be made strong enough to capture so strong and cunning an animal. Mr. Dean, however, said that he knew traps strong enough even to secure a tiger were made in India, and he would show them how these might be constructed.

There were what may be called two members of the family at Sea View who will now be introduced to the reader, for they were usually the companions either of the two boys or of their sisters. The first of these was Spot, a large and powerful dog, whose breed was doubtful; he was supposed to be a cross between an otter-hound and a mastiff, and he showed the attributes of both. He was an excellent water dog, and was employed by the two boys to retrieve wild duck and other aquatic birds which they shot, and which they could not procure without swimming. Bold as a lion, he feared nothing, and he thus ran great risks, for a buffalo would have killed him instantly in an encounter, and therefore, when such very dangerous game was hunted, Spot was chained up at home.

The most useful dog as an aid in such sport was a small cur, which would bark and snarl at the heels of a buffalo, and then run away when threatened by the animal's horns or hoofs. This proceeding stopped the retreat of the buffalo, and allowed the hunter to come within range of his gun or rifle. For following a wounded buck in the open or in the bush Spot was invaluable. He was gifted with most acute scent, and from being nearly always in the society of the two boys he became, as it were, a part of themselves, accepting the movement of a hand, or even a look, as a hint to do or not to do some particular thing. Spot's ways were also well known to the boys. The way he carried his tail or moved his ears, and the peculiar expression he sometimes assumed, was quite sufficient to enable them to know what was up. A dog that lives always with its master, and is treated as a friend, soon seems to absorb, as it were, from its master an intelligence beyond that of a mere animal.

Tom, the other dog, was a small terrier, sharp, active, and good-tempered. The two animals were great friends, almost inseparable, the large dog seeming to consider that he had to take care of his weaker companion. As companions, these two animals were highly esteemed by the whole family at Sea View.





## CHAPTER V.

### SPOORING THE WILD ELEPHANT.



THE dew falls so heavily in South Africa that the bush is quite wet until some hour or two after sunrise. Consequently the hunters did not start in search of the solitary bull elephant until they had breakfasted comfortably, and made all their arrangements for an attack upon the formidable game of which they were in pursuit.

The bullets which they used for large game were cast in a particular manner. Common lead was too soft to be used against an elephant, for if it struck a large bone it was not hard enough to penetrate it, but flattened, and was therefore less destructive than one which had been hardened by an addition to the lead of about one-eighth of tin.

Although they had only one large bore rifle, they prepared bullets for their two small double-barrelled guns, for, if the elephant charged, he might be stopped by a bullet from the other guns. Eondema was not accustomed to the use of a gun, and took a long time to aim, and even then was not reliable as a dead shot ;

but he willingly carried one of the guns, as also his assagies, whilst John carried the heavy rifle, and George the other gun.

The party entered the bush on their track of the previous day, and soon reached the footprints which they had then seen. It was decided to follow these, because if you take up one end of a trail, and follow it, you must eventually come to the other end. Eondema found no difficulty in following the traces of the elephant, and at length came to a dense portion of the bush, where the animal had evidently rested during the heat of the previous day. From this spot the animal had moved slowly through the bush, feeding as it moved. Many large branches of the acacias had been broken off—the tender shoots eaten, whilst the thicker branches had been crushed by the elephant's grinders in order to extract the juice. The slowness with which the monster had moved, as evidenced by its footprints, showed it had not been alarmed; consequently it was expected that it would not have travelled far during the day.

The three young hunters moved slowly and cautiously, because it was not an unusual proceeding on the part of an elephant in the bush to work in a circle, and to come back and pass the heat of the day in the same place at which he had rested on the day previous.

It was well that these precautions were taken, for as the party were following the somewhat old footprints, they heard in front of them, and apparently at no great distance, the noise caused by the breaking of a branch. Each hunter stopped, and remained immovable. It was unnecessary to speak; each knew what this noise

meant. The elephant was in front of them, and had evidently turned on its back trail. How far off was it? was the first question; but one equally important was, How did the wind blow in that part of the bush?

John and George put each a finger in his mouth to moisten it, and then held this up to feel on which side the finger became cool, because from that side the wind blew. Eondema stooped, and gathering some dry earth in his hand, crushed this to powder, and throwing it in the air, watched in which direction the dust drifted.

By this means it was discovered that what air there was blew from their position to that occupied by the elephant. It was probable, therefore, that the animal might have scented them, and was therefore aware of their presence; and if so, the danger was far greater than if he had been taken by surprise. Anyway, it was necessary to move as quickly as possible from their present position; and they decided to retreat, and then turn at right angles to the track they had pursued.

Without the slightest noise they carried out this plan, and having retreated some two hundred paces, they found a path along which they could easily move, and having crept along this some distance, they sat down to listen.

Persons unaccustomed to the cunning of animals that lived in the forest would not have believed that a wild elephant was within a short distance of them, if after waiting some minutes they heard no noise. These bush hunters, however, though young, were experienced, and though they waited many minutes without hearing a sound, they yet did not become impatient.

They had heard one crack of a broken branch. That was enough ; branches do not smash themselves, and no animal except an elephant or a buffalo could break a branch, and they knew that no buffaloes were then living in this bush. They were consequently as certain that an elephant was within a few hundred yards of them as though they had seen it with their eyes.

They had waited somewhere about half an hour when they heard a noise like that of branches being shaken, and they all three pointed in the direction from which this noise came.

Now none of the three had ever learned the science of trigonometry, yet they at once put into practice the results of this science. They knew about how many paces they had come through the bush from the point at which they had halted. They knew the direction of the first noise, and they now knew the direction of the second noise. Scratching on the ground the triangle thus formed, they decided that the elephant was about as far from them as they were from their first position.

To the naturalist, or even admirer of nature, this bush supplied many interesting facts. The wild luxuriance of the foliage, with the graceful festoons of the wild vine that hung from the trees, was beautiful to look at. Insects of various descriptions were flying or crawling near them ; whilst birds of brilliant plumage flitted through the branches of the trees above them.

The impudence of the monkeys was most amusing ; it was impossible to move through the bush without being seen by these active and observant creatures. They seemed to resent the intrusion of man into their forest home, and coughed and grinned at him as he

approached them, taking care to keep at a safe distance as far as any personal attack could be made.

Some of the younger monkeys would approach within a few yards of the party, and then go through a course of the most ridiculous antics, threatening apparently the intruders, and then, springing on to the lower branches of a tree, leap from branch to branch, till they were at a secure distance.

Whilst the three hunters were waiting to gain some further information relative to the elephant, their attention was drawn to a rustling noise among the leaves on the ground near them. Turning their heads slowly in the direction from which this noise came, they saw what would have alarmed less experienced hunters.

There on the ground, and not twenty paces from them, they saw the head and part of the body of an enormous snake. The reptile was slowly gliding along, and they saw by the direction in which it was moving that it would pass them at the distance of several yards.

Had there been no such noble game near as an elephant, Eondema's assagy would soon have killed this reptile, for it was one of the Natal rock snakes, a reptile that grows to the length of twenty-five or thirty feet, and is destructive to fowls, goats, and even calves. Now, however, this snake was merely watched as it glided over the ground, and was soon lost to sight amidst the thick undergrowth.

The snapping of another branch was heard, and now the exact whereabouts of the elephant was known. The three hunters rose to their feet, each with a look of determination, shown by his tightly-compressed lips. It was no child's play that these three youngsters were

undertaking. They knew well the character of a solitary bull elephant, and to approach this monster in a dense bush in which it was possible to move only along the paths made by the animal itself, was a proceeding fraught with great danger.

As no spooking was now required, John led the party, armed with his heavy rifle, whilst George took second place, and Eondema brought up the rear. Slowly and silently the three advanced, not a sound betraying their presence. As they came nearer to the forest giant they could hear the peculiar noise, like bubbling water, made by the animal. They knew by this that they were within fifty or sixty yards of the elephant, but so dense was the bush that they could not see him, and he might have been within fifteen paces and yet not seen. The advance, which had been slow, became yet slower, whilst the eyes of the party were searching to get a view of the elephant.

Suddenly a low, rumbling noise, like the commencement of a bull's bellowing, came from the bush, within twenty yards of the hunters; then a sharp, shrill scream, like that made by a railway engine just as it enters a tunnel. The bush in front of them was smashed down, and in an instant the elephant was seen, with his trunk raised, and striding towards the party.

John, quick as thought, raised his heavy rifle, and sent a bullet into the elephant's chest; then, darting to the left, sprang through the bush quick as an antelope. George and Eondema were not slower in their movements, and seeing that the elephant was charging straight down the path, they dodged to the right, and then remained motionless, whilst the animal

pursued his headlong charge through the bush. The shrill trumpeting of the elephant was accompanied by the cracking and smashing of branches, which sounded like the noise of a succession of rifles discharged rapidly. This latter sound became fainter and fainter, till all was quiet except the hoarse cough of a monkey or the twitter of a bird.

Three slow whistles were now heard, this being the signal by which the hunters made known their presence to each other, and the party assembled at the spot from which the shot had been fired. An examination of the ground showed that the elephant had charged at the smoke of the gun, and had then rushed straight on, crashing through the forest and carrying everything before him.

Following his tracks, Eondema, who was now leading, halted, and pointing to some leaves on a branch, showed the marks of blood. The elephant had been wounded, but where was as yet uncertain. John stated that he had aimed at the animal's chest, and if he had hit where he had aimed, the elephant was badly, if not mortally wounded, as the bullet must have penetrated to its lungs. An elephant, however, takes a great deal of killing, and it is very seldom that it succumbs to only one bullet. Before the trail had been followed a hundred paces, blood was seen in quantities on the ground, and from signs known to these hunters they were certain that the elephant must have been hit through the lungs.

The danger of the pursuit was now great. A solitary elephant is dangerous enough, but when he has been badly wounded he is doubly to be feared. He is

also, if possible, more on the alert, because he knows that enemies are in the bush, and his gifts of scent and hearing are used to gain the first indication of the presence of his enemies. Being aware of this fact, extra precautions were taken by the hunters, so that they should not come too close to the elephant before they were aware of his presence.

Parts of the forest through which the animal had charged were tolerably open, being free of underwood, and containing some trees of large growth, but here and there they came to parts where the underwood was so dense and tangled that they could with difficulty force their way through it; and as they could not see five paces round them, it was necessary to listen during some minutes before entering these, otherwise they ran the risk of placing themselves within reach of the elephant's trunk before they even saw him.

As the party advanced, they examined the surrounding bush, not only for the purpose of searching for the elephant, but also to note what well-beaten paths there were in various directions along which a run could be made. To merely rush away at random through the bush would have been a fatal mistake, as a man would soon be stopped by the dense underwood, through which the elephant could move as easily as a horse could move through a field of wheat. There was consequently a good deal of head-work necessary in this hunting, as well as mere observation.

By means of the footprints on the ground the hunters knew that after the first rush the elephant had reduced its speed to a walk, and instead of moving in a straight line had begun to move in a circular course. It was

possible, therefore, by turning off the track they might the sooner approach the animal, though by so doing they incurred the risk of coming upon him unexpectedly.

Turning up an old elephant path, the hunters struck off nearly at right angles to their former course, and continued walking in this direction for nearly a mile. They then came across the fresh tracks of the elephant, and at once stopped to examine these. The foot-prints showed that the animal was walking, and was moving fast.

Instead of following any of the old and well-beaten paths, it had moved through the thickest parts of the forest, and where no path had previously been made,—this was the usual practice of a wounded elephant, and was adopted in order to obtain as much concealment as possible. It was almost impossible to follow the tracks of the elephant through this thick and tangled underwood without making considerable noise, consequently the pursuit became still more dangerous, for the elephant might, when he came to a very dense part of the forest, suddenly stop and wait for his enemies to come close to him, when their escape would have been at least improbable.

It was a fine sight to see Eondema following the 'spoor.' Now and then crouching like a leopard ready for a spring, then advancing with slow steps, his feet never being placed on a broken branch that had fallen to the ground, but on ground where not even a leaf rested. Sometimes he would stand on one leg, not daring to advance the other till he found a safe spot on which he could place his foot. Turning up the

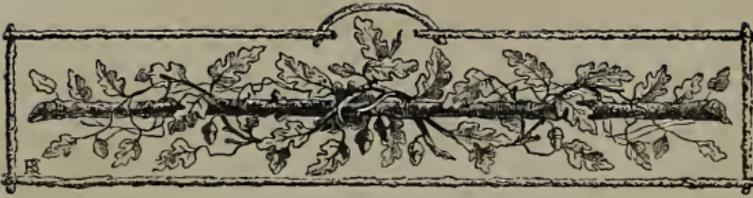
leaves of the overhanging branches, he would now and then point to the blood on these, showing that the wound the elephant had received must have been very severe to continue bleeding so long.

Suddenly the bushes on their right were violently shaken, and the party imagined they had fallen into a trap, that the elephant had circled in his track and was close to them; but a glance showed them that three or four monkeys were in the trees, and being alarmed, were leaping from branch to branch, and thus caused the noise.

The elephant's course was now straight, and from their knowledge of the bush they believed the animal was making for a very dense portion of the bush, which was in the form of a large basin, and where there was a pond of water.

Mile after mile was travelled over, and still they did not seem to be gaining on the elephant, and the bush was becoming more dense, with fewer large trees. The wind also had changed and slightly increased, so that the noise made by the moving branches would have concealed the movements of the elephant had it been travelling even within a few yards of them. A consultation was therefore held, and it was agreed to move out of the bush, and to pursue the wounded elephant on the following day.





## CHAPTER VI.

### LEOPARD AND ELEPHANT HUNTING.



HERE were two or three hours to elapse before sundown when the hunters arrived at Sea View, so, taking Spot and Tom with them, they proceeded to the Bay to have a bathe. Leaving their heavy rifle at home, they took one of their light guns with them. In such a country as Natal was at the date referred to, it was advisable always to carry a gun. One could never predict when or where a buck, a wild pig, or a leopard might be seen. Sometimes in most unexpected places some animal might cross one's path, or might stand at the distance of a few yards, gazing with surprise at the human intruders.

At about a mile from Sea View there was a very good bathing-place when the tide was high, and to this place the party proceeded. Their short journey was through some bushy country in which the duiker (a small buck) might frequently be seen. The coran, a bustard, excellent eating, was sometimes a visitor to this locality, and the two boys and their Caffre friends

had often been successful in knocking down some of these birds with their knob-kerries.

As the hunters passed through the bush, they noticed that Tom, who was some distance ahead of Spot, suddenly stuck his tail between his legs and rushed back to the party, whilst Spot at the same instant gave a low growl and showed his teeth, whilst the hairs on his back actually stood on end. The boys had no difficulty in interpreting these signs. They knew that neither a buck, a wild pig, nor any animal save one, would produce this indication of fear in the small dog, nor the threatening demonstrations on the part of the larger animal. Each knew at once that a leopard must be close to them, and that the dogs had scented this animal.

A leopard is very fond of dogs' flesh, and there are few dogs sufficiently powerful to be able to make a fight of it with a leopard. The leopards about Natal were large animals, some having been shot or captured exceeding seven feet in length. They have been known to attack and kill nearly full-grown calves, whilst young colts have also been killed by them. They have never been known to attack a man unless wounded, but they are then extremely dangerous, springing on a man and tearing him with their claws and teeth.

The dog Spot was well acquainted with leopards, as on one occasion, when he was lying asleep in a room at Sea View, having for his companion a small dog, the predecessor of Tom, a leopard sprang in at the window, seized the small dog, and leapt out of the window with the animal in its mouth. The whole proceeding was

witnessed by one of the Miss Deans, who was just about to enter the room. So quickly was this performance accomplished, that Spot had scarcely time to rise to his feet before the leopard was out of the window.<sup>1</sup> A very small portion of the dog's remains were found in the bush on the following morning, and that leopard, it was known, was still at liberty, and would no doubt have had no objection to carry off the terrier Tom, and make a dinner of his flesh.

Spot, although a powerful dog, would be no match for a leopard, as the leopard seizes his victim by the back of the neck, and, by using his claws, twists the head round, and so breaks the neck of the animal that he has attacked.

The party were not sufficiently well armed to attack a leopard; they had only one double-barrelled gun with them, and the assagies carried by Eondema. If the leopard should be wounded by the first shot, he would most probably rush on his opponents, and there was then only one more shot to be fired. Believing that the animal would not be disposed to attack Spot, supported as he was by the three, John took Tom in his arms, and, keeping a good look-out, carried him some distance, till he concluded he had gone beyond where the leopard was likely to be concealed.

It was decided that some traps should be constructed with the hope of catching some of these leopards, which were now numerous in the vicinity; and if these were not successful, then the bush was to be 'driven' by a large party of Caffres, whilst the

<sup>1</sup> This incident occurred at Natal during the author's residence there.



A LEOPARD CARRYING OFF A DOG



boys with their guns were to conceal themselves and obtain a shot at the leopards as they retreated.

On the following morning, soon after sunrise, Eondema came to Sea View, and stating that during the night he had made a plan, commenced telling his friends what this was. He believed that the elephant must be very 'sick' from its wound, and would remain in the densest part of the bush; that the three hunters should enter the bush some two miles from where they came out on the previous day; then, by looking for spoor, and listening for sounds, they should find where the elephant was concealed, and fire all their guns at once at it. To obtain more than one shot was almost impossible in the bush, and if the elephant could be hit by five bullets he would most probably bleed so much as to be too weak to travel far.

Mr. Dean had heard the account of the previous day's adventures, and told his sons that, as they knew the danger attending elephant-hunting in the bush, he knew that they would not run too much risk, but that he should feel very proud if they succeeded in killing this elephant, as there were then at Natal many Dutch Boers, old elephant-hunters, who would not venture into the bush on foot against one of these animals.

The morning was bright and clear when the three hunters started on their expedition, full of hope for the result of their day's sport. They entered the bush by means of an old elephant path, and had not gone many hundred yards in the bush before they came across the fresh spoor of their formidable antagonist. From the signs on the ground they saw that the

elephant had been standing for a long time in one spot, and had then moved slowly for a few yards and had then stood still. This he had done several times, and the date of the footprints was that morning, as the dew had not fallen on a single footprint.

From these signs the hunters came to the conclusion that they must be close to the wounded animal. So dense was the underwood that in some places they could not see ten yards round them, so that the greatest caution was necessary. Suddenly the curious bubbling noise was heard that an elephant always makes, and they knew they were within a few paces of the animal, yet nothing was seen of him. Moving slowly onwards, Eondema suddenly halted, and, putting his hand behind him, beckoned to his companions. As they came one on each side of him, he slowly raised the gun he carried and pointed at a black mass in the bush in front of them.

Each of these hunters knew how to cock a gun without making any noise ; to do so, the cock of the gun was pulled back slightly, and held firmly, then the trigger was pulled back, and the cock raised as far as it would go ; then the trigger was released, and the cock gently lowered till it reached the position of full-cock. The click made by full-cocking a gun in the usual manner would have alarmed the elephant, and he would probably have at once charged in the direction of the noise, when a steady shot could not have been obtained, and the hunters might be caught before they could have escaped or fired a shot.

It was difficult to see how the elephant was standing relative to the hunters. If he was standing head on, it

would have been useless to fire at him; he might be hit by twenty bullets about the head, not one of which would have proved fatal. A slight movement on the part of the elephant caused the sun to shine on his tusks, which had previously been in shade, and therefore not distinctly seen. From the position of these tusks, the hunters could estimate where the shoulder of the animal was situated. Not a word was spoken, but John, pointing to his own shoulder, raised his heavy rifle, and the silence of the bush was broken first by the loud report of this weapon, and then by four reports from the smaller guns.

Turning instantly, the party darted down the path up which they had advanced, and running at speed, placed some two hundred paces between themselves and where they had fired.

Immediately following the report of the guns there was another noise nearly as loud; this was a deep, savage sort of growl, which terminated in a shrill scream. And then the crushing of branches was heard, as the elephant charged through the bush, and by the noise seemed as though coming straight towards the party. Another rapid movement was now made by the hunters until they came to a very large tree, from which hung several thick and strong creepers.

‘Hamba pezulu’ (Let us go up), said Eondema; and the three, placing their guns (which they had not yet found time to load) against the stem of the tree, grasped the creepers and quickly attained an elevated position, from which they had a commanding view of the surrounding forest.

They had remained in this position little more than

a minute, when they saw the thick underwood separated at a distance of about fifty paces, and, without making any noise other than a slight rustling of the leaves, the elephant strode forward into a portion of the forest which was tolerably open, and then stood motionless, his vast ears spread on each side of his head, as he listened for some sign as to the whereabouts of his enemies, whilst his trunk was raised and turned from side to side in his endeavour to scent them.

During fully a minute the monster remained in this position in full view of the hunters, who were impressed with the formidable size and evident cunning of the animal. The blood was streaming from several wounds in the animal's side, whilst the manner in which it swayed, as it shifted its weight from leg to leg, showed that it was hard hit.

Having failed either by scent or sound to discover where his enemies were concealed, the elephant lowered his trunk and swung it about over the ground, and then slowly advanced towards the tree.

It would have astonished any person unacquainted with the peculiarities of large animals in their native forests to have learnt how quietly this giant moved. There was scarcely more noise made than would have been caused by a rabbit moving among the brambles and undergrowth.

Step by step the elephant advanced, following accurately the footsteps of the hunters, and he was now beneath the branches on which they were perched. A sudden fear now seized them that the elephant might scent their guns, and probably smash these ; and though they were so high in the tree that the animal could not

reach them with his trunk, yet he might either endeavour to shake them out of the tree, or remain beneath it till they were starved out. If they had only been able to have carried one of the guns with them up the tree, the elephant could now have been hit by a bullet in a vital spot.

Not a movement was made by the hunters. They had heard that an elephant did not understand that men could climb a tree, and never thought of looking for them among the branches. It certainly appeared as though this information were correct, for the animal having stood some minutes under the tree, quietly walked away to a distance of some paces, and there leant against the stem of another large tree.

Eondema smiled at his two companions, and made a sign that they must remain quiet, a proceeding which was the most prudent under the circumstances.

As they sat watching the elephant, they saw the branches of the trees near him violently shaken, a movement which at once attracted the animal's attention. Then it was difficult to avoid bursting out laughing as some dozen monkeys were seen near the elephant, making a sort of barking noise, whilst they grimaced at the elephant, and seemed to be threatening him with some punishment for having trespassed on their domain.

So daring did these ridiculous imitations of human beings become, that one of them jumped on the elephant's back, and then sprang into the branches near him. This proceeding seemed to irritate the elephant, for it seized the branches within its reach, and smashed these by twisting them with its trunk, and then moved slowly away from the locality.

Eondema now intimated that he would descend to the ground and bring up the big gun in case the elephant returned. So John, going as near the ground as he could, let down a stout piece of string which he always carried in his pocket, and Eondema securing this to the big and then the small guns, each was hauled into the tree, and was quickly and carefully loaded.

During more than an hour the party remained in the tree, but the elephant did not return. So they descended from their secure position, and again carefully followed the spoor, and at a distance of about two hundred paces from where the monkeys had worried the animal they found him lying on the ground dead.

They found that their five bullets had all entered behind the shoulder, and were not a foot apart, showing that their nerves had been steady when they fired ; for to fire at a buck and make a good shot is not difficult, but when novices pull a trigger at large and very dangerous game, a bad shot is not unusual.

It was still early in the day, the sun not having attained its greatest altitude ; it was therefore decided that Eondema should go to one of the English settlers' houses at D'Urban, and borrow an axe with which to cut out the tusks, these being the prizes for which elephants were principally shot. He said he would inform some of his people, if he met any, that an elephant had been killed, so that they might come and carry off as much of the flesh as they required.

Elephant flesh is tough, and not agreeable ; but the Caffres were not over particular in such matters, and were always ready to make a feast of elephant, hippopotamus, or buffalo when the chance occurred.

In another hour Eondema returned, and after considerable labour the tusks were cut out; and shortly after this business was finished, some fifty of Eondema's people arrived, and with their assagies cut up the elephant, and, loaded with the meat, proceeded to their various kraals.

There was much rejoicing at Sea View when the elephant's tusks were brought there. Although not of very great weight, they were heavy enough to indicate a value of at least £30, and the boys intended with the money thus obtained to purchase two heavy guns for themselves, as they had for some time indicated a wish to visit the Zulu country for the purpose of trading; and as this country and also the borders west of it were swarming with large game, they hoped to be able to put their new and powerful weapons to a profitable use.

Mr. Dean complimented his sons on their courage and skill, whilst their mother and sisters, although hinting that they had run a great risk of being killed by the elephant, were yet very proud of the performance. Several Dutch Boers who were in the neighbourhood came to see the tusks, and said that although they were old elephant-hunters, they would never attempt such a thing as to attack a solitary bull elephant on foot in so dense a bush as that of the Berea.





## CHAPTER VII.

### TRAPPING A DANGEROUS LEOPARD.

**W**E must catch one at least of those leopards, George,' said John, 'or they will carry off Tom or kill Spot some of these days. I think we can make a trap near our hen-house, and without much trouble.'

Practical business was the habit of these youngsters, not talk only. So they both set to work cutting down some young trees, trimming these roughly, sharpening one end, and then driving these into the ground so as to form an oblong about eight feet long by four feet broad. Making the sides of this trap was easy enough, but the top was more difficult of construction.

The lids of some old boxes were found and made use of as a covering, large nails being employed to secure this to the upright stakes. A great number of large and heavy stones were then placed at the top of this trap; and John, crawling inside, tried with all his strength to move the lid or force the stakes on one side, so as to make an opening sufficiently large to enable him to escape. After repeated efforts to do so had failed, he

announced that he considered the trap strong enough to prevent the leopard from getting out if they were fortunate enough to once get him inside.

A door that would slide up and down was then made, and was held up by a straight stick, forming the same kind of trap as that used in England to catch alive either rats or mice. Several fowls were then placed inside this cage, and fed there so as to take away the scent of human beings ; because the leopard, although daring, is also very cunning and suspicious, and if he scented the trap, and thus discovered that a man had been there, he would not be likely to enter it.

A hen was used as bait, and was secured on a perch. If she were dragged off this perch the trap-door would fall, and anything inside would be secured as a prisoner.

Matters being thus arranged, John and George took it by turns to keep watch and watch, armed with their double-barrelled gun, so that if the leopard were caught and seemed likely to escape, he could be shot.

During the first night there was not a sign of the leopard, though when daylight came and the ground was examined, the footprints of the animal were seen near the house ; but he had not gone near the trap.

Soon after sunset the dogs which were kept in the house showed signs of uneasiness—Spot especially showing his teeth occasionally, and having a wild look in his eyes.

‘Depend on it, Spot knows the leopard is near,’ said John. ‘We must keep quiet and listen. Hark!’ he exclaimed ; ‘that was the door of the trap falling. Get the guns, and bring a light.’

Mr. Dean, hearing some noise, joined his two sons,

and the three went outside the house to examine the trap. The door had fallen ; but there was no noise or, at a first glance, any sign of an animal inside. Lowering the light to obtain a better view, John caught sight of two bright objects at the end of the trap. He knew these were the eyes of some large animal, and he had scarcely made this discovery before he was thankful that his cage had been carefully and strongly made.

The leopard was crouching in the trap, but seeing its enemies so close, suddenly sprang at John, who was nearest, dashing itself against the side with tremendous force. Fortunately the stakes withstood this rush, or there would have been some bad wounds. Finding it could not force its way through such tough obstacles, the animal gave a savage growl and retreated to the back part of the cage, where it crouched down, apparently preparing for another spring.

It was hoped that the leopard might be transferred to a strong and portable trap, and thus safely secured alive, when there would have been no difficulty in obtaining twenty or thirty pounds for it. No suitable cage, however, was to be obtained nearer than the Bay, where one of the 'Winklers' stores contained everything that a man was likely to require in this wild country, and among these, two large traps big enough to contain a leopard.

As the required trap could not be procured before the following morning, it would be necessary to keep the leopard in its present trap all night. And it was doubtful whether this could be done. Several times the leopard struggled hard to force its paws under the lid of the trap, and so to raise it sufficiently to make his

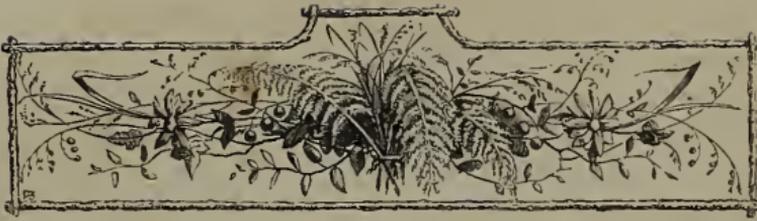
way out, but a blow on his paw delivered by John with a heavy knob-kerrie caused the animal to withdraw its leg from the opening.

As the night advanced the leopard became more and more savage, and his struggles to escape more vigorous. At length he succeeded in raising the lid of the trap sufficiently to almost get his head out ; so John, seeing no other course open, sent a bullet from his gun between the animal's eyes, and instantly killed him.

This leopard measured nearly eight feet in length, and was a powerful and dangerous monster. His skin was beautifully marked, and was taken from his body in the most skilful manner by Eondema. The leopard's teeth were formed into a necklace, while some of his claws were set as pins for neck-handkerchiefs.

It was agreed that the trap was not strong enough to keep a leopard secure in it, so several additional nails were used to fasten the ends of the planks forming the lid, and some hundred pounds additional weight of stones to make raising the lid more difficult, in case another leopard was captured.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### WAR WITH THE BOERS.

**A**T a date some few years previous to this history, important events had occurred at Natal. Two towns—namely, D'Urban and Pietermaritzburg—had been laid out by the Boers, who had quitted the Cape Colony and had settled at Natal. These Boers had defeated Dingaan, the powerful Zulu chief, who had treacherously murdered a number of Boers whom he had invited to visit him. They therefore considered Natal their own property, and gave various portions of the land to settlers on payment of certain sums of money.

It was from these Boers that Mr. Dean had purchased his extensive farm, and he fancied his investment was secure, as the English had abandoned the country. Some time after this, however, it was declared that Natal was within the boundary claimed by the British, and shortly afterwards English troops were sent to Natal to occupy the country, much to the disgust of the Boers, who imagined that they had a right to what

they had found, fought for, and purchased from the then reigning Zulu king, Panda.

On these troops coming to Natal, Mr. Dean's house was frequently visited by the officers, who, stationed in so out-of-the-way a place, were only too glad to enjoy the society of Mr. Dean and his family, and to taste, as it were, the charms of civilization.

Both John and George Dean used to take some of those officers out shooting, showing them the best places for various kinds of game, such as buck, and birds of various descriptions. After one or two attempts to shoot bush buck with these officers, the two boys gave it up, as they found the officers could not be taught to walk in the bush quietly enough to secure success. So they confined their instruction to teaching where bustard, wild duck, and partridges were to be found. These were shot by the officers, whilst game requiring more skill to stalk was left undisturbed.

Both John and George decided that it would never do to take these officers into the bush when elephants were there. The military men were unaware of the danger, and seemed only anxious by their reckless proceedings to prove they were not afraid. Consequently, no success was likely to be obtained whilst such unreasonable proceedings were adopted.

The frequent association of these English officers with Mr. Dean's family caused a strong friendship to exist between them, a fact which shortly led to some exciting and dangerous results.

The Boers who were at Natal would not admit that the English had any right to send soldiers there, and

before long a very ill feeling sprang up between the two parties. A considerable party of Boers had lately come to Natal, and were even more bitter against the English than were those who had resided during some time in the district, and a notice was then sent by the Boers to the officer commanding the English troops to withdraw from the country, as he had no right there, the Boers claiming to be under the protection of the King of Holland. These proceedings soon caused a condition of hostility between the English troops and the Boers, the latter, being well armed and confident in their numbers and knowledge of the country, having no intention of remaining inactive.

This condition of affairs caused not only considerable uneasiness, but much unpleasantness to Mr. Dean and his family. The Boers, knowing them to be English, considered that they would side with the military, and intimated that if they did do so, they would be treated as enemies and dealt with accordingly.

Although no actual hostilities had broken out, it was evident that before long there would be some fighting ; and those who knew the Boers' skill in rough fighting, and their accuracy in shooting, feared the worst for the military, who, having had no experience of the manner in which the Boers fought, would probably be taken at a great disadvantage.

Mr. Dean, seeing the course that events were taking, cautioned the officer in command of the troops that the Boers were not to be despised or underrated. But the officer, like some other commanders in more modern times, was under the impression that he had to deal with a lot of mere farmers, who would run away as

soon as a body of regular troops were opposed to them. A little common sense and reason ought to have shown this officer of what stuff the Boers were made.

It was only four years previous to this period, when a party of 460 Boers attacked and defeated the Zulu army, which at that time numbered many thousands, and it was only two years previously that the Boers, with some Zulu allies, attacked the great chief of the Zulus named Dingaan, utterly defeated him, and placed another chief, named Panda, on the throne of Zululand. These Boers, consequently, were not unacquainted with the art of fighting, and were certainly not to be despised or underrated.

On the Natal flat there was at that time a square stockaded enclosure, with bastions, in which were two eighteen-pounder guns. This redoubt, as it may be termed, was about one hundred and fifty yards square. Inside were the men's barracks, the commissariat stores, and the magazines, and against an enemy who possessed no artillery it was practically impregnable. A well existed in the fort, but the water was bad and somewhat brackish, consequently this well was intended for use only when better water could not be procured from outside.

It was evident that the Boers meant fighting, as they formed an intrenched camp at the Congella, a small stream about one mile from Mr. Dean's house, and about three miles from the redoubt, on the Natal flat. As soon as the Boers had formed their camp, they informed Mr. Dean that neither he nor any of his family were to hold any communication with the English troops, and that if he did do so, he would suffer for it.

The Boers now decided to commence hostilities, and they did so by capturing sixty head of cattle belonging to the troops. The officer in command had ordered the Boers to disperse, but this they refused to do, and threatened that if any of the soldiers came near their camp they would be fired upon.

One among the many mistakes which have been made in South Africa, in underrating the enemy, was now made by the officer commanding the troops.

The Boers during the night had dug some rifle-pits at a distance from the fort, and some of the best marksmen had taken possession of these night after night, and had there concealed themselves in order to see what was going on.

In the fort were two light cannon, an officer of artillery, and about twenty artillerymen; and the officer commanding the troops decided to make a night attack on the Boers' camp, in the hope of surprising them and gaining an easy victory. Such an idea was little short of ridiculous. Men who had been accustomed to stalk the most watchful animals, who had fought the Zulus, and had all their lives been accustomed to guard their camps, were not likely to be surprised. More particularly was this the case when the cannon were taken out from the fort and had to be dragged by oxen.

No sooner were the oxen inspanned to the cannon, than the Boers, who were on watch outside the camp, became aware that some movement was intended, and they quickly informed their friends of this.



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BATTLE AT THE CONGELLA.

**I**T was a moonlight night when the troops moved out of the fort in the Natal flat, and traversing the open ground near it, advanced towards the Congella, where the Boers had formed their camp. Not a sign of the enemy was seen, and the English believed that, as they had merely a party of farmers to deal with, they would effect a surprise, with the usual results.

Directions had been given to a sergeant<sup>1</sup> of artillery at the Point to place a howitzer in a boat, and to move up the Bay with this, so as to reach a position near the Boers' camp by water at the same time that the troops reached the same locality by land; but a slight miscalculation as regarded the tide and the depth of water prevented this howitzer from approaching within a mile and a half of the scene of action. Consequently it was useless in giving any support to the troops.

About half a mile from the Boers' camp the troops had to pass through a bush path, some two hundred

<sup>1</sup> Sergeant Stubbs, R.A.

yards in length, and they considered this the most dangerous portion of their journey. All was quiet, however, and there was as yet no sign of the Boers. The troops then emerged into an open sandy portion of ground, and were within some two or three hundred yards of the Boers' camp. The word was given to unlimber the guns and to open fire, whilst the infantry fixed bayonets and were ready to open fire or charge, as the case might be.

The information which had been conveyed to the Boers enabled them to make every preparation for a warm reception to the troops. They had no wish to check their advance; there could be no better locality for the fight to take place than where the troops were in the open and exposed to view, and where the Boers were under cover—well protected and not seen. Consequently, although the whole of the advance of the troops had been reported to the Boers, they made no attempt to check them.

No sooner were the guns unlimbered, and the orders given to load, than the Boers opened fire. The guns and the men around them were plainly seen, and the Boers, who had been accustomed to shoot large game at night, could make almost as good practice as by day. The first discharge from the rifles of the Boers killed the officer commanding the Royal Artillery,<sup>1</sup> who was shot through the head, the moonlight shining on the peak of his cap affording a good target to the Boer marksmen.

About ten artillerymen were either killed or fell wounded in as many seconds, whilst the infantry were

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Wyatt, R.A.

not less roughly treated, some thirty or forty men being dropped in a few minutes. Finding that he had failed in his surprise, and that he was merely exposing his men in the open to be fired at by men in ambush, the officer commanding, rather late, discovered that he had made a mistake, and ordered his men to retreat.

Had the Boers been so disposed, they might have shot down the greater number of these soldiers during their retreat; but having driven them off from the attack, they did not pursue with that vigour which would have shown that their object was the destruction of the English.

This defeat was very disastrous in more ways than one. First, it had the effect of causing the Boers to form a very poor opinion of the military skill of the English officers. They spoke in the most contemptuous manner of the man who imagined that he could inspan oxen to guns, could drag these guns three miles on a moonlight night, and yet move so quietly as to surprise the camp of men who, during the past four years, had been fighting, and had defeated enemies outnumbering them as fifty to one, and who were skilled in all the arts of surprises, ambuscades, and rapidity of movement.

‘Did the English officer imagine we were mere children, that he thought he could catch us all asleep?’ exclaimed one of the Boers. ‘He acted like an ostrich,’ said another, ‘which pokes its head in a bush and then imagines that he cannot be seen.’ There was consequently not only the heavy loss of men, but the loss of reputation for military skill to be regretted.

Speaking of this disaster some few years after, Sir Harry Smith, as he stood on the ground where our men had been shot down by the Boers, said, 'All night attacks are very dangerous. The movements may be safely made by night, but the attack should be delayed till daybreak.'<sup>1</sup>

Another even more serious result of this defeat was that the Boers now possessed two cannon, with plenty of ammunition, for the guns could not be dragged away, many of the oxen having been shot, and the retreat being made so rapidly that the cannon could not be dragged away.

The position of the troops now became serious. They were prisoners in their fort; not a man showed his head above the palisades but what he was the target for a dozen bullets. The captured cannon were brought by night into a position from which they could be used against the stockade, and these guns were fairly protected by earthworks thrown up by the Boers. An artillery duel now took place between the Boers and the besieged soldiers, the latter, however, possessing the heavier cannon.

Among the artillerymen who had escaped from the disaster at the Congella was one fine specimen of the old long-service gunner. He was named Porter, and in addition to his skill as a gunner, he possessed a daring that was near akin to recklessness. He would lay his eighteen-pounder gun, fire it, and again load whilst the bullets were whistling close to him. 'Every bullet has its billet,' was his remark, as his cap was knocked off by a shot from the Boers, who had aimed an inch too

<sup>1</sup> This remark was made in the author's presence.

high. By means of his skill he silenced the guns used by the Boers, and kept them at a respectful distance.

The rifle-pits which had been dug by the Boers beame very annoying, because from these bullets were fired with such accuracy that they were sent through the openings between the palisades. Now and then the garrison made a sortie by night, and some rough work took place near these rifle-pits. If the Boers had time they would scramble out of these pits and retreat before the soldiers came upon them.

On one occasion, however, a Boer was surprised in one of these pits during a dark night, and two soldiers finding him there tried to stab him with their bayonets. Not being able to reach him as they stooped down, one of these soldiers tried to bayonet the Boer by lying down. Unfortunately the man overbalanced himself and fell into the pit, and was immediately stabbed with a long hunting-knife by the Boer, who shot the other soldier, jumped out of the pit, and ran for his life. An officer, however, was near, and with his sword cut at the Boer and gave him a severe wound. Had the officer given point instead of cutting, the Boer would not have survived to tell the tale.<sup>1</sup> As it was, the man managed to make his escape, and lived to relate the incident.

Day after day passed, and week after week, the condition of the troops in their camp becoming daily worse. Several acts of daring were performed both by the Boers and the English. Among these was one incident worth relating.

<sup>1</sup> This incident was told the author by the Boer, who showed the scar on his back. The officer's name was Molesworth, 27th Regiment.

A young Boer used each evening, when it became dark, to creep up to the stockade, climb up it, and wait till he obtained a shot at one of the soldiers. If he saw any one on the look-out inside the fort he would not show his head above the palisades, but when all seemed clear he would wait for his pot-shot. During several nights he had succeeded in either killing or wounding his man, and it was a matter of either death or being wounded for a soldier to move out of his hut after dark.

An officer who was a good shot, and who possessed a good double-barrelled gun, determined to try conclusions with this Boer. He therefore procured a large barrel, sawed this in half, and placing this barrel at a short distance from the palisades, concealed himself behind it, and placed the muzzle of his gun through the bung-hole. He waited patiently for some time without seeing anything, but a slight noise attracting his attention, he saw the head and shoulders of a man above the posts of the stockade. Taking good aim, he fired, and heard the fall of a heavy body, and when daylight appeared a Boer was seen lying dead outside the fort, shot through the head.





## CHAPTER X.

### AFTER THE BATTLE.



MR. DEAN and his family had been deeply interested and concerned in the course which events had taken. They could not do otherwise than sympathize with the Boers, who, after incredible hardships and some fierce and hard-fought battles, had at length obtained, as they believed, a right to claim the district of Natal as their own. The Deans were, however, English, and knowing all the officers who were at Natal, they looked upon these as friends, consequently any fighting attended with loss on either side was to them a distressing event.

By means of a Caffre, Mr. Dean managed to convey to the officer commanding the troops a letter, in which he said that the Boers meant to fight, and as they were in great numbers, well armed, and skilful shots, he hoped the officer in command would not risk an engagement with them, for if he did a disaster to the English would occur.

Such advice was not relished by the English officer, who imagined that for a mere set of farmers, undrilled

and having no uniform, to stand for five minutes against regular troops, was too absurd to be true. He committed the same error that nearly every one of our commanders in South Africa has committed, viz. he underrated his enemy, and the result was a defeat, the unnecessary slaughter of several men, and a loss of prestige to the English arms.

Both John and George Dean had visited the Boers' camp, and had seen with admiration the precautions which had been taken to prevent the camp being 'rushed,' and to protect the constructors of the camp from the bullets of an enemy.

Several trees had been cut down, and the branches cut to a point and turned outwards, so as to present an obstacle to the advance of a foe. A ditch had been dug and a parapet thrown up, so that the men behind this showed little more than a portion of their heads.

The range of various trees and large stones that could be seen from this parapet had been carefully paced, so that the range might be known; for although the Boers did not possess rifles with sights, yet their long, heavy, smooth-bored guns had a long range, and they were accustomed to elevate the muzzle of these, so as to show more or less of the barrel, according to the distance of the object at which they aimed.

Men who, like these Boers, had been accustomed to stand calm and aim straight at a charging lion or buffalo, and who for hours had withstood the charges of the Zulu army, were not likely to lose their nerves when their enemy happened to be an English soldier. The two young Deans, therefore, foresaw that if an attack was made on the Boers, the result was almost certain

to be a defeat and slaughter of the troops. They were aware that their father had warned the English officer, and that the result was that the warning was anything but well received. If possible, they would have liked to make their way to the camp, and give all the information about the Boers' strength to their friends.

Whether or not the Boers suspected this wish they could not tell, but they were warned by two or three of the Boers that, if they were discovered either visiting the officers or sending letters to them, they would be treated as spies, and at once shot. So, said one of the Boers, '*Pas op*' (take care).

In spite of the warning which John and George Dean had received, they were very anxious to make their way to the English fort, and to inform the officers that an attack on the Boers' camp would be sure to fail, and would result in many officers and men being killed. They believed that they could persuade the commanding officer that it was impossible to succeed in an attack, and that they would consequently save many lives.

They agreed that if they decided to make an attempt to reach the fort, they would not let their father or any of the family know what they were going to do. They talked the matter over, and had decided on the course to adopt in order to reach the camp by night, and the actual time was arranged.

As they were leaving their house, they heard a shot fired, then another, and then the firing became rapid, and they knew they were too late to warn the English. The noise of the firing alarmed Mr. Dean and the family, who at once got up from bed and went out to

endeavour to discover what was taking place. It was soon evident, from the sound of the guns going farther and farther away, that the English troops were retreating, and it was concluded that they had attempted a surprise and had failed.

Mr. Dean at once said that no one should leave the house ; they must remain neutral, otherwise they might receive very rough treatment from the Boers.

The firing having ceased, they returned to the house, but had scarcely entered the doors when they heard the sound of a horse galloping, and shortly after a Boer rode up to the house and asked if they could spare him some linen for bandages, as three or four Boers had been wounded. Whilst the ladies were collecting what was wanted, Mr. Dean asked the Boer what had happened. 'Happened !' replied the Boer ; ' why, the stupid Roobarjies (red jackets) thought they could surprise us, and came to attack us. We could have shot them all, but we merely killed enough of them to make them run like a herd of buck.'

When the linen was procured, the two elder Miss Deans offered to proceed to the camp to aid in dressing the wounds of the Boers ; but the young Boer said, ' No ; it was no place for women, and there might be another attack even that night.'

It was not till the afternoon of the next day that some Boers visited Sea View, and gave a detailed account of the Battle of the Congella. They stated how the approach of the troops had been reported to them from the time they moved out of their camp until they had come within range of the Boers' guns.

‘Could anything be more stupid?’ said the Boers. ‘They courted being shot. Did they think we were fools, to allow ourselves to be surprised, or did they think we could not hit them with our bullets?’

The result, therefore, of this silly attack was to cause the Boers to have a contempt for English soldiers.

John and George having obtained permission, visited the Boers’ camp on the following day, and saw how everything had occurred. The men who had been killed had been buried, and the wounded Boers were doing well—not a man of these having been killed. They heard how the English troops were surrounded in their camp, and how it was certain that they would soon have to surrender, as they must be very short of provisions.

Mr. Dean talked to the Boers about the state of affairs, and said that, even supposing the garrison had to surrender, a large force would certainly be sent shortly from the Cape, and the Boers would not be left in quiet possession of the country.

The Boers, however, asserted that they were under the protection of the King of Holland; and so ignorant were these men of the condition of things in Europe, that they believed Holland to be a far more powerful country than England, and that if the King intimated that the Boers were under his protection, the English would not dare to again interfere with them.



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE ENGLISH BESIEGED.

**A**FTER the disaster at the Congella the troops were unable to leave their fort, and were reduced to eating dried horse flesh, biscuit dust, and dried corn. What with the deaths caused by the enemy's bullets, and also by sickness, the numbers of the troops were considerably reduced. They, however, fought with great bravery, and made frequent sorties, inflicting loss on their enemy.

In the Bay of Natal was a small brigantine, named the *Mazeppa*, and on this vessel the women and children belonging to the troops had been placed. The Boers had possession of the fort, which commanded the entrance to the harbour, and in this fort there were cannon. The captain of the *Mazeppa*, taking advantage of a suitable wind and tide, slipped his cable, and in spite of the Boers' cannon, got clear away, and at once started for Delagoa Bay, in the hope of meeting some British men-of-war, who could afford aid to the besieged at Natal. The women and children were

landed at Delagoa Bay, and soon after conveyed to Cape Town.

An important fact, however, was to make known at Cape Town, or on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, the condition of the troops at Natal. How this was to be done was the problem to be solved. Fortunately, at Natal there was a young Englishman, well trained in the practical school of hunting, and possessed of that coolness, caution, and daring which are essential attributes of the hunter.

MR. RICHARD KING (we will have his name in large type) volunteered to ride down the coast, and convey the news to the English on the eastern frontier of the Cape. The dangers of this undertaking cannot be exaggerated. First, King had to escape from the vigilance of the Boers about Natal; he then had before him a ride of six hundred miles through a country little known, and in which there were neither roads nor bridges; he had to pass through the country of various tribes, whose chiefs were anything but friendly towards the white man; to provide himself with food on the way; to swim some twenty rivers, many of which were infested with alligators and hippopotami; and to find his way by the aid of the sun by day and the stars by night.

His first proceeding was to swim his horse across Natal Bay by night, and to make his way near the coast to avoid the Boers, then to swim the Umlass River, and steer a course nearly south-west. He carried with him despatches announcing the desperate condition of the troops at Natal; and after encountering numerous adventures and hairbreadth escapes,

he reached the frontier of the Cape, having accomplished in ten days this journey of six hundred miles. Such a ride, under such conditions, stands almost unrivalled, and is a good example of the stuff of which Englishmen are made.

Arrangements to afford relief, both from Cape Town and also the frontier, were immediately made. Her Majesty's ship *Southampton* was sent from the Cape with troops, Colonel Cloete being in command. This officer had long been connected with the Cape and Cape affairs, and was well known to the Dutch. A small vessel, called the *Conch*, was also despatched from Algoa Bay with troops; and these two vessels reached the coast opposite Natal within twenty-four hours of each other.

It was a cheering sight to the little army besieged in the fort on the Natal flat, to see rockets during the night, which they knew must have been discharged from ships which had arrived for their relief.

No time was lost in landing the troops which these two vessels had brought. Seven hundred men in boats crossed the bar and entered the Bay. These were fired at by the Boers, but a few shells sent from the guns on board the *Southampton* and *Conch* soon put a stop to the Boers' proceedings, who, perceiving that they were outnumbered, and that no object could be gained by continuing to fight, retired up the country to Pietermaritzburg.

The brave little garrison at Natal was thus relieved, and none too soon, for only a few days' provisions remained, and if the reinforcements had been delayed another week the troops must have surrendered.

John and George lost no time in making their way down to the fort, taking with them a plentiful supply of oranges, lemons, bananas, and vegetables. The Caffres also brought in chicken and fresh eggs. Both officers and men made up for lost time, and during several days feasted on luxuries to which they had long been strangers.

Colonel Cloete, with the freshly landed troops, advanced towards Pietermaritzburg; but before he had gone far was met by a deputation from the Boers, who offered to submit to the English. Terms were at once made, and the Boers were allowed to return to their homes, taking with them their horses and arms.

The command of the fort at Natal was, however, to be retained by the English.

Matters remained in this condition until some four or five years afterwards, when the whole Colony of Natal was annexed as belonging to Great Britain.





## CHAPTER XII.

### BUFFALO HUNT IN THE UMGANIE BUSH.

**E**VERYTHING at Natal now settled down into a quiet, peaceable condition, and though many valuable lives had been lost by the want of tact and judgment shown by certain individuals, yet all this seemed to be overlooked and forgotten, and all was peace. The events that had occurred, however, made a lasting impression on both John and George Dean. They seemed to have, as it were, caught the infection for fighting, and were frequently talking about the mistakes made by the English in their attack on the Congella camp, and how the defeat and disaster might have been avoided. All the fighting was now over, and any great excitement must be procured by hunting elephants, buffaloes, or other large or dangerous game.

Elephants were now absent from the Natal bush. If they had visited this part of the country, they would have been alarmed and driven away by the noise of the firing, which had been going on during several weeks. They had an extensive forest in which to

roam, this forest reaching to the Tugela River, some eighty miles up the coast. Consequently they only visited Natal itself at particular seasons of the year.

Eondema heard from some of his Caffres that across the Umganie River, where the bush was very dense, a herd of buffalo had now their haunt; and as buffalo beef was very good eating, and the excitement of hunting these animals in the bush was very great, it was decided to attack these animals on the first occasion of favourable weather. A north-east wind was required, in order that the hunters might enter the bush and move up wind, so that the animals should not scent the approach of their enemies.

Neither Eondema nor the two English lads were as well acquainted with the bush across the Umganie as they were with that nearer their own locality. They therefore took with them a Caffre named Monyosi, who possessed a single-barrelled gun, and who was not only well acquainted with the bush, but was a most skilled spoorer. He was skilled in tracing every sign of wild animals, and could tell at what hour of the night or previous day an animal had pressed its foot on the ground where it had left its footprints. He could also at a glance tell at what pace the animal was moving over the ground. Consequently he was a valuable assistant to the hunters.

One morning everything was found to be favourable. Eondema and his two white friends started for the kraal of Monyosi, who was ready for them. He knew the wind was favourable, and he therefore expected them. The tide was low, and the river could be

crossed without difficulty, as it was not more than two feet deep.

On the shore of this river the footprints of a large animal were seen, which all knew were those of a half-grown imvubu, as the Caffres called the hippopotamus. The trail had been left by the animal as it passed during the previous night. The hippopotamus had probably moved on some two miles, and was concealed among some long reeds and swampy ground, where it was very difficult to approach it without making considerable noise.

Another day or a night watch would afford better opportunities of a shot at this animal than was likely to be obtained on the present occasion. As the party quitted the river and ascended the bank on the farther side, Monyosi called attention to some marks on the soft ground, which puzzled both John and George. Eondema expressed astonishment at these marks, and exclaimed, 'Inyoka m'culu!' (an enormous snake). Monyosi then informed his companions that there was one snake that infested this neighbourhood that must be the great-grandfather of all the other snakes. He was as large round as Monyosi's body, and he showed on the ground how long he was, and John, pacing this, concluded that the snake must be at least forty feet long.

This reptile was one of the rock snakes of Natal, a species of boa-constrictor. These creatures are not poisonous, but kill their prey by crushing it to death. Monyosi stated that this snake had swallowed more than one calf belonging to him, and he was most anxious to kill it.

Proceeding on their way, the party were not long in coming on the fresh tracks of a herd of buffalo that had been grazing in the open ground, where trees were far apart, and where only a few bushes interfered with the grass. The buffaloes, it was known by the spoor, had entered the bush shortly after sunrise on that morning. There were about ten or twelve of them, and they had not been alarmed at anything, as they had moved slowly, and had browsed on the surrounding bushes.

Monyosi, who knew this bush well, led the way, following in the most noiseless way the footprints of the buffalo. The slightest motion of his hand every now and then indicated where the animals had stopped to browse on some palatable bush.

The two English lads were clothed in correct costume—a dark brown suit, with the Dutch shoes which enable a man to walk quietly in the bush. Experienced as they were in bush-shooting, they could traverse the thick underwood almost as silently as the Caffres. Consequently these four moved through the bush making no more noise than would a bird as it hopped from branch to branch.

The freshly-broken branches showed that they were gaining on the buffaloes, and at any moment might come face to face with them at a distance of only a few yards.

There are few white men who have ever had the good fortune to experience such exciting sport as this. It was necessary to be as silent as the trees themselves, as watchful as a leopard, and as calm as a lake on which not a breath of air produces a ripple.

It was impossible to prevent the heart from beating rapidly under such exciting conditions, and every now and then a long breath was taken by all the party, but there was neither hurry nor uncertainty in their proceedings. They moved slowly and deliberately forward, Monyosi now and then stopping and stooping low to get peeps among the branches, which were not so thickly furnished with leaves as those above.

Two miles at least of the bush had been passed through, and the hunters knew they were close to their game. Every now and then a branch in front of them would spring back to regain its original position, from which it had been displaced by the passage of the buffaloes.

The animals could be smelt, for there was scarcely a breath of air in the bush, and the scent hung among the close, dense underwood. The signs on the ground indicated that the buffaloes had remained some time without moving, a sure indication that they did not intend travelling much more during that day.

Monyosi's movements were now even slower than before, whilst his senses were on the alert to smell, hear, or see the formidable game against which he was advancing.

Suddenly he stopped, and, placing his hand behind him, signalled for his white companions to advance. There was no hurry or excitement in any of these movements; but John and George quietly came beside Monyosi, and raising their heads, saw within ten paces of them two buffaloes, standing head on towards them and with ears erect, watching to see the cause of the slight noise which had disturbed them.

The position in which the animals stood relative to the hunters was very unfavourable for obtaining a satisfactory result from a shot.

A buffalo is most vulnerable behind the shoulder, as is the case with almost all animals. When standing head on, the buffalo carries his nose very high; consequently his forehead is nearly horizontal, and a bullet striking this will glance off without producing any serious results.

If the hunter could send a bullet into the animal's chest, it would strike too low to hit any vital spot; and though the creature might die from the effects of the wound, yet it would be able to travel many miles through the dense bush before it died from loss of blood. In this case, however, there was no choice about the matter. A shot, such as it was, must be obtained instantly, for the buffalo is as quick in its movements as is a rabbit, and the bush was so dense that the animals need move only a yard or so to be lost to sight.

The two white hunters fired at once at the buffalo's head, but Monyosi, who was rather slower, discharged his gun a second or two afterwards. The whole party then sprang into the bush right and left of the path towards which the buffaloes' heads were directed.

Quick as a flash of lightning, one of the animals, with head down, charged over the ground on which a moment before the hunters had stood. Had they remained where they had fired, they would have been knocked over and trampled, consequently their rapid movements had saved them from serious injury.

The crashing of the bush showed that the animals had continued their retreat, and the four hunters gathered together to compare notes as to what they had done. John and George had fired at the leading buffalo's head, but Monyosi stated that, just as he was going to fire, the other animal had turned sideways, and he had aimed at it behind the shoulder. He was too near to the buffalo to be able to hear the thud of his bullet striking it, but he believed he had placed the bullet in a vital spot.

A discussion was now held as to which was most likely to lead to the best results,—to follow the buffalo that had charged and had been hit in the head, or to pursue the trail of the animal that had been wounded behind the shoulder.

Monyosi, as the most experienced hunter, said that they ought to follow the trail of the buffalo that had been hit in the head, but only for a short distance. If it had not fallen, they might be sure it was not mortally or even dangerously wounded, so they might give up the pursuit and come back and take up the spoor of the other animal. There was very little blood in the trail which they at first followed, and they soon decided that it was useless continuing the pursuit of this animal. They therefore retraced their steps and followed the footmarks of the second buffalo.

Monyosi, with a smile of satisfaction, soon pointed on the ground, where there were large clotted masses of blood. Placing his hand to his mouth, he indicated that this blood had come from the animal's mouth, and that therefore it must have been wounded through the lungs. Consequently, it was only a matter of



THE DEATH OF THE BUFFALO.



time as to when it would be found dead, for die it must.

A buffalo in its native forest is a dangerous animal at all times, but when mortally wounded it is still more to be feared. It is excessively cunning, and adopts certain proceedings which, if its pursuers were unacquainted with them, would certainly lead to a disaster. One of these is to move through the bush rapidly, then to stop and back itself into a dense portion of the bush at right angles to its original line of retreat. With head down, it there waits until its pursuers come up to it, when it rushes at them, and either gores them with its horns, or, rising on its hind legs, comes with its hoofs and whole weight upon their prostrate bodies.

The greatest caution is therefore necessary when following the trail of a wounded buffalo, but no better man could have been found to undertake such a proceeding than Monyosi. He seemed to take a delight in the actual danger, and in setting his skill and cunning against the instinct of the animal. Although he moved quickly through the bush, yet he did so noiselessly, and his searching eyes penetrated every dense bit of cover which might conceal his enemy.

Suddenly he stopped, and stood for a few seconds immovable; then slowly signalling with his hand, he gazed intently at some dense cover slightly to the right of the path he was following. His two white companions examined this portion of the bush, and could just perceive the dark form of an animal which was standing motionless.

Monyosi slowly raised his gun, as did John, who was nearest to him, and two shots were fired almost

at the same instant. The two who had fired were ready to jump on one side if the animal had turned and charged, but the only sound being a sort of low moan, Monyosi whispered, 'Yena gofile' (he is dead), and advanced boldly to where the whole party saw the animal lying on its side immovable.

No time was lost in cleaning the buffalo, and the two Caffres at once decided that they must have a feast.

A box of lucifers, which John always carried with him, enabled them to light a large fire, there being plenty of dead wood lying in the bush. Some of the interior of the animal was then cooked, and the four hunters made a most substantial meal, at which the Caffres ate about four times as much as their white companions.

The buffalo was then skinned, and this skin, although very heavy, was carried by Monyosi, who undertook to carry it home, and have it pegged on the ground and preserved. Some ten or a dozen pounds of meat were carried by the other three hunters, who, following their back tracks, found their way out of the bush; and some minutes before sundown John and George reached their home, and related their adventures to Mr. Dean and to their mother and sisters.





## CHAPTER XIII.

### SNAKES AT NATAL.



**A**MONG the few settlers who resided at Natal in those days was a German naturalist named Quinch. He was connected with some of the principal museums in Europe, for which he collected and preserved specimens of reptiles, birds, and insects. This man was very friendly with the young Deans, and had taught them where to search for, and how to find, some of the rarest insects.

When they had learned from this German of the various changes through which insect life passed, they found even a walk in the bush of much more interest than when they knew nothing about such matters. Natal was rich not only in animal but also in insect life, and the Deans soon formed an interesting collection of their own catching.

Among the things that Quinch collected and preserved were snakes, the country at that time being infested with them, and these reptiles he 'set up' so well that it was difficult to see the difference between a real snake and his stuffed specimen. This skill in

stuffing was very nearly the cause of a fatal result to George, who went to pay Quinch a visit one morning.

The door of Quinch's hut was usually open, and there were four rooms in the hut. In the first room he sometimes left the skins of birds lying on the ground or on a shelf, and sometimes placed his stuffed specimens in this room.

When George entered this room he was at once attracted by the sight of a large puff-adder coiled up, and its head pointing towards the door. The eyes of the reptile looked so natural, and the gloss on its skin so perfect, that George was amazed at the naturalist's skill in having so ably represented life. He was just going to stoop down to take a closer look at this specimen when Quinch entered the room and welcomed his young friend.

'How splendidly you have set up that puff-adder!' said George, pointing to the skin on the floor.

Quinch turned quickly and saw what George referred to. Seizing a stick near him, he dealt the reptile a blow, which, though it did not kill it, yet broke its back, and George then realized the fact that a live puff-adder had entered the house, and had, with the lazy habit of these creatures, remained immovable even when George was within two yards of it.

Had the naturalist not entered the room when he did, George would have stooped down to examine the specimen, as he supposed it to be, and would certainly have been struck by the reptile, and before night would have been dead. If this snake had been seen by George anywhere else but in the naturalist's room, he would never have imagined it to

be stuffed ; but seeing it on the floor, where specimens were often placed, his suspicions were not aroused, and he consequently had escaped a great danger. Some weeks afterwards this adder really was stuffed, and so skilfully that it looked as though as dangerous as ever.<sup>1</sup>

The object of George's visit to Quinch was to ask him if he in his searches in the bush had seen anything of the enormous snake said to be near the Umganie River. Quinch told him that he had heard there was such a snake, and from the description it must be a giant among reptiles. He added that he had himself killed a rock snake at Natal more than twenty feet long, and that he had sent the skin to Germany and had been well paid for it, so that if he could obtain the skin of one that was nearly forty feet long, he should consider it a great prize.

George at once proceeded to the kraal of Monyosi, and told him that he was anxious to kill the big snake whose spoor they had seen in the morning when they were bent on hunting the buffaloes.

Monyosi smiled, and asked what they could do with the snake. 'He is valueless,' said Monyosi. 'We cannot eat him ; but he is destructive, and might some day kill one of us, so perhaps we ought to kill him.'

'Do you know where he is ?' inquired George.

'No,' replied Monyosi ; 'he travels. Sometimes he is among the reeds looking after guanias, and sometimes he is in the bush looking after monkeys and bush buck ; but he often goes near where cattle feed, and has killed and eaten more than one small calf.'

<sup>1</sup> This fact occurred in the author's experience.

‘Would he attack a man?’ inquired George.

‘Yes,’ replied Monyosi, ‘when he is hungry; and he is so quick in his movements that he would seize and then coil round a man, and crush or suffocate him before the man could do anything.’

‘Then,’ replied George, ‘that snake must be killed, and we must do it. You watch for the spoor, and let me know when you have found out where it is, and we will have his skin.’

A few days after this interview, Monyosi one evening went to Sea View, and informed George that the snake was again moving about rapidly, and was evidently in want of food, and suggested that Spot should be employed to help find the snake; for even if Spot were seized, they could kill the snake before he did much damage to the dog.

On the following morning early, John, George, and Eondema started for Monyosi’s kraal, and were joined by Monyosi and another Caffre named Inkau (the monkey). The two English hunters had their guns, whilst the Caffres were armed with assagies, and the party crossed the Umganie River, and soon saw the trail of the big snake. They followed this trail till they came to some thick bush in swampy ground, and they believed the snake was there concealed. Spot was shown this trail and told to hunt. The dog seemed to comprehend what was wanted, and sniffing about, went up to a small clump of bush, and there stood for some time looking at the bush, and then turned his head towards his masters.

‘The snake is there,’ said John; and the whole party ran forward.

Just as they did so, they saw the snake dart open-mouthed at the dog, the enormous jaws opening more than a foot. Spot jumped back and avoided the attack, and commenced barking furiously. Calling the dog away, the party approached the dense bush and peeped amidst the thick underwood, where they saw the snake with its head drawn back, ready for another



SPOT AND THE ROCK SNAKE.

dart at any intruder. John, cocking his gun, at once sent a charge of buckshot into the snake's body. He jumped back just in time to avoid an open-mouthed lunge at him, and George, quick as thought, sent another charge of shot into the snake's head.

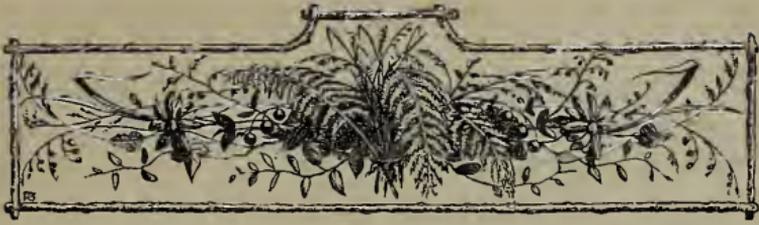
The two Caffres had stood ready with their assagies, in case the snake had succeeded in seizing their white companions ; but the last shot had done for the reptile,

for on peeping into the bush they saw that its head was shattered, and though the body yet moved, it was evident that the big snake was, as far as offensive acts were concerned, practically dead.

It required considerable labour to draw this monster out of the bush, but this work was at length accomplished; and when stretched out, John measured its length by pacing, and found that it was thirteen long paces in length, and was very thick. It was so heavy that the whole five found they could only just lift it, but could not carry it, so they left it on the ground, deciding to tell Quinch of it on their return, and to inform him that he might have the skin.

On the following day the naturalist was led to the spot by Monyosi, but very little of the snake was left. It had been eaten, and, as the spoor showed, by various kinds of animals. There was the trail of a large alligator, of a leopard, of two or three hyenas, and of some vultures, so that this valuable skin was lost as a specimen of the gigantic rock snake of Natal.





## CHAPTER XIV.

### SHOOTING BUSH BUCK.

**A**FFAIRS at Natal had now settled down into a quiet and orderly condition. A British regiment had arrived at Natal, the headquarters being stationed at Pietermaritzburg, and one company at D'Urban. Some artillery and sappers and miners completed the military force.

Among the officers were three or four who had some claim to being true sportsmen; they were good riders and excellent shots. Two of these happened to be stationed at D'Urban, and were frequent visitors at Mr. Dean's house.

Riding parties, boating excursions, and picnics were now indulged in, whilst the two young Deans frequently accompanied one or other of the officers on shooting excursions in the neighbourhood.

Feathered game was plentiful about Natal—bustards, partridges, guinea-fowl, quail, and wild duck being numerous. There were in the open country rietbuck and duiker, and in the bush the three species of buck which have been already named.

The sport in the bush was that which John and George were most pleased with. Under the instruction of their Caffre companions they had become expert bush hunters, an accomplishment that it appears as if some men could never excel in.

One of the English officers soon acquired this knowledge, and, attended by a Caffre to carry a spare gun, frequently passed the day in the bush, and rarely came out of it without a buck being on his Caffre's back.

The other officer did not possess those acute perceptions which are necessary to success in bush hunting. He was always doing something which produced a failure. He could not apparently avoid stepping on a dry stick, the crack made by its snapping causing the watchful antelope that might be near to steal away before it could be seen; or he would cough or sneeze, or knock the butt of his gun against a tree, and so make a noise that, giving the alarm, prevented him or his companions from ever surprising an animal in the bush.

When men are deficient in skill they usually attribute their want of success to bad luck, and this officer was no exception to the rule. He had accompanied the Deans more than a dozen times into the bush, had passed the whole day there, and had not seen a single buck. He began therefore to assert that there were no buck there, in spite of his brother officer bringing home two or three buck a week from the very bush in which he asserted there were none.

Being determined to prove to this officer the cause of his failure, George, accompanied by Eondema, took him into the bush one day, and made him walk some

few paces behind them. More than once they called his attention to the noise he made as he moved through the bush, but he asserted that it was impossible that a buck could know what caused the noise, and so it did not matter.

The party had not been many minutes in the bush before a buck gave that sort of sneezing noise which is indicative of alarm. The officer did not know what this noise was, and had he been alone would have paid no attention to it. George, however, asked him to stand still and be quiet, whilst he slowly advanced, and gaining a glimpse of the buck, dropped it dead with a bullet behind the shoulder.

‘You have not shot anything,’ said the officer. ‘Surely no buck could be so quiet.’

‘Tabata Inyamazan’ (take up the buck), said George to Eondema; and, to the astonishment of the officer, he saw as he advanced a red bush buck lying dead on the ground.

‘You’ll never kill a buck here till you learn how to walk quietly, and keep your eyes and ears open,’ said George.





## CHAPTER XV.

### JOURNEY TO THE ZULU COUNTRY.



**A**FTER affairs were settled with the Boers, there was no place on the face of the earth where everything was more peaceable than in the District of Natal. This District, certainly a quarter as large as England, and containing nearly one hundred thousand Caffres, and probably not two thousand white men, remained during several years in the most orderly condition. Crimes of any kind seemed unknown.

The Caffres, especially, were a just and peaceable people, who seemed to possess a love of doing what was right. A white man might travel alone from one end of Natal to the other, and he would meet nothing but courtesy from the natives; they would even go out of their way to be hospitable to a white man whom they had never seen or heard of before, and whom probably they might never see again.

The Zulu country was then ruled over by Umpanda, the father of Cetywayo. Umpanda had been proclaimed the Great Chief in 1840, by Pretorius, after Dingaan had been defeated by the Boers. Although

Umpanda kept up a large and well-disciplined army, he was yet very peaceable in his tastes, and was disposed to be very friendly with the white men. He sometimes had difficulties with his own chiefs, whom for the slightest offence he would execute; but this was not a very astonishing crime, considering that it was not so very long ago that we in England would hang a man for sheep-stealing, and for other minor offences.

Every now and then a trader would visit the Zulu country, in order to exchange blankets, beads, and other articles for leopards' skins, elephants' tusks, and the teeth of hippopotami. It was forbidden for these traders to take guns or gunpowder for sale to the Zulus, as it was determined to keep these people as long as possible in what may be termed an unarmed condition.

One of the traders, named Kirk, had visited the Zulu country several times, and had given to John and George the most glowing accounts of the large game to be found in some parts, more especially to the north of Zululand.

At that time the country north of Umpanda's kingdom was almost uninhabited. The Boers had not then located themselves in these parts, and the country was the residence of large herds of elephant, buffalo, eland, and other quadrupeds.

The coast of Zululand was fringed with a dense forest, in which elephant, buffalo, koodoo, and many varieties of antelope were to be found. It had therefore, during some time, been the great wish of the two young Deans to visit Zululand, and to have

a chance of hunting in the then untrodden forests of that paradise of sportsmen.

Kirk, having made his arrangements for a trading trip, informed the Deans that he should shortly start on his journey, and named the terms on which he would take them with him.

Mr. Dean having given his consent to this trip, the two youngsters made their preparations for the journey. They were provided each with a pony, which they carefully trained so that the animals would stand quite still whilst their riders fired from their backs. They had taught these two ponies to come to them when they gave a peculiar whistle, so that they were more like two dogs in their ways than two horses.

The Cape pony is usually a most intelligent animal, and can be taught almost anything, especially if its master is intelligent and patient. Such animals are of the greatest value to the South African sportsman, for his life may often depend on the steadiness of his horse.

Two heavy guns for large game, and a light double-barrelled gun, suitable either for small shot or bullets, completed their armament; whilst they took a large stock of beads, tin mugs, and other articles, as presents for the Zulus. It was not their object to trade, but to see the country and the people, and to obtain, if possible, some good sport.

It is impossible for any persons, except those who have experienced it, to realize the charm of travelling in a wild and almost uninhabited country, where the animal creation roam in undisturbed freedom, where the gun is the ruler, and where it is necessary to guard

oneself against the attack of wild animals which resent the intrusion of man.

That which made travelling in South Africa so pleasant was the splendour of the climate and the beauty of the vegetation ; also the abundance of animal and insect life. There are some countries, and Canada especially, in which the traveller may journey for miles through dreary pine woods, where there is no variation in the foliage, and where no animal, bird, or insect is seen ; but in Natal, especially in its early days, life was abundant.

In addition, this part of the country was liberally supplied with water, many large rivers flowing into the sea, and supplied by rapidly running little streams. It was a very rare thing for this district to suffer from a want of water, and this was one reason why both animal and vegetable life was so plentiful.

In order to be independent of Kirk's waggon, the Deans had procured what was termed a pack ox—that is, an ox trained to carry things on its back. By means of this animal, they carried spare ammunition and a large waterproof sheet, which could be made into a small tent to protect them from the dew at night.

Spot, the large dog, was to accompany them, but his little companion was left at Sea View, because he was not so well able to protect himself as was his big friend.

An ox waggon travels slowly, so it was allowed to have a day's start, and was then caught up by the Deans, who rode their ponies, and they now commenced their camp life in Africa.

Each country has its peculiar ways of travelling

when sport is desired. In former times in South Africa the hunter had to do a great deal for himself. He had to saddle his own horse, clean his gun, and very often to light his own fire, and cook his own dinner; to make his own camp arrangements, so as to be best protected against wind or rain, or surprise from wild animals, and to select places where there was neither too much nor too little water.

Thus South Africa was an excellent school in which to learn how to do things for oneself. Horses, oxen, Caffres, were always to be procured for carrying heavy articles, so that the sportsman was not troubled with carrying anything but his gun, ammunition, and hunting knife.

In India the sportsman has with him every luxury. His tents are large, his staff of followers numerous, and he does nothing for himself.

In Canada, again, the sportsman who travels by land through the forests has often to do the work of a coolie in India, and has to carry provisions, cooking utensils, and blankets, as also his gun—the Indians in Canada being very great gentlemen, and thinking it beneath their dignity to carry more than their masters who employ them.

John and George took great delight in making their camp comfortable and secure each night. They cut down bushes and made a little enclosure by aid of these, so that an animal could not penetrate into their camp, at least without making a great noise. Their horses, after being allowed to graze until it became dark, were fastened to the waggon in which Kirk slept. Spot took his rest beside his masters, and they knew

they could trust their faithful dog to do the duties of sentry.

During the second day's journey John was successful in shooting a rietbuck, whilst George killed two coran, a bird that is excellent eating. They had thus a sufficient quantity of food to keep them for three or four days without drawing on their supplies which were in the waggon.

From neighbouring Caffre kraals they procured some 'amasi' (thick sour milk), which was almost meat and drink. This they paid for with a few beads; and as there were kraals on the road to the Tugela River, which was the boundary of Zululand, they were not likely to want for the absolute necessaries of life for some time.





## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE CAMP ATTACKED BY A LION.

**I**T was on the fourth night that they had camped out, and when they were near the Imvoti River, that the party fully realized that they were in a thoroughly wild country. The camp had been formed with the usual precautions.

A large fire had been made for cooking purposes, and had been allowed almost to die out, when a sound was heard from some distant rocks, which was new to John and George, but which Kirk at once pronounced to be a lion roaring. Spot seemed to know at once what it was, as the hair on his back stood on end, and, showing his teeth, he stood listening, evidently aware that his most deadly enemy was in his vicinity.

Additional precautions were at once taken to collect more firewood, and to build round the waggon and where the horses stood a thick fence of bushes. It was agreed also that one of the three white men should take watch and watch about, so as to keep up the fire, and be ready to defend the camp in case the lion came near.

As it was not probable that the lion would come to the camp at the early part of the night, George took the first watch, whilst the other two slept. John was to succeed George on sentry duty, and Kirk was to take the last watch.

The camp had been formed near a little stream, and some fifty yards from the bush. The country on one side was open, and the oxen that dragged the waggon had made a good meal off the grass in this open space. Just previous to sunset these animals had been driven up to the waggon and there fastened, so that they could not stray during the night.

Although not formidable to, or likely to attack man, there were in this portion of the country several hyenas, which would attack and kill an ox if they found it straying by itself. The plan practised by these animals to secure their prey, was to seize an ox by the flank, and there hold on with their powerful jaws until the piece was torn from the ox's body.

There is no animal in existence whose jaws are more powerful than are those of a hyena, he being able to grind up the leg bone of an ox as easily as a dog will crush the leg bone of a chicken. The hyena, however, is a cowardly animal, and although, if it has the chance, it would carry off a child, it has never been known to attack a man.

George undertook his watch with great pleasure. Beside him, coiled up, was Spot; and as the dog seemed to be fully aware that enemies were about, he seemed to sleep with one eye open and one ear on the alert. The night was dark, so dark that it was difficult to see two yards round you; the ears, consequently, were

the sentries from which most information was to be gained.

Various sounds broke the stillness of the night. First there were the shrieks of two or three jackals, their cries sounding like the screams of a woman in agony. Then came the moans from the oxen near the waggon. Some night-bird circling round the camp would utter a strange cry; and then for some minutes all would be quiet. Then again from the distance would come the long, weird-like howl of the strand wolf, on hearing which Spot gave a low growl, indicating his animosity to the creature whose voice he had heard.

George kept heaping wood on the fire, so as to show as much light as possible round him; but every now and then the flame would dwindle down, and only the red-hot embers give a glow to the surrounding objects.

It was when the fire was giving but little light, and when George had been about two hours on watch, that the oxen began to move about uneasily, the horses to snort, and Spot, rising to his feet, his tail between his legs, and his teeth showing, stood trembling with excitement.

This was the time and the condition to try the nerves, and to learn whether one's heart was in the right place. Most youngsters, as well acquainted with these warnings as was George, would probably have called to his two white companions, and would consequently have at once broken their night's rest. He, however, was now more watchful than ever, and quietly adding some wood to the fire, he gazed intently into the darkness, in order, if possible, to discover what creature had approached the camp and caused the animals to be so

much alarmed. Gazing intently into the darkness, he saw two bright, shining objects at some distance from him; these remained immovable, and he knew they were the eyes either of a leopard or a lion.

He did not think a leopard would be sufficiently daring to approach so close to the camp, and he concluded that the lion had come into his neighbourhood to see what he could carry off for his supper. Raising his gun, he aimed at the two bright lights; but the darkness was so great that he found he could not take a sure aim, and to fire in uncertainty might lead to dangerous results, as unless he killed the lion, he should run the risk of being attacked with only one barrel of his gun loaded.

Experience teaches; and George now thought of what had not occurred to him before, viz. that he ought to have had a second loaded gun within his reach. Under the critical conditions which prevailed, he dare not move.

The lion was crouching not thirty yards from him, and every now and then George could hear the swishing of the animal's tail, just as a cat moves its tail when about to spring on a mouse. There was no other movement made by the lion, and the two bright lights remained motionless, showing that the animal's head was quiet. Would the creature spring on him, or on the oxen or horses? was the question that George mentally asked. It was impossible to say what the lion would do; one thing was certain, viz. that the monarch of the desert must be very much in want of food, or he would not have thus ventured so near to his most dreaded enemy, man.

Once or twice George slowly raised his gun to endeavour to obtain a good aim at the lion, but the darkness baffled him. Suddenly, however, the lion, which had been crouching, rose to its feet, and came rapidly forward towards the bushes which had been placed near the waggon. George, seeing this, took a rapid aim at the animal's forehead, and pulled the trigger of his gun.

In those days percussion caps were used; breech-loaders and pin cartridges were unknown; and, as a heavy dew had been falling, the caps had become damp. It was not till after this adventure that George learnt that to guard against a gun hanging fire it was necessary to dip the caps into some grease, so as to have a thin film round the opening before placing these caps on the nipple of the gun, and thereby to keep out the damp.

The effect of the dew on the present occasion was to cause the gun to hang fire, and the bullet, which, had the weapon exploded instantaneously, might have struck the lion between the eyes, whistled harmlessly over its head.

Uttering a savage growl, the lion bounded away; whilst John and Kirk were in an instant beside George, inquiring what had happened.

'It is lucky you did not wound him,' said Kirk. 'Had you done so without killing him, he would have been upon you in an instant; but I believe he will pay us another visit in an hour or so.'

George suggested to his brother that two guns should be within his reach during the time he was on watch, and also informed him that the oxen, horses,

and especially Spot, would give him warning when the lion approached.

'Call me if he comes,' said George; 'I don't feel very sleepy, and shall be up in a second.'

The night passed, however, without another visit from the lion, and soon after daybreak the oxen were inspanned, and the party continued their journey.

After consulting with each other for some time, John and George told Kirk they would reach the resting-place that night, but wished to have some shooting away from the waggon track.

Taking Spot with them, they mounted their ponies and rode to a Caffre kraal, which was about two miles from their camp of the previous night. Both the two youngsters could speak Caffre as well as the Caffres themselves; so on reaching this kraal they made inquiries about the lion, and were told that it had been nearly a month in the neighbourhood, and had killed several cows and calves, and that after dark no Caffre dare leave the enclosure round the huts.

During the day the lion lay in a rocky ravine, in which was very long grass, and at about five miles from the kraal. Arrangements were soon made with about a dozen men to track the lion, for John and George announced that they intended shooting the animal, and thus freeing the Caffres from his depredations.

This announcement delighted the Caffres, who, armed with assagies and shields, accompanied their white friends, and led the way to the ravine. Several dogs belonging to the Caffres ran on in front, whilst Spot, seeming to think himself superior to these curs, kept near his masters and took no notice of the other dogs.

When the party came near the ravine they moved along in silence, signs with the hands giving the information that is usually conveyed by words. The tracks of the lion were quite fresh, and were seen to lead into the ravine, but there were no footprints leading out, so the lion had been tracked to his lair.

John now separated from George, and rode on one side of the ravine, whilst George remained on the other, Spot electing to stop with George.

From the behaviour of the Caffre dogs it was evident that they knew the lion was near. Their tails were curled under their hind legs, and their lips drawn up so as to show their teeth, whilst the hair on their backs bristled up and really stood on end. At the slightest rustling noise of the reeds or grass, the dogs rushed away, and did not stop till they had run forty or fifty paces.

Though probably these dogs had never seen a lion, or had any experience of the power of such an animal, yet their instinct seemed to have taught them how dangerous it was to come within reach of such a creature.

The Caffres, who kept together in groups of three or four, now commenced throwing large stones into the ravine, whilst John and George, sitting on their ponies, remained quiet on the elevated ground, ready for a shot should the lion break cover. They remained thus watching scarcely a minute, when George saw the lion moving up the side of the ravine on which he was stationed. The animal was crouching low, and sneaking along just as does a cat when it is out on a thieving expedition.



THE DEATH OF THE LION.



Just as George raised his gun to fire, the lion stopped, apparently to listen, and thus gave his hunters a better chance of hitting him.

George, taking good aim, fired, and almost at the same instant John's gun was discharged. Spot rushed forward in spite of being called back by George, who feared that the brave old dog would be instantly killed.

The Caffres, who had caught sight of the lion, rushed boldly towards it, and there seemed every chance of some lives being lost. A singular sight was now seen. The lion, roaring savagely, was sitting up, as it were, on its front legs, whilst its hind-quarters seemed helpless.

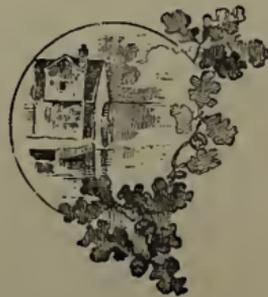
The Caffres seemed to guess what had happened, and, approaching the lion within thirty paces, hurled assagy after assagy into its body. George, dismounting from his pony, and warning the Caffres to stand clear, sent a bullet into the animal behind the shoulder, and rolled it over dead.

To examine the cause of the lion's inability to move was George's first proceeding, and he then discovered that he had made one of those singularly fluky shots which most sportsmen who have killed large game have experienced. His bullet had hit the lion in what we should term the small of the back, and had broken the backbone, so that the hind-quarters of the lion were paralysed, and he was unable to move except by dragging his hind-quarters by aid of his two front legs. Had the bullet struck three or four inches lower it might have passed through the lion, but would not have stopped him, and if the flight of the bullet had

been one inch higher it would have missed the lion altogether.

The Caffres, by aid of their assagies, skinned the lion, John and George securing the teeth and claws. The Caffres were told to clean and peg out the skin, and to have it ready when the waggon returned from the Zulu country.

The return of the two successful hunters to the kraal from which they had set out on their expedition was a sort of triumphal march. Their praises were sung by the attendant Caffres, whilst every kraal they passed supplied some dozens of Caffre men, women, and young girls, who listened to the account of the hunt, and expressed their admiration of the skill and bravery of the young white chiefs.





## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE SPITTING SNAKE.

**I**N addition to John and George, Kirk's party consisted of a Hottentot and a half-caste, and also a young Caffre, who did the duty of 'fore looper,' that is, he led the two front oxen, and guided them along the beaten track that they were pursuing.

In order to drive an ox waggon, the driver must know the name of each ox, for these animals soon learn their names, and when shouted at, know that if they do not pull their very best, they will feel the lash of the heavy whip which the driver wields with great accuracy and power.

Kirk and the Hottentot could each drive the 'span' of oxen, whilst John and George occasionally tried their hands at the whip, and were each day becoming more expert.

The two young Englishmen, however, found they could make themselves most useful, as also enjoy themselves most, by leaving the beaten track, and, with Spot to help them, hunting the surrounding country in search of game. In this proceeding they were very successful.

A rietbuck or duiker, a pouw, or two or three coran, or some guinea-fowl or partridges, were brought to the camp each night by these sportsmen; consequently there was no necessity to make use of the stock of salt beef or bacon with which the waggon was stored, and which was the resource when fresh meat could not be procured.

Although there was no evidence to indicate that any lions were in the vicinity, yet there was always one man on watch during the night, each of the party taking it in turn. There were leopards in great numbers in the bush near their various camping grounds, and hyenas prowled near them at night; but these animals were not as formidable as was a lion, and so there was not much fear of the camp being attacked.

Whilst travelling in this country, and also when camping by night, the greatest caution was requisite to guard against poisonous snakes. Before civilization extended as it has done in Natal, there was no part of the world in which poisonous snakes were more plentiful than in Natal.

In some old maps, instead of this country being covered with zigzag rivers or lines of mountains, showing the topographical peculiarities of the country, there was merely printed on it, 'Plains infested with snakes,' and such was really the case.

This was probably due to the fact that there was an abundance of insect, bird, and small animal life upon which serpents could live; whilst, excepting the secretary-bird and some eagles and large hawks, the snake had no enemy.

There were several varieties of poisonous snakes, each deadly — the large black snake, the cobra, the puff-adder, and other adders somewhat like the puff-adder.

The author of this tale, when in South Africa, was informed by Caffres and Hottentots that there was a snake in the country that had the power of spitting its poison and sending this to some distance, and that if this poison entered the eye it might produce blindness.

The evidence being good, and these observers having no object in deceiving, the fact was mentioned in *Sporting Scenes* in the following words: 'I have heard from both Dutchmen and Caffres that there is a snake which spits out its poison at any one who may approach, and makes capital shots.'

A learned critic, who probably had never travelled ten miles from Fleet Street, and who was entrusted with the duty of reviewing this book, considered that this statement gave him a good chance of airing his critical skill. Consequently, in a weekly paper which assumes to give its readers an accurate estimate of the merits of a book, there appeared remarks about the young officer who was so silly as to be taken in by such fables as spitting snakes, and a hint that he ought to have been more cautious than to publish such nonsense.

It happens, however, that the spitting snake, called the spuugh slange, the *Naja haje* of naturalists, was as well known as is a flying fish, and several specimens of this reptile were at that time in the British Museum. Some of the readers of this tale may one day become authors, and this fact is mentioned in

order that they may not be 'put out' by the arrogant assumption of ignorant critics, who too often make the boldest assertions, which are entirely deficient in the essential element of truth.

When walking through the bush, or long grass, it was essential to use the greatest caution in order to avoid treading on, or coming within striking distance of, one of these reptiles. If a man walk carelessly with boots on, he makes a noise, and snakes, as a rule, hearing this, will glide away; when, however, a hunter has on the light velschons that the Boers use, and moves noiselessly, he may come so close to a snake without having alarmed it, that the reptile is taken by surprise, and in self-defence it will strike its supposed enemy.

If the hunter is unable to kill the snake instantly, his safest proceeding is to stand motionless. The reptile will then remain in a threatening attitude during a few seconds, but will then usually glide away. If a finger even were moved under such conditions, the lightning-like stroke of the reptile would be made, and a few hours afterwards the hunter's career on this earth would be finished.

In order to become well trained as a hunter, it is essential that a man should imagine that certain conditions will occur to him, and then to consider what course he should adopt to best protect himself against these. By thinking of such things a man avoids being taken by surprise, and acts almost, as it were, instinctively for the best.

This system of precaution holds good not only for such a wild country as South Africa, but also for our own civilized England. Let us suppose that we wake

in the middle of the night with smoke in the room, and find the house is on fire, what should we do? Suppose we hear a noise during the night, and believe a burglar is in the house, how should we proceed? Every possible contingency may thus be thought of, and the best method of proceeding mentally arranged before the event really occurs.

Taught by their experienced and thoughtful Caffre friends, John and George had been accustomed to make plans in advance for all sorts of possibilities. The large rock snake of Natal was quite big enough to coil round and crush a man if it found him asleep on the ground. If a man's arms were fastened to his body by the coils of the snake, the man could do nothing; if, however, he possessed a sharp knife, and his arms were free, he could cut the snake so as to separate its muscles, and render it incapable of employing that contracting power by which this reptile squeezes the life out of its victim.

If a poisonous snake were encountered so close that a movement to effect an escape could not be made, to stand motionless was the only chance. There is a case on record where an officer in India, who had been thus trained, suddenly felt a snake round his legs. Instead of starting up, and thus adopting the very course which would cause the snake to strike, he in a low voice told his companions what had occurred, and asked them to procure a saucer of milk and place it on the ground at a short distance from him.

The snake, especially the cobra, is very fond of milk, and this was a fact with which the officer was

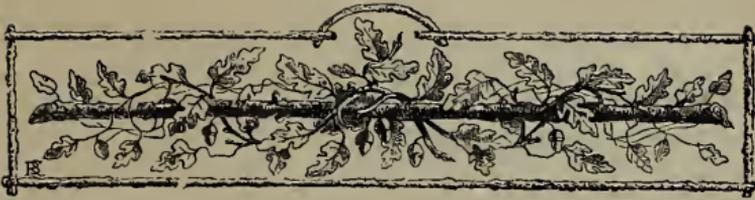
acquainted. The milk was brought, and the cobra, as it proved to be, slowly uncoiled itself and went to drink the milk, when it was killed by those who had in the meantime provided themselves with sticks.

It was as John was walking through some long grass, having left his pony to graze, that suddenly, almost from under his feet, rose a large m'namba, one of the most deadly of South African snakes. The head of this reptile was not four feet from that of John.

Instantly John stood immovable, as did the snake ; the latter gradually lowered its head, and was gliding away, when a charge of buckshot from John's gun laid the poisonous reptile dead.

Such an incident dwells long in the memory, and it is not immediately that the danger which has been thus escaped is fully realized. It may be weeks or months afterwards, that a horrid nightmare comes, and the snake is just in the act of striking when we awake ; but we become fully aware of the value of the precaution that was used, and which would rarely if ever be adopted unless the affair had been previously thought out. Before reaching the Tugela River the party had killed ten poisonous snakes, two being found in the camp at night.





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ZULULAND ENTERED.

**B**EFORE entering the country of any great chief it was customary to send a message to the chief asking permission to enter, and stating the object the visitor had in view in visiting the country. On one occasion a trader, who either from ignorance or impudence had neglected this proceeding, received a severe lesson from the Zulu chief. The trader crossed the Tugela River and entered Zululand, outspanned his waggon, and sat himself down as though the whole place belonged to him. The Zulus, offended at this piece of impertinence, set fire to the grass near the waggon, and it was with difficulty that the trader prevented his waggon from being destroyed by fire.

He immediately complained of this proceeding; but the chief stated that he was not aware that a waggon had entered his country. No permission had been asked, no intimation had been sent to him, and as the grass required burning he had given orders to that effect. If traders chose to come where they had no right to come, and omitted to make known where they

were, they had only themselves to blame for any mishap which might occur.

On reaching the Tugela River, Kirk immediately sent a message to Umpanda asking permission to enter his country for the purpose of trading, and stating that two young Englishmen were with him who were desirous of visiting the great chief, and also, with his permission, having an opportunity of shooting in his country.

As it would occupy two days for the messenger to travel to the chief's kraal and return, camp was formed on the west bank of the Tugela, and the young hunters employed their time in shooting.

Game was plentiful in those days all over the Natal District, and on both days a successful bag was made, and venison was plentiful in camp, and there was a sufficient quantity of meat to obtain a supply of 'biltong.'

Biltong was made in the following manner.

When an animal was killed, its flesh was cut into pieces about six or eight inches long and about one inch square. These pieces having been rubbed with a little salt, were threaded on a string, and hung up in the sun to dry. After about two days the meat became quite hard and dry, and would keep for months. When required for food it was soaked in water, and could then be cooked, or even eaten as it was, the sun having almost cooked it. A plentiful supply of biltong is always a great resource in a hunting trip, for if game is scarce there is always food in the waggon.

Permission having been obtained from Umpanda to

enter the country, John and George lost no time in crossing the Tugela and visiting some of the kraals where the minor chiefs resided. Speaking the Zulu language like the Zulus themselves, they found no difficulty in getting on with these people, who were much pleased with the two young white chiefs, as they termed John and George. Inquiries being made as to the game in the neighbourhood, the Zulus stated that there were elephants and buffaloes in the bush near the coast, and 'imvubu' (hippopotami) in the rivers, but that before hunting these the permission of Umpana must be obtained.

Although there were no newspapers or post in Zululand, yet news travelled rapidly. When anything new was heard by a Zulu, he would tell this to the whole of the other men he might meet, and each of these would make the news known at his kraal, from whence it would spread to other kraals, and so on. Thus the arrival in the country of two young white chiefs was a fact known in a day or two from one end of Zululand to the other.

In former times, when the Zulus in the Natal District met either an Englishman or one of their own people, the first salutation was, 'Sacar bona,' a sort of 'How do you do?' Then, 'Chela pela's indaba' (tell me the news). This news might not seem very important to an English journalist, but it was interesting to the natives.

It was usually something of this kind:—A herd of elephants are in the bush near the Umganie. We saw their footprints to-day. They drank last night in the river. We saw the track of a large snake some dis-

tance farther back. A leopard killed a calf the night before last at Inkau's kraal; and so on. This news could not be imparted suddenly or hastily, but was usually imparted as the two travellers sat down and exchanged pinches of snuff.

Knowing the surest way to the affections of an old Caffre woman, John and George had provided themselves with very large gourd snuff-boxes, filled with snuff made from strong Cavendish tobacco. These snuff-boxes were produced on the slightest hint, and a large pinch given to the old 'umfazi,' who would at once compliment the young Englishmen, not only on their snuff, but on their personal appearance.

The Zulus at that time were in what might be correctly termed a condition of prosperity. There is no more true proverb than 'If we curtail our wants we reach the same condition as though we increased our income.' The Zulus had few wants, and all these they were able to supply. For raiment they might be compared to that of Adam in the old song, where it says—

' Now Adam was a gentleman,  
As everybody knows ;  
He never paid his tailor's bills,  
Because he wore no clothes.'

A blanket to wrap round them of a night in the cold weather was all the clothing they required. For food they had abundance of Indian corn, 'mealies,' and another kind of grain smaller than the mealies. Pumpkins of various kinds grew in abundance, whilst their herds of cattle were very numerous. In consequence of these people rarely killing any of their cattle, the herds increased rapidly, and the supply of milk from

the cows was sufficient to enable these people, in their lovely and genial climate, to keep fat and sleek on an almost entirely milk diet.

The reception which the two young Englishmen received from the Zulus caused them to stop one night at a kraal, where they had arrived in the afternoon, and from which to their camp was a long journey. The grazing in the neighbourhood was good, so that their ponies would not want for food ; and feeling quite at home in a Caffre kraal, they enjoyed themselves very much.

To an English boy who had never been out of Great Britain such an experience would have been most remarkable. Not one boy in ten thousand who has lived in England during his whole life has ever passed a night out of a bed. To sleep on the bare ground would be considered a hardship ; but to be amongst a different race of men, who did not understand one word of English, and whose whole system of life was so at variance to that which is practised in civilization, would have been at the least startling.

The two young Englishmen, however, understood the Caffre character thoroughly, and accommodated themselves at once to the ways of these people. In the particular hut in which they were to sleep were the chief, his three wives, and two daughters and a son. He had several other sons and daughters ; the latter were married, and the sons had kraals of their own.

The only light in the hut was that produced by the fire, which was kept burning by the two Caffre girls supplying it with fuel. The conversation was maintained by the chief and the two white men, and was

mainly about the power of the Zulu nation and the events which had occurred during the past ten years.

As the night advanced, a young Caffre entered the hut and said he had some news. Upon being asked what it was, he gave an account of a lion that had been very destructive to cattle, and had also killed and eaten two Caffre children, and was the terror of all the people near whose kraal he had taken up his residence.

John and George listened to these accounts with great interest, hoping that they should have another chance of encountering the lord of the desert.

A most thrilling description was given by this young Caffre of the strength and ferocity of this lion, and how the Caffres without guns thought it hopeless to attack it. He then suddenly changed his tone and action, and stated that two young white chiefs heard of this lion and went out to fight it, and no sooner saw it than with their guns they fired and killed it. 'And,' said the Caffre, 'those two young chiefs are now in our kraal;' and pointing to John and George, 'and there they are.'

During the whole of this description the Deans had not suspected that what was being said referred to them, so they were rather surprised to see all eyes directed towards them, the admiring looks of the two Caffre girls and the surprise of the chief causing them to almost blush.

'Is that true?' inquired the chief.

'Yes,' replied John; 'we shot the lion.'

'You are in truth chiefs,' said the Caffre, 'and I am pleased to have you here.'

Such a performance as killing a lion was considered by these Zulus a grand thing, and they esteemed a man

more for having succeeded in doing so than if he had been the most skilled scholar. Deeds were what these men appreciated and understood, and they valued a man according to what he had done, not according to what he was supposed to know.

At sunrise John and George rose, and intimated that they would start for their waggon ; but the chief begged them not to go, for not far from his kraal was a leopard that was not only destructive but was very fierce, and as they had shown their courage and skill when they killed the lion, he thought they might be able to rid him of the leopard.

This leopard had become very bold, and would prowl round the kraals of a night, giving a sort of roar as though challenging any one to come and attack him. He killed calves, dogs, and chickens, and if he had a chance would have attacked a child. The two young Englishmen were only too glad to have a chance of such sport, and intimated their willingness to do their best.

Information was obtained from the Zulus that the leopard was in some thick bush, almost impenetrable to man.

The locality having been examined, it was decided that the Zulus should almost surround this bush, and leave only one small portion open by which the leopard could escape. John and George were to conceal themselves near this, and endeavour to shoot the animal as it attempted to escape. There could be found no better aids in such an undertaking than the Zulus. Armed only with their assagies and shields, they forced their way through the dense underwood,

although they could not tell that each step they took might not bring them within reach of the leopard's claws or teeth.

John and George had taken up a position from which they were certain to obtain a view of the animal if it broke cover on their side. They agreed to keep close together, so that they might protect each other. They remained very watchful for some time without hearing anything but the noise of the beaters, when a slight rustling of the bush attracted their attention, and they saw the leopard standing and gazing at them at about thirty paces distance. John raised his gun and fired, and almost at the same instant the animal bounded towards him.

To hit a leopard with a bullet whilst it is in rapid movement is very difficult, especially when bushes and long reeds occasionally conceal it from view. The leopard therefore was within a very few yards when George fired, and the animal, rearing straight up, gave John a good shot at a vital part, and a bullet in the chest tumbled the enraged animal dead on the ground.

The Zulus at that time were not possessed of fire-arms. They had some of them experienced the effect of such weapons when they had attacked and had been attacked by the Boers, consequently the novelty of the death-dealing firelock had not worn off, and when they saw the leopard roll over dead without any struggling, their admiration and astonishment were very great.

'Would this gun kill an alligator?' asked the chief.

'I think so,' replied John, 'though I have never tried.'

The chief then explained that in the river near his kraal there was one very large alligator, which had become dangerous. It had carried off a Caffre boy who was crossing the river, and several of the Caffres' dogs had been killed and eaten by this monster. The chief asserted that the alligator was as long as three men, and nearly as big round the body as one of the Zulu bulls.

The skin of this alligator could not be penetrated by an assagy, so the Zulus were unable to attack it with any chance of success. Consequently they were much in dread of the monster, and if the Englishman's gun was strong enough to kill it, a great day of rejoicing would take place among these people.

It was generally known that the alligator about sunset was in the habit of lying in the water near the crossing of the river, its nose and eyes only being just visible. It would there wait for a chance of seizing some animal, either when this was crossing the river, or was drinking. If an animal as large as a bull were drinking, the alligator would seize it by the head, and by means of its great weight and strength could keep the bull's head under water long enough to drown it. Thus the fighting did not last long, for the bull was soon incapable of resistance.

Kirk's waggon, it was known, would proceed slowly, and a sharp day's riding would enable John and his brother to come up with it, though it had two days' start of them. It was therefore agreed that an attempt should be made to obtain a shot at the giant alligator about sunset.

Several Zulus kept watch in order to discover, if possible, where the alligator was ; and at least an hour

before sundown they saw it floating down the stream towards the drift. Belonging to the chief's kraal there were several goats, and one of these had a young kid. This kid was fastened to a string, and all being ready, it was let down near the drift, whilst John and George concealed themselves near the river.

The goat was tied to a large rock, and immediately began to bleat loudly—a sound that the alligator soon heard. The water was troubled, and the monster was seen approaching the shore towards the goat. Those persons who have seen the sleepy-looking alligator in zoological gardens can scarcely form an idea of the rapidity with which these creatures can move when they are in search of their prey. Although the alligator moved slowly when in the water and as it emerged from it in its approach to the goat, it was as rapid as a cat seizing a mouse when it reached within some twenty paces of its prey.

Quick, however, as it was, a bullet was quicker, and John striking it behind the shoulder and George in the body, the monster flourished its tail in the air, twisted round, and made for the river. Two more bullets, however, struck it, and for a few seconds it seemed as though dead.

The Zulus, who were concealed watching the events that occurred, now showed their courage and skill. Dashing at the monster, they seized it by the legs, and, in spite of its struggles and snapping jaws, turned it over, and twenty assagies were in the reptile's stomach. The days of the alligator were over, and in a few minutes it was torn to pieces, and the fragments cast in the river.

Such an important event as the destruction of this formidable monster was not to be passed over lightly. The chief sent word to the neighbouring kraals that a dance would take place that night, and the praises of the young Englishmen sung.

These dances were no novelties to the brothers. They had seen and had joined in many dances at Eondema's kraal when any great event had to be celebrated. But to the reader such a scene is probably unknown. Some three or four hundred Zulus having assembled, they formed a circle—the men standing two or three deep, whilst outside this ring the women and children either stood or sat down. Each man had his assagis, a knob-kerry, and shield, and his plumes of feathers, and 'tails.'

The proceedings were commenced by a man entering the circle, and in a loud voice describing the proceedings of the leopard, how it had killed fowls, goats, and calves, and was a terror to the women and children at the various kraals. Then came the two white men, and the leopard was killed. There was some very good acting, as this man imitated the rush of the leopard and the noise of the guns, and then showed how the leopard died. Then the praises of their visitors were sung, and a chorus started—the men beating the ground by stamping with their feet, keeping excellent time, and producing an effect similar to a small earthquake.

Another Zulu then entered the ring and described the proceedings of the alligator, and how its hard and thick skin rendered it invulnerable on the back to an assagy. He then said that the alligator thought he

was going to have a young goat for his supper, and came out of the water to seize it ; but the white chief's bullet hit him and made him sick, and then the Zulus' assagies taught him that he could not eat people and not have to pay for it. Another dance and a song of praise followed these speeches, and after a plentiful supply of Caffre beer, the party broke up ; and the two young men passed another night in the hut of the chief.





## CHAPTER XIX.

### GOLD DISCOVERED.



HE sun was just rising when John and George, having had a swim in the river which had been freed from the formidable alligator, mounted their ponies, and taking up the track of their waggon, rode in pursuit thereof. The news of their success with the leopard and alligator had preceded them, and their progress was stopped every now and then by Zulus who, seeing them coming, turned out from their kraals, and insisted on shaking hands with them.

The waggon had a start of about thirty miles, so the ponies were off-saddled when half of the distance had been ridden, and the vicinity of a large kraal was selected for the halting ground.

'Amasi,' the thick milk so very popular with the Zulus, was supplied to the young Englishmen, and a long talk took place. These Zulus were much puzzled to comprehend the difference between the English and the Ama Boere, as they termed the Dutch. Both were white, and it took a long time to explain to them that the Dutch and English were different nations, with a

different language and different habits. The Zulus had a great respect for the power of the Boers. They had not forgotten how only a few years previously not more than 460 Boers, under Pretorius, had defeated the whole Zulu army ; and again, two years afterwards, the Boers, with some Zulu allies, had defeated Dingaan, and had placed Umpanda on the throne of Zululand.

Hitherto the Zulus had defeated all their enemies, and had come to consider themselves invincible ; when, however, they found a mere handful of Boers strong enough to defeat thousands of their warriors, they were astonished, and looked with great respect on the Ama Boere.

As the Deans rode from kraal to kraal they asked for all the news as to game in the neighbourhood, and they ascertained that in the bush game was plentiful, because it was there that animals obtained protection from the assagies of the Zulus. Umpanda, however, would not allow any white man to shoot elephants without his permission. He had learnt the value of ivory, and by means of pits succeeded occasionally in securing an elephant. He did not therefore desire that such valuable animals should be destroyed by every sportsman who came into the country.

It wanted some hours to sunset when the waggon was reached, and Spot rushed out to meet his masters. Kirk, who had become somewhat anxious when his companions failed to come to the waggon two nights in succession, was very glad to see them, and listened to their accounts of their sport with great interest.

They were now so near the great kraal of the chief

that they could reach it by the next day when the sun was at its greatest height. Near their camp was a large kraal, from which many Zulus came to see the young white men who had shot a leopard and an alligator. The young Deans were anxious to hear all that these people had to tell, and after some time the Zulus gave them a full and detailed account of how Pieter Retief and his party were massacred by Dingaan some years previously.

These Zulus admitted that, as the Boers were on a visit to their chief, such a proceeding was not right; but, said these men, the Ama Boere came and fought so well that the Zulus could do nothing against them. During the evening the Zulus told stories about their adventures with large or dangerous game; and one old man was pointed out who was nicknamed E-gwi (snuff)—the reason for this name being an incident that had occurred several years ago.

This Zulu was sitting down one evening just before sunset watching his cattle, his dog near him, whilst he had just turned into his hand a very large pinch of snuff. Suddenly a leopard sprang on his dog, close beside the man, whose assagies were on the ground. Instead of attempting to pick up his assagies, which probably would have led to his being attacked and killed by the leopard, he threw the snuff in the leopard's face.

The effect was satisfactory, for the animal released its hold on the dog and started back; but, being temporarily blinded and choked by the snuff, it darted away, sniffing and sneezing, whilst the Zulu, seizing his assagies, stood ready to defend himself. The dog,

although badly torn, recovered, and the Zulu soon reached his kraal, where his friends were much amused at the account of the incident.

One of the chiefs had on his arm an ornament which at once attracted the attention of Kirk and his two companions. This was a thick bracelet of yellow metal. Having examined this, the three agreed that the material was gold, and how the chief came by

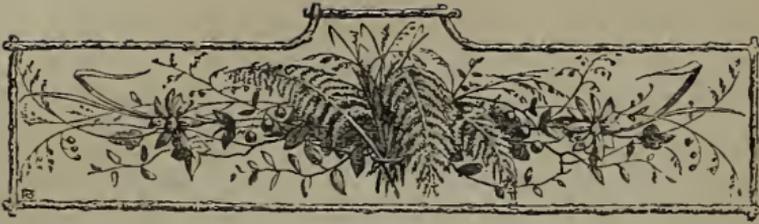


'SNUFF' AND THE LEOPARD.

this was the question. He told them that he had bought it from some natives, not Zulus, whom he had met many days' journey up north of his country. He refused to sell it, as it was supposed to be a charm, and he stated that up there plenty of that metal was to be found in the rivers, though there was none in or near Zululand. He also stated that there was a chief up in that country who had a medicine-stone quite white, and that nothing had been seen like it in any other part of the country.

Being convinced that the armlet was gold, John and his brother speculated as to whether this stone they heard about might not be a diamond. If so, it must be of great value, and they began to wonder whether it might not be worth while to pay a visit to the country on the chance of being able to procure it. To be able to succeed, however, they must take with them something which would be valued by the chief at a great price, and they began to wonder what there was that would attract the chief's fancy. This was a subject that they agreed to think over on some future occasion.





## CHAPTER XX.

### THE ZULU CHIEF INTERVIEWED.



INGAAN, the predecessor of Umpanda, was what was called a warlike chief. The father of Dinga'an was Charka, surnamed the 'bloody.' It was Charka who had raised the Zulu nation to that powerful position which they occupied in South Africa until the nation was broken up after its defeat by the English troops in 1879. The battles fought and the victories gained by Charka would, if described in detail, fill a volume.

It has been stated that during his reign as chief of Zululand he was the cause of the slaughter of between two and three hundred thousand human beings. As far back as 1820, Charka overran Natal, slaughtering men, women, and children, and capturing vast herds of cattle. Fortunately he died, or, as was believed, was poisoned about the year 1828, or he would have caused the death of many more people. He organized the Zulu army, naming his regiments after various animals, and originated that system of attack from which our troops suffered so severely in the late war.

His successor, Dingaan, although not so much disposed to slaughter and conquest as his predecessor, was still a warrior, whilst Umpanda was peaceful and disposed to take things easily, though he was well aware that it was necessary to keep up a large army for his own preservation.

Intimation was sent to Kirk that Umpanda would receive him and the two young Englishmen, when the sun was at its greatest height in the heavens. That time would be what we term mid-day, or noon. It is customary with these chiefs to keep their visitors waiting a short time before they show themselves; this proceeding, they consider, is dignified. Visitors, therefore, always reach the place of meeting before the time named for an interview.

The waggon being left at some distance, the three white men, leaving their guns in the waggon, walked towards the great kraal, and soon saw the preparations for their arrival. Extending nearly half a mile were armed Zulus, two deep, forming an avenue. These men were provided with five or six assagies each, and also a shield. The shields were of different colours, according to the regiment to which the men belonged.

These warriors were naked, excepting that round their waists were hung strips of hide or the tails of animals, which reached to below their knees. Their heads were decorated with feathers and beads, whilst several men had bracelets formed from elephants' teeth or the claws of leopards. They were evidently well disciplined, as they stood immovable whilst the three white men walked between the two lines, and not a sound was heard.

These men were excellent specimens of dark-skinned

warriors, well made, and with heads and countenances that, except for the colour, might have belonged to Europeans. Seeing these men as they stood, one could well understand how they could fight if required to do so. They did not know what fear was, and being very swift and enduring, they were a formidable force for any army similarly armed to encounter.

In an open country, however, these warriors, with all their bravery, could do nothing against mounted men armed with double-barrelled guns, because the assagy, although an excellent weapon for close quarters, was no match for firearms, especially when the latter were used by men accustomed to shoot running game with a bullet.

The portion of the army drawn out to receive the visitors, and used as a guard by Umpana, numbered some five thousand men, each man of which was ready to sacrifice his life to order.

Kirk and his two companions approached the kraal occupied by the chief, and were then told to sit down. Kirk, knowing that he might have to wait some considerable time, lighted his pipe, using for this purpose some lucifers. At that date this means of producing fire was not known among the Zulus, and there was a murmur of astonishment from the warriors when he was seen to procure a light instantly, their method being to rub together two sticks, and thus by friction to produce fire. John and George had adopted the Zulu practice of taking snuff, and each being provided with a gourd snuff-box, given them by their Caffre friends in Natal, indulged in a pinch of snuff.

About half an hour after the arrival of the English-

men, Umpanda crept out of his hut, and there was immediately a shout of 'Inkosi!' (the chief) from the assembled warriors. Taking a seat on a sort of wooden stool, Umpanda called Kirk by name, and spoke to him. Kirk, although long a resident in Natal, was not able to speak the Zulu language freely; he, however, understood what the chief said, and told him that his young companions were not traders, but young chiefs, who had come into the Zulu country merely to see the great Zulu king.

Umpanda was an enormously fat man, and above the middle height, being nearly six feet high. He indulged in vast quantities of 'itchuala' (Zulu beer), and also in snuff. Having ascertained that the young Englishmen could speak the Zulu language, he signalled to them to approach, and having examined them attentively, he asked them if it were true that they had killed a lion, a leopard, and an alligator during that moon. John undertook the replies, and told the chief they had done so. 'Chela pela's indaba' (tell me the news), said the chief; and John, who knew the manner in which it was most pleasing that such incidents should be related, gave a description, with acting, of the manner in which each of these creatures had been killed.

The excellence of his Zulu, and his good acting, pleased Umpanda immensely; and when his account was finished, the chief ordered a large elephant's tusk to be taken to the waggon as a present to John. The conversation then turned on affairs at Natal and the proceedings of the Boers, and Umpanda said he had heard that the Boers had defeated the English, and he

wanted to know how it was that the Boers had left the English in possession of Natal.

'The English are too many,' replied John; 'our tribe have many tens of thousands, so the Boers knew it was useless to oppose us.'

'Is your tribe as large as mine?' inquired Umpanda. 'Here are only a few of my warriors; I have besides twenty warriors for every one that you see.'

'Our people,' replied John, 'are more numerous; we have kraals extending a hundred times as far as this of yours, and such towns are more numerous than single kraals in your country.'

Umpanda looked at John for some time, and then said, 'Amanga' (you are not speaking the truth). Kirk and George, however, both said 'E-ar-nesa' (it is the truth). 'The white men are more numerous than locusts, and it is because we are so numerous that we come to countries like this.'

Umpanda evidently did not believe this statement, he being firmly convinced that there was no nation in the world so numerous as the Zulus.

Umpanda now signalled for one of his chiefs, and gave him some orders. He then rose, and attended by his English visitors, walked to a large open space outside his kraal. Seats were provided for the party, and at a given signal the warriors rushed towards this open space, and in an almost inconceivably short time had formed a large circle round their chief.

A chief then stalked into the centre of the circle and sung a song, in which he described the power of Umpanda, and his riches in cattle and wives. He then spoke of the young English visitors, and described their

proceedings when killing the leopard and crocodile. Every now and then, by means of a signal from the solo singer, the whole of the warriors shouted a chorus, stamping their feet in regular time, and shaking their shields. The effect was grand; the earth seemed to tremble from the shock of so many feet striking it.

When this song was concluded, two young Zulus from opposite sides of the circle approached each other, all eyes being turned towards them, and perfect silence maintained. It was evident there was going to be a combat, whether in earnestness or sham the Englishmen did not know. The two Zulus approached to within about forty paces of each other, and then stood watching during a few seconds.

Suddenly the one with a dark shield sprang forward, but as he did so his adversary with the light shield hurled an assagy at him, which, true to its aim, would have entered the body of his opponent, had he not jumped on one side just in time to avoid the missile.

Almost at the same instant he hurled one of his assagies at his assailant, and with such rapidity that there was no time to dodge; but the use of the shield was now seen, for by its means the assagy was turned aside, the shield being held sideways, so that the spear glanced off.

The two warriors now moved so rapidly, dodging, feinting, and throwing their spears, that it was difficult even to watch them.

Neither, however, was struck by a spear, and now each was left with only one broad-bladed, heavy assagy suitable for close quarters; and they gradually approached to within a few yards of one another, prepar-

ing for the final combat, when, at a signal from Umpanda, the encounter ceased, and the two young Zulus were called to Umpanda, and were told they had done well.

Having seen this fight, which was real as far as it went, John and his brother agreed that against such men and such weapons the sword of our English officers was as useless as a toothpick.

A Zulu can throw an assagy from fifty to sixty yards, and at such a distance the blade would pass through the body of a man who was hit by it. At from thirty to forty yards a Zulu would make certain of hitting a man; and although when at close quarters a sword may be an efficient weapon, yet a Zulu would never allow his adversary to come so close; at least, not unless this adversary had one or two assagies through his body.

Several other similar encounters took place, in only one of which a Zulu was struck by an assagy in the leg. It was not unusual, in such displays, for the encounter to be carried on to the end, and one or the other of the combatants killed. This, however, was thought nothing of; it was like the gladiatorial displays in ancient times. These Zulu soldiers lived only to die at the command of their chief.

When this display was over, John asked Umpanda if they might have some shooting in his country, and mentioned that they had heard there were elephants and buffaloes in the bush.

Umpanda, after some consideration, replied, 'You know these animals are dangerous; suppose they killed you, your chiefs would then blame me, and would say

I had let you be killed. Why should I run the risk of such a thing?’

John replied that they were not unacquainted with the habits of elephants, and knew how to take care of themselves; they had also powerful guns, and, as they had proved, knew how to kill a leopard and a crocodile; they also knew how to kill an elephant.

‘If,’ said Umpanda, ‘you know what an elephant will do, you know more than I or my hunters know, for we can never tell what an elephant will do. One day he will run away when he smells you; another day he will rush at you. Then, again, he will stand quiet, even when struck with an assagy. Who can tell what an elephant will do? If, however, you want very much to go after elephants, you may do so, but you must give me one of the tusks of each elephant you kill; and,’ said the chief with a smile, ‘even with that, I don’t think I shall be much richer when you have finished your hunt than I am now.’

Umpanda now bid good-bye to his visitors, and walked off to his hut, the English returning to their waggon, where they were soon surrounded by numbers of the minor chiefs. John and his brother, from their long acquaintance with the Caffres of Natal, whose language and habits were similar to the Zulus, got on very well with these people, and sat talking with them till near sundown. Presents of Indian corn and amasi were brought by the Caffre women, and in return a few beads were given to them, with which they were much pleased.

Spot was greatly admired by the Zulus, and as he had been taught to beg and to retrieve, they were

astonished at the intelligence of the animal. He was also very friendly with the Zulus, because he had been accustomed to Caffres all his life. Dogs that have rarely seen black men are disposed to bark at and bite one when he approaches them. One of the performances that Spot had been taught was to hunt for and pick up anything that his masters had dropped.

John, taking some of the Zulus with him, walked to a distance from the waggon, Spot accompanying him. He then quietly dropped his handkerchief, which he had rolled up and knotted so as to be easily carried in a dog's mouth. When he had come half-way back to the waggon, he made signs to the dog, which started at once on the back track, found the handkerchief, and brought it to John. The Zulus were delighted with this exhibition, and were not satisfied till it had been repeated several times.

On the following morning, at about sunrise, two Zulus came to the waggon, and stated that the chief had sent them to guide the young Englishmen to where they would find elephants. With this news John and his brother were delighted. They soon made their preparations, and, hearing that the elephants were in thick bush, decided to leave their ponies at the waggon and to do their shooting on foot.

Providing themselves with biltong, and plenty of powder and bullets, they ate their breakfast and started on their journey, which they were told would occupy about as long as it would take the sun to travel forty times its own length. In countries where neither clocks or watches are known, the inhabitants are more observant of the movements of the sun, moon, and

stars than are people in more civilized localities. The sun appears to change its position in the heavens about twice its own diameter in four minutes of time. Consequently, it would alter its position forty times its own diameter in about one hour and twenty minutes, and the distance consequently would be about five miles.

As the party travelled towards the hunting ground, the Zulus gave an account of these elephants. The herd consisted of five or six large bulls, not a cow elephant being among them. This herd had, on the previous evening, journeyed from the dense bush near the coast, and had taken up its position near some mealie gardens in a portion of bush not so very thick. The movement of this herd had been reported to Umpanda; consequently, as the distance was not very great, he thought it would be a good opportunity for giving the young white men a chance to show their skill.

As the party passed some kraals, the inhabitants turned out and walked with them some distance to hear the news; but they were not allowed to follow far, as it was necessary to keep very quiet for fear of alarming the quick-eared animals they intended to hunt.

During the night the elephants had entered the corn gardens, and had done considerable damage; but as soon as the sun was near rising, they had entered the forest.

The footprints showed that they were all very large elephants, and the Zulus said they were very savage, and would probably charge as soon as they heard or

scented the hunters. Scarcely a word was now spoken, and if it were necessary to say anything it was spoken in a whisper. The two Zulus, like all their tribe, showed they were skilled as bush hunters. They had noticed the direction of the wind, so as to proceed with the wind in their faces; they moved slowly and silently, listening for any sound which could indicate the exact locality where the elephants were concealed, and scanning the bush for a chance of seeing the white tusks of the monsters.

When the party had penetrated some distance in the bush they sat down to listen, and snuff-boxes were produced. If any person who had been acquainted with what has been considered sport in England had seen this party, he would have realized the difference between that which was real and that which was merely a grotesque imitation. Here were four men in a dense bush preparing to attack in his native stronghold the largest and most powerful animal now in existence. Two of these men were armed with assegis only, a weapon that against an elephant seemed almost useless, whilst even a gun was not a certain means of producing instant death.

To compare such real and dangerous sport with pigeon-shooting, or with firing at pheasants or partridges driven towards a number of men armed with guns, was ridiculous. It was like real war compared to a sham fight.

Although John and his brother sat calmly whispering to their Zulu companions, yet both felt the reality of the work on which they were engaged; and though they were outwardly calm, yet the freshness of the

elephants' spoor caused them to be convinced they were very near their game, and that possibly in a minute or two they might be within a few yards of it.

Crack came the sound of a broken branch, and the two Zulus pointed in the direction from which the noise came. Each pushed his finger into his mouth, and then held it up to feel on which side it was cold, so as to tell which way the wind was blowing. Having found that the elephants were to windward, one Zulu exclaimed in a whisper, 'Hambani si hamba!' (Let us be moving); and the party slowly advanced through the forest.

They had gone scarcely one hundred paces, when the Zulu who was leading stood motionless, gazing intently to his right. John and George moved silently to his side, and then saw five immense bull elephants with long tusks standing motionless amidst the gloom of the forest. Two of these animals were standing broadside, one having a branch held in his trunk, and which he occasionally raised and with it rubbed his body.

'You take the branch elephant,' whispered John to his brother; 'I'll take the other.'

An instant after the silence of the bush was broken by the report of the two heavy guns. A short interval of quiet, and then the shrill screams of the animals resounded through the arches of the forest, and the loud noise caused by the smashing of the bush showed that the herd were charging.

The two white men dashed down the path up which they had advanced, and finding a large tree, took up their position near it. They then saw a scene which impressed itself on their memories for many a year.

The two elephants that had been wounded were striding down the path towards them, but close behind were the Zulus, who had dodged on one side and had allowed the elephants to pass them.

As the elephants entered a portion of more open forest, each Zulu, taking his assagy by the wooden end, gave a swing to the spear and inflicted a deep wound in the elephant's hind leg; another swing, and another deep cut completed the work. The elephants were each ham-strung, and were unable to move, except slowly and with great difficulty. No sooner was one leg of each elephant thus rendered useless than the assagies were used to the other leg, and these powerful animals were now unable to advance or retreat.

'Wena bulala' (you shoot), calmly said one of the Zulus, as he came towards the brothers, who had already reloaded their discharged barrels.

Now, although a shot behind the shoulder will usually eventually kill an elephant, the most deadly shot is between the eye and the ear. Selecting a suitable position, two bullets well placed dropped the two giants dead.

Such success, so rapidly obtained, was quite unexpected, and the party sat down to have a meal of biltong, some snuff, and to talk over their proceedings.

One of the Zulus, however, soon started off to a neighbouring kraal to summon men to cut out the tusks, and to help carry them to the chief's kraal, and also to arrange for cutting up the flesh. The Zulus gave all the credit to their English companions for having killed the elephants, and praised their guns, their shooting, and their coolness.

The sun was some considerable height above the horizon when the hunters reached the kraal of Umpanda, who had been informed by runners of the success that had been gained by the young Englishmen. The chief received the party most cordially, and told them that they were very fine fellows.

Of course there must be a dance to celebrate the event, and, as it was full moon, the Zulus assembled soon after sunset and kept up the entertainment till long after midnight.





## CHAPTER XXI.

### JOIN A ZULU IMPI.



AT the date to which we refer in this tale it was an unusual event for any tribe in South Africa to remain very long entirely at peace with all its neighbours, and the Zulu nation was no exception to this rule.

Far up to the north of Zululand was a tribe with which the Zulus had more than once had difficulties.

At the time when the Deans visited Umpanda, an expedition was being arranged to attack this tribe, and to recover if possible a number of cattle which had been stolen from the Zulus. Although it would perhaps have been wise to let these people settle their differences among themselves, yet it was part of the Colonial policy to check these small wars, and if possible to interfere and have matters settled by arbitration. Umpanda, being aware of this, was anxious to keep the secret about his proposed expedition, so that the Government of Natal should hear nothing about it.

The fact, however, became known to John and George, and they were at once anxious to accompany the ex-

pedition, and to see how these people fought. They knew that Umpanda would not give his consent to their going, for fear of the consequences should anything happen to them. So they tried to think of some plan by which they could manage to see the fight without exactly going in opposition to the express orders of the chief.

Having taken into their confidence a young chief named Copen, they ascertained the date and time when the army would start, and also the direction in which they intended to march. Two days before the time fixed, the two Deans asked for an interview with Umpanda, and having thanked him for his hospitality, asked if he would allow them, instead of going straight back across the Tugela, to hunt and shoot at any place where they might find game. Umpanda, not suspecting anything, and being pleased with the success gained against the elephants, consented to this; and on being asked to do so, told the various chiefs that the young Englishmen had permission to travel anywhere in his country, and also to shoot.

'Boys will be boys' is an old proverb, and the two Deans were little more than boys in age, though very old as regards their experience in matters connected with hunting and sport of all kinds. To join the Zulu army and to see them fight, they thought, would be great fun, and the novelty of the thing would afford them something to talk about when they returned home. They had not thought sufficiently of the risk they incurred of being surrounded by the enemy, who would naturally take them for allies of the Zulus, or the chances they ran of being caught in some ambus-

cade and overpowered by numbers. Older heads would have kept clear of the business, but old heads are rarely found on young shoulders.

Having taken a large supply of biltong in their haversacks, with plenty of ammunition, some beads and tobacco for presents, John, George, and Spot, with the pack ox, started early one brilliant morning, and with no other guide than the sun, rode in a northerly direction. Their rate of travelling was slow, as it was limited by the speed of the ox. John and George took it in turns to ride one horse and lead the other, whilst whoever was on foot led the ox.

On their journey they passed a few kraals, the inhabitants of which turned out to see the 'Umlungo,' as they termed the white man. From these people the brothers learnt how quickly and accurately news travelled in this country. Everything seemed to be known about the white men. Each detail connected with their shooting the leopard, crocodile, and elephants was repeated, and an intimation given that the Great Chief must love them, to have given them permission to travel in his country where they chose.

At one of these kraals the youngsters stopped some men, and were plentifully supplied with amasi, which was as good as meat and drink, whilst their horses and the ox had a good feed of grass.

There was not much game in this part of the country, as it was open and free from bush, consequently there was no cover in which animals could find a safe refuge from the assagies and knob-kerries of the Zulu hunters. But farther north they were told the country was hilly, and in parts thickly wooded,

and there, either in the kloofs or bush, game was plentiful, bush buck and buffalo being there in great numbers. Leopards, they were told, were also numerous, and sometimes a lion, and that Spot was almost certain to be carried off and eaten by one or the other.

All this information caused the two sportsmen to look forward to plenty of excitement in the more advanced portion of their journey; and when two fine young Zulus asked if they might go with them and help to kill game, the Deans were delighted, and readily agreed to give them a fair share of the meat when they shot anything.

The two Zulus, who were named Molopi and Umlilo, were not only useful in helping to drive the ox, and to make a secure camp, but their natural keen sight enabled them to perceive on the ground foot-prints which would have escaped the eyes of the Englishmen.

The party were not many miles from the kraal to which these Zulus belonged, when Umlilo, one of the Zulus, examined the ground for an instant, and then announced that a rietbuck had been there just before their arrival, and that it was now probably concealed among some long reeds that they could see in an old watercourse a few hundred paces from them.

Molopi, the other Zulu, remained with the ox and horses, whilst Umlilo and the two Deans made a circuit, and spread out so as to approach the reeds from different directions. The two English lads were very anxious to make a good shot at this buck, for if they missed it the Zulus might lose confidence in their

skill. The three were quite close to the reeds before there was any sign of the animal of which they were in search.

The wild animals in the Zulu country were not as yet acquainted with firearms, and were not aware of the distance at which they might be struck with a bullet; they therefore would allow a man to come much closer than would a buck that lived in a



RIETBUCK.

locality where it had heard the whistle of a bullet near it. When within about forty paces of the reeds, the buck jumped up, trotted a few yards, and then stopped and turned broadside on, gazing in surprise at the two white men. It was an easy shot for John, and a bullet behind the shoulder dropped it dead.

The Zulus declared there was no time like the present for eating, so a fire being lighted, much to the

astonishment of the Zulus, who had never before seen a lucifer match, portions of the buck were cooked, and a grand feast was enjoyed. During the process of cooking a number of vultures had assembled, and were circling high overhead. The Zulus seeing these, said that if any men were about attention would be drawn to this locality, so they ought to keep a sharp look-out.

In spite, however, of this announcement, the whole party, after their feast, lay down in a shady place, and soon all were asleep ; even Spot, who had made a good meal, had, when he had seen his masters asleep, coiled himself up and was indulging in a snooze.





## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE CAMP SURPRISED.



THE whole party had been asleep for some time when they were awakened by a growl from Spot. On looking about them they saw that an alarm had not been given too soon, for at not more than sixty yards from them they saw four leopards gazing intently at them, and swishing their tails as though about to rush down on the dog. John and George instantly seized their guns, whilst the Zulus grasped their assagies and shields. To have left the animals alone would have been the more prudent plan, as it was improbable that they would have ventured to attack four men.

The two young Englishmen, however, were not going to miss a chance of bagging another leopard; so as two of the animals were standing broadside on, John fired at one, George at the other. The leopard John fired at fell dead instantly; the other, although evidently badly hit, came leaping towards the party.

The Zulus were now seen in their glory. Standing close together, each with an assagy in his right hand,

they waited till the leopard was within twenty paces of them, when it stopped a moment as if to gather itself for a final rush. At that instant the Zulus' assagies were hurled at the animal, and both stuck in its body, whilst a bullet from John's gun striking it between the eyes, dropped the savage brute dead. The other two leopards had disappeared, evidently not liking to make further acquaintance with white men.

The skins of these two leopards were too valuable to be lost, so it was arranged that Umlilo should take the skins to a kraal about two hours' journey distant, ask the Zulus there to clean and dry the skins, and rejoin the party on the following morning. There being good water and a fair supply of wood close at hand, it was decided to form a camp; and as in addition to leopards there was a probability of a lion being in the neighbourhood, it was necessary to make a camp which should be as secure as possible.

A suitable situation was selected, where a huge rock, some forty feet high, formed a background, whilst in front plenty of branches of trees were placed, so as to keep off any intruder who could not leap over this obstruction. The horses and the ox were to be brought into this enclosure as soon as the sun had set, and a fire was then to be lighted, so as to keep off such trespassers as hyenas or jackals.

John and George were delighted with their little stronghold when it was completed, and asked the Zulu if he did not think it very good. Molopi looked at the surroundings for some time, and then said, 'Good against hyenas and jackals, not much against leopards,

no use against a hungry lion, and very bad against a man enemy.'

'Why?' inquired John.

'A lion,' replied Molopi, 'once jumped over the palings round a kraal I was in. These palings were taller than I am. He killed a young cow, and with this in his mouth again got over the palings. If he could do that, what's the use of these few bushes? They are better than nothing, as a lion could not creep on to you without making a noise; but they are no good in keeping him off, except that he may fear a trap, and may not like to come near.'

'The bushes, though, would keep a man from rushing on you,' said George.

Molopi smiled and replied, 'Do you think any man such an "egasa" (fool) as to come up to these bushes if he meant to attack you? No, he would go to the top of the rock, and just drop big stones on you. You couldn't see him there, and you would soon have to get away from here to escape being crushed. This place no good against lions or man enemy.'

Molopi had never passed an examination in military tactics, nor had he been to the Staff College, which was not invented in those days, but his observation and practical common sense taught him where were the weak points of this camp. Such knowledge seemed to come naturally to these people, whilst there are others, in more civilized lands, who, even with all the cramming in the world, cannot be trained so as to prevent them from making the most childish errors when they come to real practical work.

When the sun set and darkness quickly followed, a

large fire was kept up within the enclosure forming the camp, and many an hour passed as the three men sat conversing, Molopi telling tales as to various fights in which he had taken part either against men or wild animals. It was decided that Spot and the animals might be left to keep watch for some time, because some indication would be given by these if any enemy approached them.

Molopi agreed to this arrangement, but at the same time, although he lay down, he had no idea of going to sleep. He did not distrust the watchfulness of either the dog or the horses, but he placed more confidence in his own powers of watchfulness.

Several noises disturbed the calmness of the night, the long weird-like howl of the strand-wolf was frequently heard, the shrieks of jackals came from every direction, and noises, some unaccountable, were occasionally heard from the distance. At length even Molopi was overcome by sleep, after he had made a good fire, which he believed would keep off any leopard or prowling lion.

Daylight was just beginning to appear when the party were awakened by a growl from Spot and some uneasy movements of the horses. They sat up and looked round, but nothing was to be seen. The dog, however, gave several low muttered growls, and erected his ears as though he heard something that he feared.

Molopi whispered, 'Perhaps it is Umlilo coming back. I hear man's footsteps, but don't think he could reach here yet.'

He had scarcely spoken when a loud voice, which

came from the summit of the rock, called, 'Mena bo umgane, wena yenzani' ('You, my friend, what are you doing?'). Molopi was alarmed at this challenge, as he feared it might be an enemy, neighbouring tribes speaking the Zulu or Caffre language the same as the Zulus.

'Zingela' (hunt), replied Molopi.

John, who had listened attentively to the first words, now called out in Zulu, 'Tuga ezapa.' Tuga was the name of the young chief with whom John had agreed that he would join the expedition against the hostile tribe, and recognising his voice at once called him by his name.

The truth of the remark made by Molopi relative to the insecurity of the camp as far as men enemies were concerned was now verified. On the summit of the rock, and overlooking the camp, there were some forty or fifty Zulus ready to drop large pieces of rock or to hurl an assagy on the people beneath. When Tuga signalled that the people in the camp were friends, there rose from behind every bush or rock two or three armed Zulus, who had taken up stations in front of the camp so as to cut off the retreat of any one who attempted to escape by running away.

Tuga came from the summit of the rock, and smiling said, 'You were caught in a trap. If we had been enemies, you would have been killed.'

'How did you find us?' inquired John.

'Last night,' replied Tuga, 'we saw the light of your fire, and so before daybreak this morning we came here and made our plans for capturing you in case you were enemies.'

‘You must have known who it was,’ said John, ‘because of our horses.’

‘There might be other horses in the country,’ replied Tuga, ‘and we wanted to be sure. But you must come to the chief of our party, for though you have the great chief’s permission to travel anywhere in his country, I don’t think our chief here would let you go now, for you might tell the enemy we were coming.’

‘What will your chief do then?’ inquired John.

‘I think he will make you go with us, so as to keep you out of danger.’

As Tuga said these words he looked straight at John with a smile on his face, and the young Englishman knowing the great skill in diplomacy possessed by the Zulus, saw the whole plot at once. For them to accompany the army as volunteers might not have been permitted, and they might have some trouble when they returned to Natal. If, however, they were merely kept with the Zulu army to prevent their incurring the risk of being cut off by the enemy, they, of course, could not help themselves. Leaving their Zulu in charge of their horses and oxen, the two Deans accompanied Tuga to where the chief of the expedition was eating his breakfast. As soon as Tuga was alone with John and George, he said, ‘This is my plan. Good, is it not? You can now go with us safely. It wouldn’t do for you to go riding about and telling men that a Zulu impi was coming this way. I tell the chief this.’

At about a mile distant the chief who led the expedition, and was called Makasi, was found; he received Tuga’s report of the proceedings that had been adopted,

and heard his suggestion about the young Englishmen being kept with the 'impi' (army). He said to the Deans, 'You see we must keep you, if only for your own safety, and I hope it will not be unpleasant to you.'

'We won't complain,' said John, 'and perhaps we may be of some use to you.'

'How?' asked Makasi.

'We have guns, and can use them, and if your army happen to be hard pressed we can come to your help.'

'Then you would fight with us?'

'No,' said John; 'we are not warranted in fighting with you; but if you, our protectors, were likely to get the worst of the battle, we should have to adopt the best course to protect ourselves, and that would be in shooting your enemies.'

Makasi looked attentively at John, and then said, 'You are very young, but you have the head of a chief. You don't want to incur the risk of having joined us, but at the same time you will take care of yourself. That is good; we will fight together, but mind and not be rash.'

The sun being now several times its own height above the horizon, the Zulu army fell in, and skirmishers having been sent out, at once continued their march.





## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A ZULU BATTLE.



THE Zulu impi consisted of about ten thousand men : they were armed only with assagies and knob-kerries. Guns or rifles in those days could not be procured. The armament of the enemy against whom this army was launched was similar to that of the Zulus ; firearms were difficult to procure, whilst powder and bullets were even more scarce. It had been found, however, that such guns as had been procured were no match for a well-disciplined army provided with assagies. It took time to load a gun when it had been discharged, and the quick movements of the Zulus rendered a second discharge from the old muzzle-loading guns almost impossible.

The skill in shooting, also, of these men was very limited ; they took a long time to aim, and they could rarely hit a moving object. The assagy was their national weapon, and with this they had gained their battles, and had attained the power which they now held as a great South African tribe.

It was a fine sight to see these warriors marching on

at a rate which would have soon left behind the best English marching regiment. Each Zulu had only a large bag of Indian corn, which was his rations for the expedition. This bag had not yet been opened, food having been supplied from the kraals they had passed on their way.

Information had been received that in a kloof some miles ahead there was a herd of buffalo, and some of these were to be killed to supply a little meat to the army, though it would require many buffaloes to supply ten thousand men. A Zulu, however, could go for three or four days without any food except a few mealies, provided that he obtained a good meal at the commencement and end of this period.

The march of this Zulu army was conducted quietly ; there was no shouting or beating of drums, or blowing of trumpets. Scouts were in advance, and were spread out right and left, and signalled to the main body from time to time that all was right. Once or twice a short delay occurred in order to surround a portion of bush in which a buck had been marked down. This buck was soon killed, and was kept for the supper of the principal chiefs.

As soon as darkness set in, the army halted ; no fires were lighted, and conversation was carried on in the quietest manner. A stranger might have passed within a hundred paces of this army, and would not have suspected that a man was near him unless he had passed to leeward, when he would have smelt these dusky warriors, because a Zulu has a very strong scent emanating from him.

Before daybreak the army was on foot and moving

rapidly to the ravine, where it was known that buffaloes would be found. Some Zulus had been sent forward to keep watch in this kloof, and to report to the chiefs when and where the buffaloes had been seen.

The two Deans were told by the chief that they must not fire their guns, because in that country the report of a gun could be heard for miles, and the Zulus were desirous of effecting a surprise and taking their enemy unawares. The buffaloes were to be attacked with assagies only; and as this animal is strong and his hide very thick, a tough fight would certainly occur, and probably some Zulus would be killed.

When within about a mile of the ravine, two Zulus came to the chief and reported that there were ten buffaloes in the kloof. These had fed early in the morning just outside the thick bush, and then as the sun rose had moved into the dense cover.

An opportunity was now given of witnessing the rapidity with which the Zulus moved. Some of the minor chiefs had received instructions as to surrounding the kloof. Leading their men at a run towards the bush, they gave a few shrill whistles, and in an instant their men spread out, running at full speed, and reached their appointed position, where they stood with assagies ready to attack any animal that might break cover.

A detachment of about twenty men were now sent to the upper part of the ravine, with orders to enter it, and to drive the buffaloes through the bush, so that they should come out when the main body of the Zulus were waiting for them.

John and his brother occupied a position at some distance, where they could have a view of all the pro-

ceedings. As they dare not use their guns, they thought they had better keep at a distance, as a buffalo is a dangerous animal with which to come to close quarters.

As the party in the ravine moved onwards, they now and then gave a shrill whistle, to intimate that the animals were moving on in front of them. The Zulus on the outside of the bush now lay down, and the grass being long they could not be seen. It was expected that if the buffaloes came out of the thick bush, and saw their enemies in front of them, they would turn back into their stronghold, so it was necessary to use great precautions in these proceedings.

It was not long before a magnificent bull-buffalo came out of the bush, and advancing a few paces raised his head, as though sniffing the air in his endeavour to scent danger. He turned about several times, as though he did not feel quite secure; but hearing behind him in the bush the advancing Zulus, he moved forward, and was instantly followed by the remainder of the herd.

In an instant some fifty men rushed between the buffaloes and the bush they had just left, and so cut off their retreat from the ravine, whilst in front and on each side men sprung up and rushed towards their prey. Assagy after assagy was now hurled at the animals, which were soon bristling with spears, whilst the men, closing in even to stabbing distance, drove their spears into the formidable game.

The great bull, the leader of the herd, although bleeding from a dozen wounds, charged at his foes with his head down, and at a great speed. Nimbly

jumping on one side, the charge was avoided, and a dozen more assagies were driven into the animal's body.

One young and active Zulu sprang at the buffalo as it passed and seized its tail, whilst he cut at the animal's hind legs as he was dragged along. One of his cuts was evidently successful, as the great bull suddenly stopped and tried to turn on its assailant; before, however, it could do him any harm, twenty men were alongside and clinging to it like ants on a cockroach, and the buffalo sank to the ground. Not one of the herd escaped, and there was now food in plenty.

In spite of the risk of making their presence known by the smoke of a fire, yet the temptation to have a feast was too great for their caution, and by aid of the Deans' lucifer matches a fire was lighted, and buffalo beef was plentifully supplied to the army.

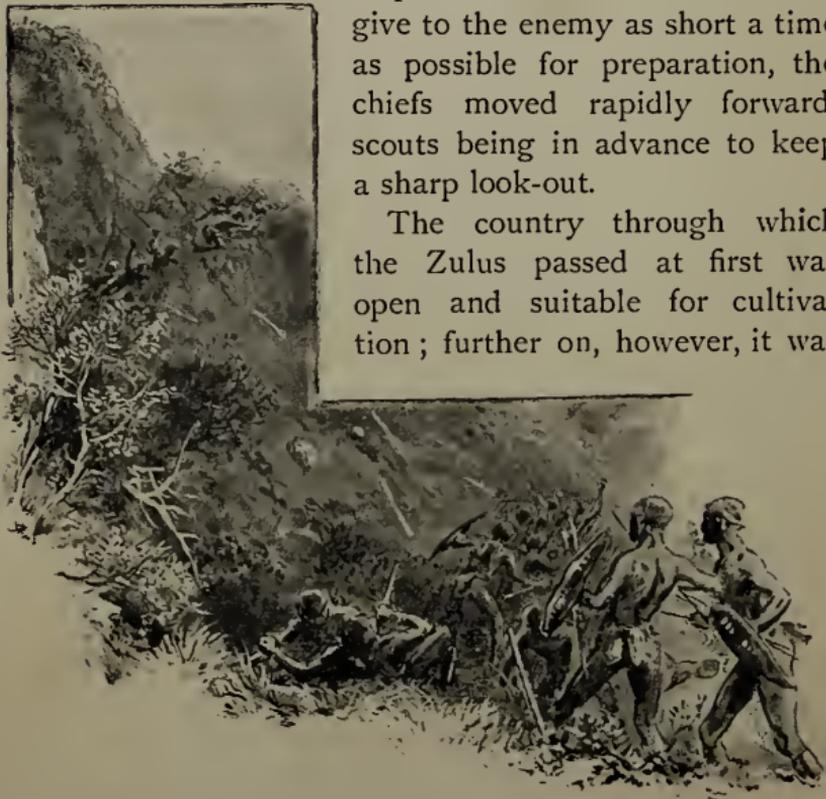
After two more days of marching, it was announced by the scouts that the enemy's kraals were in sight, and that there were plenty of cattle to be seen. The proceedings of the Zulus were now very cautious, not a man showed himself in the open country, and the marches were conducted during the night, the men remaining in the bush or ravines during the day. The principal object of the expedition was to capture cattle, and at the same time to destroy the kraals and kill as many people as possible.

Although every care was taken to conceal the march of the Zulu army, the tribe against which proceedings were to be taken discovered by some means that they were to be attacked. It does not take these people a very long time to assemble or arm, and on the morning when the Zulu army moved rapidly into the enemy's

country, and hoped to capture a large herd of cattle, they found all the cattle had been driven off, the kraals were deserted, and there was no sign of an enemy.

From these facts the Zulus knew that their advance must have been discovered, and their attempt at a surprise had failed. In order to give to the enemy as short a time as possible for preparation, the chiefs moved rapidly forward, scouts being in advance to keep a sharp look-out.

The country through which the Zulus passed at first was open and suitable for cultivation; further on, however, it was



ATTACK ON THE AMAZULU.

broken up into ravines which were densely wooded, and large patches of thick bush scattered here and there. This nature of country prevented the Zulus from keeping their formation, and they were com-

pelled to contract their line in order to pass these obstacles.

John and his brother rode near the principal chief, whilst Spot followed close behind his masters. It was as the leading portion of the army was passing through a narrow gorge, on either side of which was dense bush, that the attack was commenced by the enemy. Their selection of the locality was good.

From the top of the rocks on each side of the gorge assagies could be thrown into the crowd below, whilst not one of the enemy who were so employed could be seen by the Zulus below. The chiefs at once realized the fact that they had fallen into an ambuscade. What there was in front they did not know, so to advance would be a reckless proceeding.

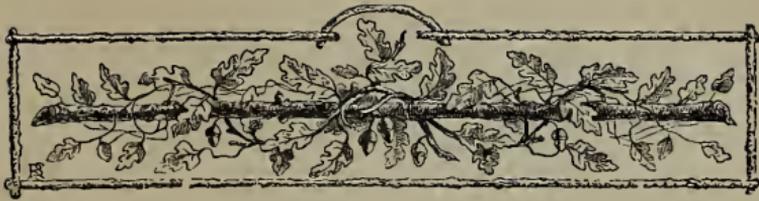
The signal for a retreat was instantly given, and that portion of the Zulu army which had entered the ravine quickly moved out of it, not, however, without leaving more than a hundred men behind, who had been mortally wounded by assagies.

The Zulu chiefs lost no time in making a fresh arrangement of their men. The army was extended and ordered to ascend the steep sides of the ravine, and to drive the enemy out of the bush. After a few minutes not a Zulu was seen in the open; and as John and George could not enter the thick bush on horseback, and not being disposed to let their ponies run loose, they suddenly found themselves alone, without any sign of either the Zulus or the enemy, though they could hear the noise of the fight in the thick bush in front of them.

Their position was now somewhat unpleasant; two

young white men in a country they did not know, with two savage tribes fighting in their immediate vicinity, was not the most desirable condition to arrive at. To wait where they were, close to a thick bush, was dangerous, as an enemy might rush on them almost as soon as he was seen, and also their retreat might be cut off. They therefore rode on their back track about half a mile, and then pulled up their ponies, and sat listening for some sign which should indicate the results of the battle that was going on in front of them.





## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE DEANS TAKEN PRISONERS.



CONSIDERABLE time passed without a Zulu being seen, and the Deans had no means of knowing what was the result of the fight. Their position was decidedly unpleasant. They had a journey of several days before them if they attempted to ride back towards the Zulu country, and they did not know what would be the proceedings of the Zulus if they found that the two white men had deserted, as it were, the army.

Dismounting from their ponies so as to save the animals as much as possible, they endeavoured to keep watch on all sides, so as to see any enemy or friend who might approach them.

Hour after hour passed, and there was no sign of a Zulu returning; the Deans therefore concluded that either the whole of the army had been massacred, which was unlikely, or else that this army was advancing towards the country into which the cattle had been driven.

Not a sign of any human being having been seen,

even when the sun was near the horizon, the two Deans set out in search of water, of which they were much in want; and having found a stream of clear water they off-saddled their ponies, and sat down to make a meal.

There being no object in moving about, they determined to pass the night where they were, each keeping watch in turns. The night passed quietly, and on the following morning they again saddled their ponies, and rode to the summit of a small hill in hopes of seeing their friends the Zulus.

Careful and watchful as they had been, they were yet no match for the natives of this country, whose lives are passed in stalking game and in practising every artifice for surprising an enemy. On looking behind them they saw a large body of natives, who had evidently cut off their retreat; whilst in front and on either side other numerous bodies of men appeared, and quickly closed in on them.

These men the Deans at once knew were not Zulus, and they realized the fact that fighting was useless—the men around them were more than one hundred to one. John at once knew that there was only one chance for them—that was to try talking; fortunately all the tribes in this country spoke Zulu, or something very like it, so that communication by word was possible.

He at once called out to the natives, 'My friends, you have rescued us. We were made prisoners by the Zulu impi when we were hunting, and they brought us along here; but they could not take us into the bush, so we have escaped. Will you help us to get back to our own country?'

This speech evidently took the chief by surprise. After a few words had passed among them, one chief called out, 'Put your guns on the ground and get off your horses, then we will talk to you.' Both John and George did as they were requested, and four powerful men then advanced, their assagies ready to be thrown in case the white men showed fight, and when close to them they seized their guns and led their horses away to some distance; and then returning, asked the white men who they were and how they happened to be with the Zulus.

John stated that he and his brother lived at Natal, and had joined a trader to go into the Zulu country and shoot; that they had obtained permission to shoot up north, but that whilst the Zulu army was travelling it came upon them, made them give up shooting, and forced them to go with it for fear they should make it known that an army was out.

John then described how he and his brother had escaped when the Zulus entered the bush, and how glad they were to have a chance of getting away from those who had made them prisoners.

The chiefs heard this speech in silence; they then whispered together for some time, and then one of them asked, 'Are you friends with the Zulus?'

'We are not likely to be friends with men who make us go with them like prisoners; we two could not fight with an impi, so we had to journey with the Zulus.'

'Do you white men fight with the Zulus?'

'No. There is no fighting between us at present, as there is nothing to fight about.'

'Are there any other white men with the Zulus?'

'No. We were alone, and thought we were quite safe till we were surprised by the impi, and were made to go with them.'

'What were you doing?' here asked the chief.

'We slept here last night, and intended trying to find our way to Natal.'

A consultation now took place between the chiefs, and John knew that now was the critical period for them. These chiefs might give the order for the two white men to be assagied, and make the excuse that they had joined the Zulu army against them. Even if the true cause of their death became known at Natal, there would be great difficulty in finding who were really the guilty parties; so they felt anything but comfortable, yet they both acted as though they felt quite at home with their captors.

'Are you Amaboere?' inquired the chief.

'No,' replied John; 'we are English.'

'Did your tribe fight against the Amaboere some tens of moons back?'

'Yes—at Natal.'

'You must come with us to our great chief,' replied the same man. 'Let us be going.'

Two of the chiefs carried the guns of John and George, whilst some of the common men led the ponies; and keeping the two white men carefully surrounded, the party moved northwards at a rapid pace.

The two Deans knew there was no use in attempting to escape or to object to anything these men might do. Although their position was critical, they believed that, as they had not been assagied at once, they would probably be safe from slaughter. John at once commenced

talking to the chiefs, asking if there were any lions or leopards near, and was told there were many. He then inquired where the Zulu army had gone, but was answered with the one word, 'Mukile,' which means 'gone away ;' at the same time he gave a wave of his arm as if to indicate that the Zulus had disappeared.

Whether the Zulus had won a victory and made off with the cattle, or whether they had been exterminated, was not said, and John did not think it prudent to show too much anxiety about the matter, so made no further inquiries.

Although the two Deans were young, they yet possessed that tact and judgment which prevent older men from doing that which may lead to suspicion. They both spoke the Zulu language as well as they did English or Dutch, consequently they could converse in the Zulu language. Thinking that if they spoke English they might raise some suspicions, they spoke only in Zulu, a language which their captors thoroughly understood.

'Who is your great chief?' inquired John.

'Sikonyella,' replied the man. 'He is a great chief, and does not fear the Zulus.'

'I am glad we are going to see him,' replied John. 'Does he know us English?'

'No ; he knows the Amaboere, and does not like them ; they fought against him once, and shot down his warriors ; they are friends of the Amazulu.'

The party by which the Deans had been made prisoners consisted of about five hundred men, and had it not been for the head-dresses they wore and the materials out of which their 'tails' or kilt was made,

they would have been taken for Zulus. They were all fine men, and evidently under excellent discipline, and were armed in the same manner as were the Zulus—viz. with assagies, a knob-kerrie, and protected by a large shield.

Three days were passed in marching from nearly sunrise to sunset, and had the Deans not been in good condition, they would not have been able to keep up with these men. Being young, and accustomed to take a great amount of exercise, they could walk the whole day without feeling tired. When it became dark, and the party stopped for the night, both John and George told the chiefs various tales about the English, their houses, modes of travelling, ships, and other matters.

The chiefs thought they were merely inventing fables, especially when they stated that in England there was a means of travelling as fast as a horse could gallop by making water boil, and that this method was called railway travelling. The chiefs would not believe this, however earnestly the two brothers asserted that it was true; such a thing, these men were convinced, was impossible.

The country through which the party travelled was swarming with game: elands, koodoo, buffaloes, and elephants being seen daily, whilst the footprints on the ground showed that other game was very numerous. Lions and leopards were also plentiful; during the night roars of lions could be heard from various directions, and the black men kept close together for fear of a lion carrying off any man who might be alone.

On the fourth day the party came in sight of the kraal of the great chief, and messengers were sent in

advance to announce that two white men were being brought to the chief.

By this time John and George had become very popular with their captors: their youth, ability to walk well, and their good humour, had pleased the chiefs, whilst their conversation, although supposed to refer to matters that had no foundation in truth, yet amused their hearers.

Hundreds of the natives came from the various kraals to look at the white men, and joined the crowd, so that on reaching the kraal of the great chief there were more than two thousand men around John and George.

After waiting some considerable time, a great shouting announced that the great chief had come out of his kraal, and was ready to see the white men. On being brought into his presence the chief looked for some time at the Deans, and then inquired of the chiefs how they had found these white boys. An accurate detailed account was then given of how the Deans had been found and brought to the great kraal, and even the stories that had been told were repeated with the greatest accuracy. After hearing this intelligence, Sikonyella said, 'How did you come into my country, and what were you doing there?'

John, acting as speaker, said that they had obtained permission to shoot in Zululand, but were taken prisoners by the Zulu impi, and made to accompany it. That when the Zulus entered the thick bush they turned back, and being alone went and hid in a place where there was water, but on the following morning found themselves surrounded by Sikonyella's men, and were then brought in.

John added, 'We thought ourselves unlucky in being taken away by the Zulus, but as it has led to our seeing the great chief Sikonyella, we are now pleased.' Even a savage is not proof against flattery, and he at once asked if the white men, who were not Boers, had heard of him.

'Have your young men ever heard of a lion?' said John. 'Your name is well known to us.'

'Are your people friends with the Amaboere?' inquired the chief.

'We fought with them at Natal many moons ago.'

This remark was made because John was aware that the Boers, instigated by Dingaan, the former chief of the Zulus, had attacked Sikonyella, and captured cattle and horses, and consequently this chief did not look with much favour on the Boers.

'What are you going to do now?' inquired the chief.

'We are in your hands,' replied John. 'We should like to shoot some large animals, see something of your country, and then return to Natal to tell the English how well you had treated us.'

Sikonyella remained silent some minutes, and then told his chiefs to give the white boys a kraal to stop in, and also food, and he would talk with them again on the following day.

From these orders the Deans believed their lives at least were safe, and following the chiefs, were soon hard at work on a meal of Indian corn and amasi.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### A LION HUNT AND ITS RESULTS.



HERE are people so constituted that they can make themselves at home with savages and also with the most civilised beings. The Deans were able to do this, and having finished their meal, they joined a group of men and sat down amongst them and talked as though they belonged to the tribe.

Their ponies had been well taken care of, but their guns were kept from them, an indication that as yet they were not looked upon quite as friends. Among the young chiefs was one who wore on his wrist a solid bracelet, which evidently had been compressed on the wrist and could not be taken off. John had noticed this bracelet on the young chief's arm when he first saw him, and he now asked to examine it.

The ornament was a solid ring about half an inch thick, and though not well acquainted with metals, John knew this bracelet must be made of solid gold. Having satisfied himself of the nature of the metal, John asked the young chief where he had procured it, and was told that about a 'moon's journey'—that is, one month's

journey—up to the north, there was plenty of this metal. Some might be found in the streams, and some sticking to white stones.

The chief said he had collected a quantity of small pieces, and had then made a large fire and melted these, and formed the ring, which he had then squeezed together on his arm. The chief was evidently not aware of the value of the metal, and merely regarded it as a curiosity and as an ornament. The chief stated there was plenty of this stuff to be found, but that it was not so handy to work into bracelets as was lead, as it required a much stronger fire to make it melt.

This statement caused John and George great surprise, but they would not let these men see how eager they were for more information. That there was gold up the country, and evidently in great quantities, was evident from the fact of such a bracelet having been made from gold picked up on the surface.

In talking over this matter with George, John remarked that up north there was a country called Sofala, which the Zulus did not pronounce as the English did. 'This country,' said John, 'may be the Ophir mentioned in Scripture, where Solomon sent his ships to procure gold. If we could only get up there and find where it was, we should make our fortunes.'

'Just at present,' replied George, 'I should be satisfied to feel certain that we could get back to Natal, and not have to feed the vultures here. This old Sikon-yella looks a vicious old brute, and very suspicious.'

The sun had risen some hours when the great chief sent to say he would talk to the white boys. John and

George at once proceeded to the kraal where they had seen the chief on the preceding day. They were accompanied by several men as a guard. Sikonyella told them to sit down in front of him, and having looked at them attentively for some time, he said, 'You want to go back to the Zulus?'

'No,' said John, 'we don't; we want to avoid the Zulus and go back to Natal, but we should like first to shoot some large game near here, if the chief would give us permission.'

'Can you kill a lion or a buffalo with those guns of yours?'

'Yes; we have done so, and we have also killed an elephant.'

'Then to-morrow you shall show what you can do,' replied Sikonyella. 'Go back to your kraal, and you shall be shown to-morrow where there is large game, and I shall expect meat.'

The chief then re-entered his kraal, and the interview was over.

'We are all right now,' whispered John, 'and to-morrow we shall have some fun.'

The remainder of the day was passed by John and George in talking to the minor chiefs, and in making inquiries as to the game in the immediate neighbourhood. They were told that lions and rhinoceros, elephants and buffalo were plentiful, and they were looking forward with pleasure to the sport they were likely to enjoy.

As they sat talking to the chiefs the conversation turned on poisonous snakes, and one of the chiefs asserted that he had round his neck some 'muti,' or

medicine, which would, if eaten, prevent the bite of a snake from killing a man.

John asked to look at this necklace, and the chief taking it off gave it to John to look at. There were various pieces of wood strung on this necklace, and two pieces of buckskin containing some objects which he could not see.

After examining the pieces of wood and being told what they were for, he asked what was in the bag, and if he might look. The chief consented, and John on opening one bag found a piece of white stone, to which was attached a nugget of gold, and in the other he found an angular white stone bigger than a pigeon's egg. He held this stone up to the light and found it transparent, and on asking what it was for, was told that the chief did not know, but had found it in some mud near a large river.

John was not well acquainted with precious stones, but he suspected that this stone might be a diamond, and if so it was worth many thousand pounds.

This chief's name was Amafuta, and he was a very ill-looking man, towards whom both John and George at once had a great dislike.

Early on the following day Amafuta announced that the hunting party was to start and to travel northwards, and that he was going to show the white hunters where game was plentiful. Eager to show how well skilled they were in the use of their weapons, the two young white men started on their expedition with great pleasure.

About fifty men accompanied them, all armed with assagies, knob-kerries, and a shield each. Before they

had travelled many miles, John found that the attendant men did not seem as much disposed to talk freely as he expected they would have done, but every now and then he noticed a peculiar look among them, as though they were not in earnest in what they were doing.

Among the party was a young man named E Bomvu, from his reddish colour, who was about the same age as John, and this youngster evidently had something in his nature different from Sikonyella's people. His features were more like those of the pure-blooded Zulu, and after some time John discovered that this youth had been captured from the Zulus when he was very young, and had been brought up among Sikonyella's people as one of themselves. He had, however, by some means learned what was his true pedigree, but had concealed his knowledge from his captors, who supposed he was unacquainted with the fact of his being a true Zulu, whose parents had been killed in one of those expeditions which are so frequently made between tribes whose frontiers are adjacent.

E Bomvu seemed to take a great fancy to John, and kept near him on every occasion, looking at him as a devoted dog looks at his master, and occasionally saying, 'Incosi, Dia tanda wena' (Chief, I like you).

As the party proceeded on their way, they approached a ravine in which there was some long grass and water, and some of these keen-eyed natives discovered the fresh trail of an enormous lion, and saw that the animal had gone into the long grass near the water. E Bomvu immediately came to the front, and said to John, 'I will go into the reeds and drive the lion out, and you shoot him.'

'No,' said John, 'you must not go there, it is too dangerous to go alone.'

'I go for you,' replied E Bomvu, and without waiting a moment he ran forward and disappeared among the reeds, before either John or George could prevent him.

The South African lion varies as much in his nature and temper as do dogs. Some are timid and even cowardly, and prey only on animals that are easily caught and that offer no resistance; others seem by nature savage, and will kill and destroy apparently for the mere love of slaughter.

Lions which have not been accustomed to encounter men armed with guns, usually show less fear of human beings than those which have heard the report of a gun, and have seen the effect of this gun on their companions, or have themselves felt the sting of a bullet.

In some countries, where formerly the natives possessed no firearms, lions would be so daring that they would calmly face a score of men. These lions were accustomed to see men run away from them, and thus had no reason to stand in awe of a man.

The character of a lion changes when he has seen the effects of a bullet, and some persons have then described him as a cowardly brute that runs away when he sees a man. Small blame is there for a lion to endeavour to escape, when he knows that near him is a foe, armed in a mysterious manner with a weapon that will kill him at a distance, and against which his giant strength is as nothing.

The Deans knew the risk which E Bomvu incurred in walking into the long reeds where the lion was

concealed, for the lions in this locality were bold and fearless. It was too late, however, to call him back, so they dismounted from their ponies and advanced close to the edge of the grass and reeds, in hopes of catching sight of the animal, and probably getting a shot before any attack could be made on E Bomvu.

John had scarcely taken up his position when the



E BOMVU AND THE LION.

lion gave a loud savage roar, and E Bomvu was seen rushing towards the open ground, the lion close behind him. Before John could raise his gun, E Bomvu, apparently catching his foot in something, fell to the ground, and the lion was instantly standing over him, one paw keeping him down, whilst the animal, seeing John within a few paces of him, stood swinging his

tail and staring at to him the novel sight of a white man. The lion offered a broadside shot, and John, steadying himself, aimed behind the shoulder, and the monster fell to the ground without any further movement.

Believing that E Bomvu must be dead, John reloaded his discharged barrel and cautiously approached the lion, but he saw that his shot had been fatal. He knelt down to see in what condition was E Bomvu, and found the young Caffre looking at him anxiously, whilst he yet remained immovable.

‘Are you much hurt?’ asked John.

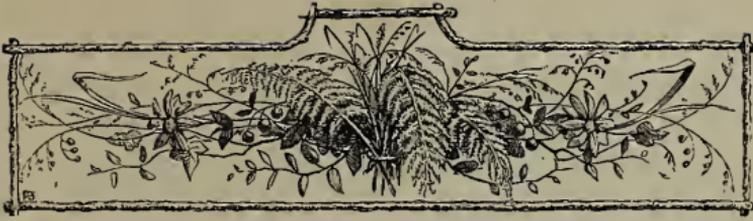
‘Carbo, inkosana’ (no, young chief).

‘Where have you been wounded?’ inquired John.

‘Nothing much,’ replied E Bomvu. ‘I fall down, and save the lion the trouble of knocking me down; then I lay quiet, and the lion just press me down with his paw, and you shoot him dead. You’ve saved my life.’

On the lion being dragged away from E Bomvu, it was found that he had not a wound, the lion not having even put out his claws, and his death being so sudden that he had made no attempt to cause his victim to move, and just as a cat treats a mouse, he seemed disposed to keep his prey for future exertions.

The chief and other natives, who had seen all that had taken place, were astonished to find that the lion had been killed by one shot from John’s gun, and they gathered together at a distance and talked in a low tone, evidently about what had occurred. Of the subject of their conversation John was ignorant; had he not been so, he would probably not have slept that night as calmly as he did.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### A WARNING.

**J**OHAN and George were sleeping under the shelter of a thick spreading acacia, their guns beside them, and Spot lying at their feet. Their horses were near them, fastened by their halters, and occasionally moving as mosquitoes troubled them. The day had been an exciting one, and though they both slept, their sleep was not deep, for in such a wild country where dangerous animals were about, men do not become entirely the servants of the sleeping power.

Although there was no sound to alarm him, yet John had a feeling as though some creature was near him, and placing his hand on the long handle of his knife, he lay listening in the hope of detecting any creature which might attack him or his brother. Suddenly, close to his ear, he heard the word 'Inkosana' uttered in a whisper. 'Yes,' he replied; 'what is it?'

'Don't move,' said the voice, 'but listen to me. To-day you saved my life, and I want to save yours. I am E Bomvu, and I have crept here at the risk of my life; if I am seen I shall be assagied, so keep

quiet. Sikonyella is a "chingana" (rascal); he has given orders that you and your brother are to be assagied, but not till you get on another day's journey.

'It is to be said that you were both killed by a lion or an elephant, or drowned in a river; your guns are to be taken to him, and the horses concealed if any one inquires after you. Now, I want to save you, and I want to get away too. I have a plan, and if you follow this we may escape,—but show no suspicion. You were nearly attacked to-day when you killed the lion, but these men thought they had better wait. To-morrow night don't sleep, but be ready for what I will tell you. Now sleep; I must creep back to where I ought to be asleep.'

Without any noise E Bomvu moved away, but John found it impossible to go to sleep; and after some time, finding his brother was awake, he whispered to him the information with which he was acquainted.

Many proceedings of the chiefs, and also of the men who were accompanying them, now seemed to the Deans as suspicious, and to corroborate what E Bomvu had told them. Of course it would have been easy for the chief to have ordered the slaying of the white youths at his own kraal, but then the whole tribe would have known of it, and the news might have reached Natal and have led to difficulties with the English. By sending the Deans up the country where there were no inhabitants, and there killing them, the real facts might be kept secret, and killed by lions would be a probable account of their death; and as their bodies would be eaten in less than twenty-four hours by hyenas and vultures, there would be no

evidence to contradict the story of their having been killed by some wild animals.

The question which occupied the minds of John and George was whether it would be safe to stop another day with these people. If a chance occurred they might be attacked at any moment, and it required some good acting and great coolness, to behave as though the men about them were their friends, when at the same time they were acquainted with the fact that they had received orders to slay them.

When the sun rose and breakfast had been eaten the party continued their march, John talking to the men as though he believed them to be his best friends.

E Bomvu marched on, giving no sign that he knew anything more than what was good for the white men. John called to E Bomvu and asked him if he felt any the worse for having been under the lion, at the same time telling him the lion had marked his back with his claws.

'Luto' (nothing), replied E Bomvu, as he strode on without even looking at John.

The sun was about ten times its own breadth above the horizon when E Bomvu, pointing to some bushes to the left of their track, said he had seen a large buck go into those bushes, and proposed that John should go with him and shoot it. The other natives immediately sat down and enjoyed the luxury of a pinch of snuff, whilst John, George, E Bomvu, and Spot moved on towards the bushes, where the antelope had been seen. As soon as these three were at a sufficient distance from the main body to speak without being heard, E Bomvu said—

‘This evening, just before the sun goes down, I will tell you elands are to be found some miles away, plenty of meat if you will go out. You take your horses and ride off, the men won’t want to move as they have eaten. Then you go off, and when out of sight ride with your backs to where the sun rises. Keep on riding as best you can, and you will save your lives, for to-morrow at sunrise, if you remain here, you will be killed.’

‘But how about you?’ inquired John. ‘Will you come with us?’

‘Yes, I will follow your spoor. I know the direction where you will ride, but the men do not. It will be dark before they find out you don’t return; then when it is light, and they can follow your “ama sonda” (footprints), you will be a long way in front of them.’

‘We must save our horses to-day,’ said John, ‘and let them have plenty of food.’

‘Yes,’ said E Bomvu, ‘do that; but when you ride and come to hard ground, turn before you come to it as if you were going somewhere different, then your followers waste time in taking up your footprints. If you ride straight they follow very quickly, and in seven or eight days the men would go as far as a horse.’

In some of the recent competitions in England, where men have competed in speed or distance, it has been found that some of these men could travel over four hundred miles in a week. The natives of South Africa are not behind these men in travelling powers. A horse carrying a rider cannot do much more than this. Consequently, although John and his brother might when mounted ride away from any enemies

who were on foot if the distance were short, yet when it came to hundreds of miles, they were not at all sure that they could out-travel the natives who were on their track.

To find their way down to Natal was an undertaking of difficulty. They did not know the country; and as this country was crossed by rivers which they might have to swim, by ravines which they would have to work round, and by thick bush through which they



THE KOODOO.

could make but slow progress, they were aware that even with twelve hours' start they were by no means certain of not being overtaken by their fleet-footed followers.

'Why not ride off at once?' said George. 'We should get a good start.'

'No,' said E Bomvu, 'you would be followed at once. If you wait, the men may think you have lost yourselves, and they will first try to find you in the

direction where you were seen to ride, and you will have a better chance. You trust me. I know, you don't.'

The antelope that had been seen to enter the bushes was a koodoo, a large animal with splendid horns. John and George having taken up positions outside the bush, E Bomvu entered it from the opposite side, and making a great noise drove the animal out, when it was dropped at the first shot by John.

E Bomvu immediately signalled to the men in camp, and some twenty men came to help in cutting up the animal, and conveying the meat to where the remainder were resting.

'This is good,' said E Bomvu; 'this evening they will expect you to kill more, and to have a great feast when I tell that elands are near.'

As soon as the meat was brought into camp, the men seemed indisposed to do anything except to cook this meat and eat. There was no indication of a wish to travel farther. Such a proceeding was not unusual, because most of the natives of South Africa are contented to sit down and eat, and afterwards to remain immovable, merely talking and taking snuff.

The sun was near the western horizon on the evening of this day when E Bomvu, who had been on the lookout, came running into camp, and stated that three large elands were feeding among some bushes not far off, and that the white men could shoot them if they mounted their horses and rode fast. 'We must keep quiet and not be seen,' said E Bomvu, 'or the elands will run.'

The natives, who had crammed themselves with

meat, were indisposed to move, and allowed John and George to ride off guided by E Bomvu, having no idea that the white men were suspicious of them. After passing over a small hill which was east of the camping ground, John and the other two entered some bushy country, and rode on until a second hill intercepted their view of the camp. They then turned to the north, and continued this direction until the sun had set. They then steered due west, and rode as fast as E Bomvu could run.

The moon was about half-full, and gave a sufficient amount of light to enable the party to avoid ant-hills, deep watercourses, and other obstructions, and they continued a nearly straight course until the moon disappeared in the west. The party then halted, off-saddled the horses, and allowed them to drink from the little stream near them; but it was necessary to hold the horses by their halters whilst they fed, for if allowed to go loose they might stray away.

In the haversacks, which were carried on the saddles, there was some biltong, a portion of which was given to E Bomvu and Spot; but as it was impossible to predict how long the party might have to travel without obtaining fresh food, they ate very sparingly of the little they did possess.

Sleep was out of the question; a slight doze every now and then was all that could be indulged in, for although their two-legged enemies were a long way off, they had evidence occasionally that four-legged enemies had found them out. It would have been the height of imprudence to light a fire, because the light of one could be seen from many miles' distance, and their pursuers

would at once start for this spot ; and as the speed at which the ponies had travelled was regulated by the rate at which E Bomvu would run, this rate was no faster than that at which the other men could travel.

The white men had therefore only a few hours' start, and if the pursuit continued during five or six days, a gain of an hour a day would enable the pursuers to come up with the pursued.

John told E Bomvu that if they were overtaken he had no fear of the results, for he and his brother had more than forty rounds of ammunition each ; and as they were mounted, they could always keep far enough away from their pursuers to be out of range of an assagy.

'That is true,' replied E Bomvu ; 'but I have no horse, so we had better try to keep in front, and fight only when we can't help it. We must try to make our footprints tell lies to-morrow, and send the men on a wrong track. I show you to-morrow what we do, so that we gain time. I try to sleep a little now, but when you can see as far as you can throw an assagy, then it is time for us to start. Hark!' exclaimed E Bomvu, 'I hear a lion. Keep close together near the horses, keep Spot close, and make a little fire with those small sticks in your box, then lion afraid to come near.'

John scratched a lucifer on his box, and as the match ignited he heard a rustle in the bushes near, whilst Spot's trembling indicated that some enemy had been close to them.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE ESCAPE.

**A**S soon as there was sufficient light to see a short distance round them, E Bomvu awoke as though by instinct, and, taking a glance around, walked off to look for the footprints of the animal that had come near them on the preceding night. There on the ground were the marks of a lion's foot, and it was seen by these that the animal must have been within a few paces of the horses. The striking of the lucifer match was therefore probably the cause of the lion having retreated.

'Now,' said E Bomvu, 'you follow me; we must "coclesa" (cheat) any men who follow us.'

He then crossed the stream, walked about two hundred paces in a northerly direction, crossed the stream again, and moved on to some hard rocky ground which extended for many hundred yards. He then turned back till he came to the stream, and entering this walked down the stream, which concealed all the footprints, and walked down this till he came to some hard rocks on the bank. He then left

the water, and stepping carefully on these rocks, waited till the ponies had also reached the hard ground. He then examined the marks left by the horses, and taking some mud in his hands, rubbed the marks over with this, then scraped off the mud, and sprinkled some water, so that all signs had been obliterated. 'Now, on,' he said. 'When men come here they follow foot-marks up there, then run on and keep looking, they lose track for long time, and we go on, so get start.'

E Bomvu's endurance seemed inexhaustible; he could move on at a run, the rate being about seven miles an hour, and he could keep this up for three or four hours. It seemed almost impossible that a large party of men could travel at the same rate, whilst they were also following the tracks; but E Bomvu said there was every probability of their being overtaken unless they kept on in the same way; and from what John could estimate of the distance, it would require about eight days before they reached the district of Natal.

The course was not difficult. To their right, and to the north, were the ranges of the Quathlamba Mountains, whilst the west was the direction in which they were to travel. The days were so clear and bright that the sun was always visible, so they could steer a tolerably accurate course by its aid.

Plenty of game was seen on the journey, but there was no time to spare to stop and shoot this; the ride was for life, and each hour that was gained now rendered the probability of escape the greater. The ease with which E Bomvu kept up with the ponies showed the Deans that they had no very great advan-

tage over their pursuers, who were probably as fleet and enduring as was the Zulu; and if the pursuers, by chance and good sight, obtained a distant view of the horses, they might make a short cut, and so gain on the white men.

During the day E Bomvu knocked down with his knob-kerrie two coran, a bird larger than a pheasant and excellent eating, and Spot chased and caught a very young duiker, a buck that when full grown is not large. This success supplied the party with plenty of food. The difficulty was how to cook it without showing any smoke by day or a light by night. E Bomvu, however, said he could manage that, and would have a good feed soon after the sun set on that evening.

The rate at which the party had travelled, and the small amount of food that the ponies had been able to procure, would have been causes to have knocked up some horses; but the Cape pony is a most enduring animal, able to travel for days without more food than it can pick up from even the coarse grass of the Veldt.

After two stoppages by day to allow the ponies to roll, drink, and eat a few mouthfuls of coarse grass, the party halted at sundown among some rocky hills. There was water in pools in this locality, and the rocks were so arranged in some places as to form caves.

E Bomvu at once set to work to collect some dry sticks which lay about under the bushes, and a sheltered cave having been selected, a fire was lighted, and the two corans and buck were cooked. A hearty meal was made, and Spot, who was very hungry, had a good feed, finishing the bones of the birds, whilst the larger portion of the buck was left for the morrow. After the fatigues

of the day, and this hearty meal, the whole party felt very sleepy ; but it was necessary that one of the three men should remain awake and on watch. John took the first watch, whilst his brother and E Bomvu slept.

Not many hours after darkness had set in the wind rose, and a heavy storm commenced, the lightning and thunder being terrific. Sheltered by the cave, the two sleepers kept dry. John was crouching under a projecting rock, which protected him from the rain, but the two ponies felt the full force of the storm. In the midst of the storm the party were alarmed by a loud roar, and a lion springing upon one of the ponies struck it to the ground. The night was so dark that except for the flashes of lightning nothing could be seen.

John shouted in the hope of frightening the lion ; but the animal, like all his species, was particularly bold during a rough stormy night, and lay growling on the body of the pony, which it had struck to the ground. Two or three flashes of lightning coming in quick succession, enabled John to see the lion, and having his gun ready, he waited for another flash, and then fired at the animal.

The noise of the gun was not less than that of the lion, and John expected the monster to spring on him, as it was scarcely ten paces distant ; but the animal at once retreated, whilst George and E Bomvu seizing a large piece of lighted wood, threw it in the direction in which the lion and the pony had been lying. The other pony had been knee-haltered, so it could not run away, but stood trembling close beside its companion, which it was found had been killed by the lion.

Although both the Deans were good runners and in

excellent condition, they were not so capable of continuing at great speed as was E Bomvu. The death of one of the ponies was therefore a very serious matter, and rendered greater the probability of their being overtaken ; also, in case it came to a fight, the chances of successfully opposing the enemies was much less.

The plan that was arranged, however, was that the Deans should ride turn and turn about ; when one was tired out by running, he was to mount the pony, whilst the other dismounted and ran with E Bomvu. This arrangement enabled the party to get on fairly well ; but the Deans could see, from the ease with which E Bomvu kept pace with them, that if the pursuers were only as fleet and enduring as was this young Zulu, they must now gain on them each hour, and probably during the next day would overtake them.

There was, however, a chance that the pursuit might be abandoned, when the trail had been followed unsuccessfully for two days ; but upon this probability being submitted to E Bomvu, he shook his head, and said, 'No, the men follow till they find ; they get assagied when they get home if they don't catch you.'

At about midday, when the sun was very hot, the party halted in a shady spot, and beside a stream. Taking the saddle off the pony, he was knee-haltered and turned loose, so that he might roll and take a feed. Instead of doing so, however, he stood still for some time with his head hanging down in a listless, helpless way. 'Ehashi efa' (the horse is sick), said E Bomvu, 'he die to-night.'

The horse sickness, which is so fatal to horses in Africa, is very sudden in its effects, and kills thousands

of these animals. Horses are also liable to be bitten by a fly, the results of the bite being fatal. From whichever of these causes, it was evident that the pony was in a bad way, and was not likely to be able to carry a rider many miles farther.

'If men follow they catch us now,' said E Bomvu, 'and we shall have to fight. How many men will your guns kill?'

'Thirty or forty each,' said John, referring to the number of bullets they possessed.

'But you must feed the guns after you have fired two shot,' said E Bomvu; 'and when you are feeding them, the men will run in and assagy you.'

'But we should not empty both our guns at the same time.'

'No good,' said E Bomvu; 'twenty, perhaps thirty, men run at you at once, then what you do; fight no good.'

'What, then, are we to do?' inquired John.

'Coclesa' (cheat), replied E Bomvu. 'We may even now have escaped, as the rain may have washed out the footmarks of the horses; but a horse is heavy and leaves deep marks, but a man is lighter and does not always tell his followers where he has gone. Now, we try to coclesa.'

E Bomvu moved forward rapidly, followed by the Deans, and at a short distance came to a stream. Crossing this stream, the party moved forward till they came to some rocky stony ground, where they halted for a short time; and then E Bomvu told the Deans that they must all three walk backwards on their back trail, stepping as much as possible in their old foot-

prints, so that there was no sign of the party having returned on their back trail.

On reaching this stream, E Bomvu walked in this for about a mile, followed by the Deans, and selecting a rock on which to land, reached dry ground without leaving any signs on the ground. 'Now, cachema' (run), said E Bomvu, and the three started at a jog trot, the Zulu carrying one of the guns, whilst John and George relieved each other in carrying the second gun. Every now and then the run was reduced to a walk; but the Deans soon found that, although no match for the Zulu, they were yet able to travel very fast.





## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE PURSUIT.



WHEN the Deans with E Bomvu had left the large party of natives, there was no suspicion that the white men knew that orders had been given for them to be killed. 'Let them kill the "impovu"' (eland), said one of the men, 'then we can have a good feast, and to-morrow we will wet our assagies in their blood.'

When darkness set in, one of the chiefs ordered that a fire should be lighted on some rising ground in order to serve as a guide to the white men, by which they could reach the camp. 'They will come to this fire like moths,' said the man, 'and will find too late that they have been tricked.'

To light a fire by aid of John's lucifer matches was a very easy business ; but he being absent, there were no other means than the somewhat slow one of making an upright stick rotate rapidly in a little hollow formed in another stick. It required several minutes of hard work to produce a few sparks by this means ; but a

fire was at length kindled, and was kept burning during the greater part of the night.

When the sun rose, and the Deans did not return, it was supposed that having killed an eland, they had stopped by it in order to feast on its flesh. This is what every native would do, and these men judged of others by themselves. It was, however, decided that the party should spread in various directions, and to ascend the hill-tops in order to obtain a good look all round, and also to examine the ground to find, if possible, the trail.

Fortunately none of these men went in the direction that the Deans had turned when they struck westwards. Had they done so, they would have gained considerably on the fugitives. The whole of the natives spread out northwards and north-east. When no signs of the white men were seen, and no vultures were observed circling in the air, the natives agreed that no eland had been killed, so they immediately set to work to follow the trail in a business-like manner.

As yet they did not suspect that the white men were endeavouring to escape, but when some young men who had gone far ahead asserted that there was no sign of any elands having been in the country, they began to wonder whether it were possible that the white men had by some means found out that they were in danger, and had made a plan to escape.

It was soon discovered that the white men had turned in a westerly direction, and had ridden only fast enough to allow E Bomvu to keep up with them. This one fact was enough to convince these people that an

escape was being attempted. Had the white men been hunting some animals they would have ridden at full speed, and E Bomvu could not have run fast enough to have kept beside the horses ; but in several places the footprints of the horses were visible over the footmarks of E Bomvu, so it was evident that the Zulu must have been leading.

Arrangements were at once made for following the trail, with all the skill that these men usually practised. Three or four of the fastest runners were sent on ahead to ascend the hills, and to endeavour to obtain by sight a view of the runaways. The most skilful trailers followed the footprints of the horses, and they did this with great ease, as no other animals had travelled over this country during the past few days.

Sometimes this trail could be seen at a considerable distance in advance, and so need not be followed step by step. The rate at which the pursuers travelled was nearly equal to that at which the ponies had moved, so that during the first day there was no advantage gained by the natives.

When it became too dark to follow the track the natives halted for the night, and discussed the probabilities of overtaking the fugitives. They were very angry at having been tricked by the white men and the Zulu, and concluded that E Bomvu had revealed the plot to assuage the white men, and had decided to escape with them.

These men knew that if they returned to their chief and informed him that the white men had escaped, he would probably order several of them to be killed. To them, therefore, it was as much a matter of life or

death to capture the white men, as it was for the white men to get away.

As soon as it was light enough to distinguish foot-marks, the party adopted the same proceedings as on the preceding day, and they shortly came to the spot where the Deans and E Bomvu had stopped on the previous night. It occupied but a few minutes of time for the natives to discover all that had taken place during the preceding night ; they saw the footprints of the lion, and also the remains of the match that, when lighted, had been thrown at the lion. They had now no doubt that the two white men were acquainted with the fact that their death had been ordered, or else why should they endeavour to escape as they were endeavouring ?

‘Hambani si hamba’ (let us be going), shouted the chief in command of the party ; but a considerable delay now took place. The trail could not be found.

It will be remembered that E Bomvu here practised his first plan to throw the pursuers off the right track, and though his proceedings delayed the Deans some minutes, it delayed the pursuers much longer. Following the traces to the hard rocky ground where E Bomvu had turned back, the natives spread out to endeavour to discover the trail ; but finding no sign, they at once concluded that a trick had been practised by an experienced hand, and the stream and its banks were very carefully examined in order to find the lost trail.

It occupied some time to discover the very slight marks left by the horses when they turned from the stream on to dry land, but once found the pursuers ran

on these traces like a pack of hounds after a fox. Many angry exclamations were made by these men against the cunning of E Bomvu, they being aware that such proceedings were the acts of the Zulu, not of the white men.

It was some time before sunset on this day that the natives saw in the far distance some vultures circling in the air and descending to the ground; this proceeding on the part of the birds, they knew, meant that some animal was dead, and had attracted the vultures.

Leaving the main body to follow the trail, ten of the fleetest runners started at once for where the vultures had assembled, and some time before sundown came on the remains of the pony that had been killed by the lion. Without stopping to make any further examination, these ten men followed the trail, for they now knew they had gained in their pursuit. Where the pony lay dead they knew was the locality in which the white men had stopped on the previous night. Continuing their rapid advance, they ran on until darkness prevented them from seeing the trail. They then stopped for the night, but as soon as there was sufficient light they again pursued the traces of the one pony.

It was scarcely mid-day before, far ahead, vultures were again seen, and there was at once an exclamation from the men that perhaps the other pony had been killed by a lion, and if so, they should be able to overtake and kill the white men and E Bomvu. The vultures which had been seen were busy at the carcase of the pony that had died from the sickness, and by thus giving information enabled the pursuers before

nightfall to reach the spot, and thus to be only a few hours behind the white men.

The success of E Bomvu's stratagem to throw his pursuers off the trail was now manifested. The footprints of the horses could be followed with much greater ease than that of the men. Great care was necessary to keep on the trail now that both horses were dead, and consequently when the three men only had to be tracked.

The ten pursuers followed the footprints across the first stream and on to the rocky ground, where E Bomvu had halted and had walked backwards. From this rocky ground no signs of the trail were visible. The men spread out and examined the ground in all directions, but could not discover a single footprint. One of the young chiefs suggested that the white men might be concealed among some of the rocks; but after a careful search it was found that such could not be the case.

'They are not birds, they cannot fly,' said one of the men, 'their footprints must be somewhere. Let us examine the trail before it came to the hard ground.'

It did not occupy these keen-sighted hunters a very long time to discover how they had been cheated; they found in several places the marks of the feet not quite over previously made footprints, and they at once knew that the three men had walked backwards over their previous trail. They were very angry at being thus cheated and delayed in their pursuit, for although it had occupied E Bomvu and the Deans some time to practise this plan, it had occupied their pursuers much longer to unravel the riddle.

On reaching the stream there was another puzzle : had the white men gone up or down the stream? There were no signs to indicate that the one or the other course had been pursued. The party therefore divided, five men going on the bank up stream, the other five going down stream.

The party who followed down stream, the direction in which E Bomvu had walked, had to proceed very slowly, in order to examine the ground with great care. They knew by this time that they were tracking one who was just as clever as they were in all the art of trailing and concealing the trail, and they were careful that they should not again be tricked and delayed by following a false trail.

In spite of their watchfulness they passed the spot on which E Bomvu had landed, and went on some distance beyond ; but believing that they must have overlooked the trail, three men ran on to the open ground some five or six hundred yards from the stream, and then walked parallel to the stream, so as to cross the trail if it happened to be in that direction. By this means the footprints of the retreating party were discovered, and by shrill whistles these men endeavoured to indicate to the other men that they were on the right track. Without waiting to be joined by the others, these five men ran forward on the trail which could now be easily seen, and from the freshness of these marks, they knew they were not far behind what they looked on as their victims.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE FIGHT FOR LIFE.



THE two Deans had now arrived at a sort of dogged condition. They felt that as far as running was concerned they were over-matched by their pursuers. To add to their difficulty, George had blisters on his feet, and was able to run only with great pain. It was possible, they believed, that they were not followed, and all this exertion might be unnecessary ; but E Bomvu asserted that from what he knew of the pursuers, it was unlikely that they would give up until the district of Natal was entered. 'We must go on,' said E Bomvu ; 'a blistered foot is nothing compared to an assagy through you.'

'But,' replied John, 'we can shoot these men.'

'No good,' replied E Bomvu. 'You shoot four, perhaps ten, but ten more will assagy you ; we must go on.'

There were now not many miles between the pursuers and the white men ; it was mid-day when the pony died from sickness, and it was a few hours before sunset when the natives came on this pony, and

again took up the trail. These natives discovered that no dew had fallen on the footprints of the white men ; they therefore knew that no night had intervened between when the white men, and they, had passed over the ground. This caused them to increase their speed in the hopes of being able to obtain a view of their victims, and then by speed and endurance to close with them.

The country was now broken up by streams and ravines, which rendered following the trail somewhat difficult, but the pursuers lost but little time in recovering the trail if they happened to lose it, and being the best runners among the party they moved forward rapidly, and gained on the white men so fast, that about two hours before sundown they saw them, and the chase now changed from trailing to view.

E Bomvu was not long in finding out that his enemies were within sight. He saw them from a distance, and announced to the Deans that they could not run quick enough to escape now that they were seen ; 'but,' added E Bomvu, 'I can only see five ; I don't know where the others are. Perhaps now we make a good fight.'

'You make your escape,' said John ; 'you can run fast, we will stop and fight.'

'Carbo' (No), replied E Bomvu, 'I fight with you. I won't run. Now follow me, and see that your guns are all right.'

E Bomvu ran to a steep ravine, along the ridge of which were some thick bushes, and having gone down this low enough to be concealed from his pursuers, he stopped and crawled back to the ridge, followed by

the Deans. 'Now you shoot them as they come on; if you shoot four I will assagy one, then we run on again, for more men must be near.'

'I suppose,' said John to his brother, 'we should be justified in shooting these men after what we have heard? If we let them come close without shooting them we shall be assagied, so we must take the risk, as we shall fire merely in self-defence.'

'Yes,' replied George; 'this is not a case for standing on ceremony, hesitation would be fatal.'

The brothers put fresh caps on the nipples of their guns, and used their ramrods to see if the bullets were well home on the powder, and then waited for the approach of their enemies. They had not long to wait,—running on at great speed, the five men approached the ravine, and were soon within sixty yards of the Deans.

'I will take the leader,' whispered John; 'you take the second man, I the third, and you the fourth.'

Taking a steady aim, John fired, and the leader, a tall, long-legged man, fell dead. George's shot followed quickly, and the second man fell. The three remaining men were now side by side, and were stopping, when two more shots were fired and two more men fell, one only remaining standing. Seeing this, E Bomvu rushed out, assagy in hand, towards him, and the two stood facing each other at a distance of about fifty paces.

'Reload,' whispered John, 'both barrels—quick,' and the guns were quickly ready for use. In the meantime, E Bomvu and his opponent had each thrown an assagy, which was in each case dodged; then John, raising his gun, fired, and the native fell forward on

his face. E Bomvu rushed on him and stabbed him with his assagy, and soon killed him; then cutting his necklace from his neck and seizing his assagy, E Bomvu returned to the Deans, and said, 'Your necklace and your assagies;—assagies may be useful. Now let us "cachema" (run fast), for more men must be behind.'

Without waiting for further examination, E Bomvu and his white companions ran on, the Deans now realizing the fact that it was a matter of life or death that they did not allow themselves to be overtaken by the natives. Keeping to the bushy country so as not to be seen by their pursuers, they moved rapidly on long after darkness had set in, but being at length exhausted they halted by a stream, washed their feet, had a drink and some food, and were soon all three fast asleep.

The cold that always comes on just before daybreak awoke the three sleepers, and they were quite willing to move on in order to keep warm. E Bomvu suffered from the chill morning air much more than did his white companions, whose clothes were a protection. Leaving the more bushy and hilly country, they now traversed vast undulating plains, on which were several herds of game. Elands, hartebeest, springbuck, gnu, and other antelope were scattered about in groups, and seemed so unaccustomed to man, that they moved away slowly as the three men passed them, and almost immediately recommenced grazing.

When the sun had risen about ten times its own diameter above the horizon, E Bomvu called attention to the vultures which were circling in the air above

where the five men had been shot. 'Men see those vultures,' said E Bomvu ; 'go there, and find five men dead ; then if they follow us they will be more cunning and not come straight at us. They will be afraid of your guns.'

'How was it that only five men came?' inquired John.

'I think,' replied E Bomvu, 'they divide into parties—some go one way, some another, when they lose our trail. The five you shot were on the right trail, the others on the wrong. But let us be moving, this open country shows us too plainly.'

On estimating the distance they had travelled, the Deans believed that in another day they would enter the Natal District, and would arrive within a day's journey of Pietermaritzburg. They believed they travelled more than fifty miles a day, because during a great portion of each day they had run, and when they had walked they had gone very quickly. They had been on foot from about thirteen to fourteen hours each day, and had consequently made a daily journey of over fifty miles.

Each day that they travelled they seemed to gain additional power and endurance, a result probably due to the fact, that they were decreasing in weight, and getting into better condition. What a man can do when in good condition would astonish any one who has not attained to that state.

A walk of fifteen or twenty miles would be a tiring and exhausting journey to a man in the state in which most men are who live the usual civilized life. When, however, the same man is in training, he travels on

and on, feeling light, active, and in good spirits. He feels less craving for food and drink, and is a stranger to what is called being tired; but little sleep is requisite, and even to breathe is to enjoy life,—it is worth while once or twice in one's life to attain what is termed 'high condition.'

E Bomvu, when he started on the journey which has been described, was in excellent condition, but his white companions were not. Now, however, there was but little difference between them, and the two white men could travel as fast and as long as could the Zulu.

Although the country was open, and an extended view could be obtained, there were no men visible in pursuit; but even with their glasses the Deans could not have discerned men at a greater distance than four or five miles, and that meant less than an hour behind them. They consequently did not relax their speed, but travelled on, knowing that their lives might depend on their endurance.

Two days after their encounter with their pursuers they crossed a river, and at some distance saw a Caffre kraal. To whom this kraal belonged they did not know, so they thought it more prudent to give it a wide berth, and kept considerably to the south. After travelling some time they observed in the distance a white object which was moving, and on John examining this with his glasses he announced that it was a waggon.

'Then we are in Natal,' said George, 'and are safe. Hurrah, we have outrun those brutes!'

The party, now feeling perfectly safe from pursuit, moved on more slowly, and finding a sheltered spot

near a clear stream, they halted for the night and made a hearty meal, and slept as they had not done during several nights.

After a bathe on the following morning, John told George that he had been wondering whether there would be any row about their having shot those men. 'You see,' he said, '*we* knew that if we had not shot them, they would have assagied us. But suppose the chief makes up a different story, and says that we fired on them without cause. We may have some difficulty in proving that they meant mischief towards us. The question is, would it be better for us to tell the whole story to the magistrate, or to get back to Natal and say nothing about it?'

'We had better not decide in a hurry,' said George; 'but it would perhaps be better not to go into Pietermaritzburg, but to go straight to D'Urban and get home quietly. Old Sikonyella will not dare tell the story; he will probably keep quiet, and we shall hear no more about it; but I should like to hear what E Bomvu has to say.'

On the case being put to him, E Bomvu replied: 'If we had been assagied, then no one in Natal would have heard anything about it from Sikonyella. He would keep quiet and say nothing, except that you had been killed and eaten by lions. Now, perhaps, he will try to get some cows paid him, and will say you shot his men because you were angry with them.'

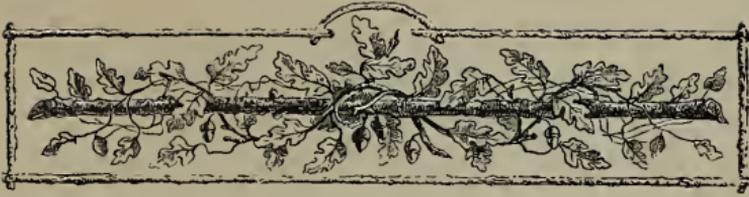
'But,' said John, 'how will he be able to find us out in Natal?'

'That easy enough; he send men here with your saddles and bridles, and soon it would be found out

whose they were. Then, too, people at your kraals know you were away in Zulu country, and go up with impi. Easy to find you out. Then you would have to show, and would be recognised by Sikonyella's men. No use to think you won't be found out ; better complain at once to your chief, and have first talk, and say how you hardly escaped. I hear what the men say, I know you were to be killed, and I can speak.'

'E Bomvu is right,' said John ; 'we must get home as quick as we can and tell father all about the affair, and hear what he says. We can reach the house by to-morrow evening.'





## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE TRIAL.



HE sun was some height above the horizon when the Deans and E Bomvu reached their home near the Umbilo River, and the brothers were welcomed by their relatives. The news soon spread that the young chiefs had returned, and several Caffres came up to the house to welcome the travellers. E Bomvu was handed over to a young Caffre to take charge of, whilst the brothers had a good wash, and a clean suit of clothes, their old clothes being in rags.

Kirk the trader, with whom the Deans had travelled to the Zulu country, had returned to Natal, and had stated that he feared something serious had happened, as Umpanda's impi had returned to the great chief's kraal, and had reported that the white men could not be found after the first battle, in which they were surprised and for a time had the worst of the fighting.

This news was brought by Kirk only a few days

before the Deans returned home, but it had caused great anxiety to the relatives and friends of the two Deans. Nothing could be done to help them, because it was not known where they were, or even if they were alive. It was quite possible that, as the white men were with the Zulus, they might be assumed as enemies, and in the excitement of the battle might have been slaughtered at once.

It was very late before John and George had finished giving an account of their adventures, which were listened to with great interest by the family. Mr Dean at once gave it as his opinion that no time was to be lost in telling the tale to the magistrate at D'Urban. 'You have nothing that you wish to conceal; you shot the men in self-defence, at least so it appears. I must examine your companion, E Bomvu, for it appears you owe your lives to him. It was not prudent of you to go in the direction where you knew the Zulu impi were going. When fighting is going to take place in which you are not concerned, it is better to keep clear of it. But you will be glad to sleep in a bed to-night, so you had better go to your room, and to-morrow we will see about business.'

Shortly after breakfast on the following morning, Mr. Dean, his two sons, and E Bomvu walked to D'Urban, and saw the magistrate and gave him an account of all that had happened. E Bomvu was examined, and gave an account of the orders he had heard about the two young white chiefs. They were to be taken, he said, on a journey of a few days, then to be killed when they were asleep, and a report to be made that they had been killed by lions.

No amount of cross-questioning could shake his evidence. He repeated again and again the words he had heard, and he added that perhaps had not the young chief saved his life when he was under the lion, he might have been one of those who helped to carry out the orders of the chief.

E Bomvu then described, evidently with great delight, the accurate shooting of John and George. He imitated the approach of the men to their concealed position: how they held their assagies, and were already for casting these when the 'isibum' (gun) of the young white chief spoke, and the leading man fell; then the other young chief's gun spoke, and down went another; then two more fell, and only one remained 'I am not afraid of any one man,' said E Bomvu, 'so I ran out to fight the one remaining; but he was soon shot, and then we ran on, because fifty or a hundred men might come and the guns could not speak quick enough to kill them all.'

After the magistrate had heard the whole story he stated that it might be an awkward business, as there was only the evidence of E Bomvu to prove that an assassination was intended, but that it was right that a statement of facts had been given him.

Upon E Bomvu being told of the opinion of the magistrate, he said, 'Why did these men run after us so fast? What did they want with us? We had done them no harm, we owed them nothing. Why did they run on our trail with their assagies ready to throw? Why do the dogs follow a buck? Is it to talk to it? No. Why did these men follow us? Only an "igaza"

(an idiot) would believe they took all this trouble to catch us merely to ask why we ran.'

The story of the escape of the Deans was soon known all over Natal, and the officers there were much interested in hearing the account from the principal performers themselves.

The Lieutenant-Governor of Natal, who resided at Pietermaritzburg, sent to say he should like to see the Deans and E Bomvu, and to hear from them the details of the whole affair. Mr. Dean with his two sons and the Zulu consequently proceeded to Pietermaritzburg, and were received very kindly by all the principal residents.

Their account was listened to with great interest, and as the whole statement bore on it the stamp of truth, they were congratulated on their escape. They were, however, told that probably there might be some trouble in consequence of their having shot five men, because the proof would be difficult that these men intended to assagy them.

At present the statement of E Bomvu was the only proof, and if Sikonyella's men asserted that they never had any intention of doing harm to the white men, and that E Bomvu was telling lies, there might be considerable complication.

About three weeks after the return of the Deans to Natal, a deputation of ten of Sikonyella's councillors reached Pietermaritzburg, bringing with them the saddles and bridles belonging to the dead ponies. They interviewed the Commissioner for Native Affairs, and stated that two white men had visited their country and had asked permission to shoot

large game. This permission had been given, and a party sent with them to show where the game could be found.

Suddenly the white men disappeared, and the men who were sent with them, fearing the chief would blame them if anything happened to the white men, at once took up the trail and followed the white men in hopes of coming up with them, and preventing any harm occurring.

The white men went so fast that only five of the quickest runners were able to come near them. But the white men, for no reason, fired at and killed these five men, and their dead bodies were found by their companions. The chief wanted to know why his men had been shot. He asked that the white men should be given up to him, or at least that fifty head of cattle should be given for each man shot.

This story, though very plausible, was easily seen through by the Commissioner. Having heard all that had been said, he asked the speaker who had given the order for the white men to be killed, and the story to be spread that they had been killed by lions, 'Was it the great chief, or some other chief?'

'It is a lie,' said the speaker; 'no one gave such orders.'

'Why should you follow the white men as you did and be so anxious to overtake them? The white men were merely going home. I have evidence that the white men were to be killed, so your story will not be received. If any white men enter your chief's country and are said to be killed by lions, your chief will have to account for them.'

This reply did not satisfy the councillor, who continued talking for an hour, but gradually decreasing his demands till he claimed only one cow for each man shot. This demand, however, would not be listened to, and the party left, stating that their chief would be very angry with them.

On the following day the men again visited the Commissioner to make their demands. In the meantime E Bomvu and the Deans had arrived at Pietermaritzburg, and when the councillor had again stated his case, E Bomvu was called upon to say what he knew.

E Bomvu, stepping forward, said he had heard the chief Sikonyella tell the men that they had better kill the white men and say that a lion had killed them. At that time he had no feeling of liking for the white men, but when one of them risked his life to save him, and shot the lion that was standing over him, he determined to save the white men. 'If you say that you were not ordered to kill the white men, you lie,' said E Bomvu. 'If you did not want to kill the white men, why did your men follow as fast as they followed? Why not let the white men go on alone? Did you know where we had gone when we crossed the stream and your men followed our footprints? You are dogs without the nose of the dog. You were cheated, and five men only followed us. If ten had come, our bones would now be lying on the plains picked clean by the jackals. You are cunning, but not cunning enough for one of the Ama Zulus. You come with cheating lies in your mouth, but you will gain nothing. The white man you consider a fool, but he will not be deceived

by you ; and if you get away without holes in your skins from the white men's bullets, you may consider yourselves lucky. I have spoken.'

Sikonyella's people were evidently impressed by this speech, and though they continued murmuring among themselves, they were evidently put out by E Bomvu's direct evidence and threat.

The councillor said he should have to report to his chief what was said, but he knew his chief would be very angry ; after which remark the whole party got up and at once left the neighbourhood.

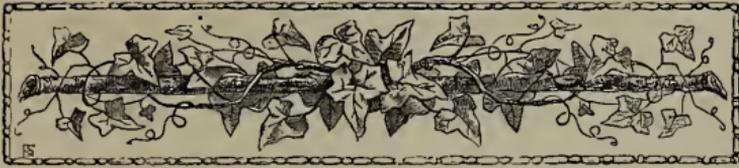
It was impossible to say whether any further proceedings would be taken by the chief. Although at that time human life was not regarded with even the respect that it is at present in that country, yet the shooting of five men was regarded with anything but calmness. Quarrels occasionally took place on the frontiers between two tribes, which sometimes resulted in forty or fifty men being killed, but this did not necessarily lead to war between the two tribes. Just as a few years ago the Russians attacked our allies the Afghans and killed several hundred men, and this was merely termed 'an unfortunate incident.'

The natives, however, were well acquainted with the white man, and had found that for the sake of peace and quietness he would usually be disposed to pay money, or, which was the same thing, cows, rather than incur the risk of war. In the present instance, however, the demand was rather too barefaced. It was in reality demanding a fine because these natives had been unsuccessful in assaying two white men, who being ably guided by a Zulu, quick of foot, and accurate

marksmen, had succeeded in escaping from a trap which had been prepared for them.

This was the general opinion in Natal, and John and George shared with E Bomvu the congratulations of the inhabitants, in having been able to escape from a condition of great danger.





## CHAPTER XXXI.

### IS IT A DIAMOND?



NINE months had elapsed since the return of John and George, and no further messengers had visited Natal from Sikonyella. The attempt to obtain some payment for the men who had been shot had failed, and, probably from the account given by the councillor of the conversation which had taken place at the meeting, proved that the English knew too much.

At this date an event occurred which eventually caused a great change in the future of the Deans. An officer came to Natal for the purpose of making an accurate survey of the district, and also to describe its geological condition. This officer had studied mineralogy, and was practically acquainted with the subject. In addition to his taste for science, he was also a sportsman; not the sportsman who merely enjoys killing, but one who hunted with skill, and as much for the purpose of obtaining specimens of natural history as for the mere object of shooting. These tastes soon brought him into close companionship with

the Deans, who took him into the bush, instructed him in spooring, and described the habits of the bush animals.

Conversing with him one day on their adventures up the country, John told him that they had seen a native who had on his wrists large bracelets of gold, and this native stated that he had collected the gold from among some stones that were in a stream. This statement at once excited the interest of the officer, who asked many questions as to how John knew it was gold. The replies being satisfactory, the officer, whose name was Grant, told John not to talk to other people about this, for probably he, with the Deans, might make an expedition up the country and be the first discoverers of gold in South Africa.

Some days after this conversation, when Lieutenant Grant was passing the afternoon at the Deans', John asked him if he knew anything about stones, and then showed him the white stone that was in the necklet which had been taken from the neck of the native that had been the last of the five that had been shot.

Taking from his pocket a magnifying glass, Grant examined this stone with great care, and then announced that he had scarcely any doubt but that it was a diamond.

'If it be a diamond,' said John, 'it ought to be worth a great deal of money.'

'Money!' replied Grant; 'if it be a diamond, and of as pure a water as it looks to be, there is a fortune in it, for it would be worth several thousand pounds. Is there any experienced and honest jeweller in Natal?'

‘There is no jeweller at all in Natal, as far as I know,’ replied John, ‘and I don’t believe any one here could tell the difference between a diamond and a piece of glass.’

‘What do you intend to do with it?’ inquired Grant.

‘I don’t know what to do. What would you advise?’

‘If you have no plans arranged, and care to trust it to me, I could send it to my brother in England, who would submit it to the best mineralogist in England for his opinion, and also as to its value. It would occupy about six months for us to obtain an answer. I don’t think there would be much risk in sending it, unless, of course, the ship in which it goes home sinks on the voyage. But I leave it to you to judge whether this plan would suit you.’

‘I should be very much obliged to you,’ said John, ‘and, of course, if it proves to be a diamond, you must have a share in it.’

‘Never mind that,’ replied Grant. ‘We must first see if my opinion is correct. I will pack it with some geological specimens I have, and send it to Cape Town to a brother officer who is going home very soon.’

In spite of the opinion of Lieutenant Grant, neither John nor George imagined for a moment that the stone was a diamond. Diamonds, they had heard, came from Brazil and India, and they could not believe it possible that a native of South Africa had, by any means, become possessed of such a stone. It was just probable that some ship from India might have been wrecked

on the South-east Coast of Africa, and the diamond, if diamond it was, might have been found on board, but there was no record of any such ship having been lost in modern times on that part of the coast.

E Bomvu was asked if he had heard how this native had become possessed of the white stone he wore with his *muti* (medicine) round his neck. He replied that the man said he had found it far away when he was hunting. It was in some mud, and, never having seen a stone like it, he had sewn it in a piece of buckskin, and wore it round his neck as a charm. This account made matters more puzzling, but also induced John to conclude that it must be some common stone, for diamonds, he believed, did not exist anywhere except in India and South America.

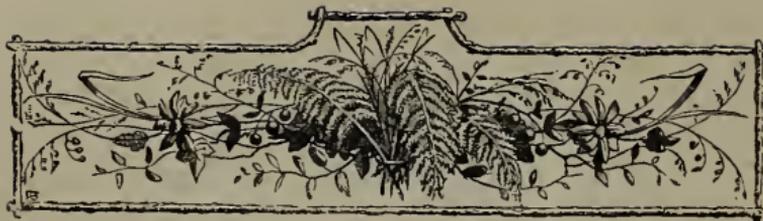
Reports had recently reached Natal that gold had been found in Australia and in large quantities, so John thought it might be possible that there was gold in some of those parts of Africa which had not been explored by white men who were acquainted with geology. The man who wore the gold bracelets had also stated that he found this metal in a small stream, and it followed that this gold must have been in nuggets, or he would not have been able to work it. If the gold was only in small quantities in quartz, it would require skill to obtain sufficient to form two large bracelets. Gold, therefore, must be in lumps of considerable size somewhere, but to discover where this locality was would be the problem for the future.

After talking the matter over with Lieutenant Grant, it was suggested that John should again visit the Zulu country, and endeavour to find out where was the

stream out of which the man had taken enough gold to make his bracelets. It would require great skill in diplomacy to obtain this information without causing the man to imagine that he possessed very valuable information. If he suspected that the white men were very anxious to find out what he knew, he would probably keep his secret.

At that date the Zulus were not well acquainted with the current coin of England. If you offered a Zulu half a crown or half a sovereign, he would accept the half crown, because it was the larger of the two; but, as these men were very observant, they would soon become aware that gold was very valuable if they found how anxious the white men were to find out where it could be obtained. John's journey, therefore, was one not to be undertaken except by a clever man.





## CHAPTER XXXII.

WORTH SEVEN THOUSAND POUNDS.

**F**IVE months had elapsed since Lieutenant Grant had sent home the stone which he supposed might be a diamond. John Dean had made his trip to the Zulu country, and with great skill had obtained from the Zulu as much information as possible as to the locality from which the gold had been obtained. He ascertained that the stream in which the gold was found was nearly a moon's journey north of Zululand; a moon's journey being one month—that is, from one full moon to another.

The country was said to be hilly, but not so much so as was the country in the vicinity of the Draakensberg. Several streams flowed in that district, and in several this yellow metal was to be found sticking to white stones. With this information John was obliged to be content, he could obtain no more at the time; but he had asked the Zulu if he would go on a hunting trip up the country, if a party of white men wished to go in that direction. The Zulu said he would, but the

place was unhealthy, and horses and oxen would soon die there, and man get 'efa' (ill).

All this information was given to Lieutenant Grant, who studied a map of the country which he possessed, and stated that it was quite possible that gold might be found there, as this country was evidently but little known, there being neither rivers nor mountains marked on it. He stated that, as soon as his work was over in Natal, he would try to obtain three or four months' leave, and would then travel up the country and try to obtain gold, or at least to be able to announce to English geologists that gold existed in that part of the country.

These arrangements had been agreed to, when a letter from England reached Lieutenant Grant, informing him that the stone he had sent home had been submitted to Professor Tennant and other competent mineralogists, who had pronounced it a diamond of the purest water; that when cut it would weigh probably between fifty and sixty carats, and that an offer had been made for it of seven thousand pounds; but that, as it was supposed to be worth more, this offer had not been accepted until further information had been received from Natal.

The effect of this letter on the Deans can be better imagined than described; such a sum of money as seven thousand pounds seemed to them a large fortune. Everything at Natal in those days was cheap: meat was about twopence a pound, chicken were four for a shilling, and Indian corn was plentiful and cheap. Consequently money went a long way, every necessary of life being cheap, though luxuries were dear. Land,

at that date, was also cheap, and many of the early settlers, it is said, bought land at five shillings an acre, and after several years sold it for £100 an acre.

Lieutenant Grant assured the Deans that there was not likely to be any mistake about the diamond, as the people he had sent the stone to were the very best judges in England of such stones, so they might look on it as certain that they would obtain seven thousand pounds at least. He also told the Deans to be most careful not to let any one know about this diamond. 'There may be more where this one came from, and we may manage to procure these. Besides,' he added, 'if it became known that you had taken this diamond from the neck of a native you had shot, it might be an awkward business for you, and I am certain of one thing—namely, that you would never handle one penny of the seven thousand.'

It was difficult for the two Deans to keep as a secret the news they had received; but their training as hunters had taught them patience and prudence. They also recognised the fact, that if they let other people know about the diamond, they might possibly never derive any advantage in the money way from having obtained it.

When they were by themselves they would talk of what they would do with the money when they received it. John said that he should buy land with it; but George stated that he should like to be an officer, and would purchase a commission in the army, probably in the Cape Mounted Rifles, because then he should remain at the Cape, and his knowledge of Dutch and Caffre would be of great use to him.

Several months elapsed, during which the Deans accompanied Lieutenant Grant on his surveying expeditions. In some parts of the country they enjoyed excellent sport. In those days the plains near the Draakensberg, termed the 'Mooi River Veldt' by the Dutch, abounded in elands and hartebeest, vleck-vark, or wild pigs of the plains, and ouribi were also numerous, whilst rietbuck, rhebuck, and duiker were also to be found.

Whilst Grant was surveying the Deans hunted, and they rarely returned to camp without bringing with them plenty of venison. Now and then the officer joined them, and admired the skilful manner in which they followed the trail, or rode down the swift-footed animals that were to be found on the plains.

At length the English mail arrived with letters, and Lieutenant Grant received one announcing that the sum of eight thousand pounds had been given for the diamond, the purchaser being a well-known diamond merchant in London, who was most anxious to know where this magnificent stone had been discovered.

'I only wish I knew,' said Grant, 'for such a stone is not likely to have had no companions; there must be some part of this country where diamonds are plentiful, or a native would not have been likely to have picked up one like this. Gold is all very well, but you would require a lot of gold to obtain eight thousand pounds for it; any way, you have made a good thing out of this business.'

After considerable discussion on the matter, Lieutenant Grant, who at first refused to accept anything for what he had done, consented to accept one thousand

pounds as a present. He agreed to this only after John and George stated they would never forgive him if he did not. 'Why,' said John, 'had it not been for you, we should never have known the value of the stone; we might have given it away, or done anything with it except make money out of it. I shall buy some land up in this neighbourhood. A big farm can now be bought for a few hundred pounds, and I am sure, before long, when people find out what a good climate this is, and how fruitful the soil is, they will come out in thousands, and then land will rise in value.'

John Dean's opinions were after a few years proved to be true. In the vicinity of D'Urban at Natal Bay, where wild elephants, buffalo, and buck roamed in the forest undisturbed, except by one or two enthusiastic hunters, such as the Deans and their Zulu companions, there now stand large hotels, clubs, churches, and villas.

On the large plains near the Mooi and Bushman's rivers, where herds of elands and other antelope used to roam, and where the roar of the lion was often heard, there are now substantial houses and large farms, where every kind of vegetation introduced by art flourishes. This change, from a mere utilitarian point of view, is no doubt an improvement, but one cannot help sympathising with the Boer, who, in describing the former and present condition of the country, spoke as follows:—

'When I first settled near the Bushman's river there were four of us, each of whom built a house not far from each other; we made this arrangement so as to be

able to help one another in an emergency. As far as we could see from our houses, and that was a long distance, there were plains covered with game. We never need kill our cattle for food, there were always elands or other large game within easy reach. Plenty of firewood was near, and good water was plentiful. Our cattle and horses could graze where they liked; no man interfered with them. After some years, however, what you call emigrants came out in hundreds and squatted about the country, and claimed portions of the plains as theirs. They drove away all the game; for though they were not skilful enough to shoot these, they were always firing off their guns, and so drove them away far up the country. Our cattle and horses could not now graze where they liked, for if they trespassed on these squatters' land, we were asked to pay for the damage. There being no sport and no freedom, we sold our farms and left the country, which was no place for us.'

People who live in countries which are crowded with inhabitants cannot understand the charms of such freedom, but in South Africa in former times such feelings prevailed among the first inhabitants.

As soon as the money for the diamond was available, John bought two large tracts of ground—one near D'Urban, and the other on the Mooi River Veldt. Both proved eventually to be good investments, as that which he had bought for one pound he was able to sell for thirty times as much. George, who was seized with military ardour, set to work to purchase a commission in the Cape Mounted Rifles. In those days there were no competitive examinations, a commission could be

bought; and as long as the purchaser was sound in wind and limb, and had a fair amount of education, he was granted his commission.

Of course in the present day such proceedings would not be tolerated, and an officer so unskilled in science as was George Dean would never have obtained a commission. He was, however, an excellent rider, a splendid shot, and was acquainted with every dodge connected with stalking game or men, and also with defending a camp. Had such an unscientific and untrained officer as was George been in the Zulu country during the late war, and had been at the camp at Isandula, he would have made that camp a stronghold, and would probably have saved the slaughter of some thirteen hundred men, though he had not seen in any of the text-books that such a proceeding was recommended.

As a leader of men against such an enemy as the Caffres, George was better qualified than most men who are now trained at our military colleges. Being desirous of visiting Cape Town and seeing a friend there who was a colonel, and through whose interest he hoped to obtain his commission, he took passage in the *Mazeppa*, a small brigantine, and left Natal Bay for Cape Town, where he arrived after a good passage.





## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### START FOR A HUNTING TRIP.

**J**OHN,' said Lieutenant Grant, as he rode up one morning to the house of the Deans, 'I have sent in an application for three months' leave, and expect that it will be granted. It is to commence from this day fortnight. Now are you prepared to join me in a trip up the country in search of diamonds and gold? Of course, we shall have plenty of shooting also, but the principal object of the trip will be scientific exploration. We must combine business and pleasure, and with the money we can now spare we ought to manage things well.'

'Go!' replied John. 'I should think I would; it's just the sort of thing I have been longing for.'

'Well,' replied Grant, 'I must be allowed to stand the expenses; all you need bring will be as many horses as you like, your guns, clothes, and powder and lead.'

'Why not go shares in the expenses?'

'No,' said Grant, 'you have been liberal enough already, you must let me have my way this time; but

what I want you to do is to select a good waggon for me, and a good span of oxen. You are more up in these things than I am. Also, I fancy you are a better judge of horses than I am, so you must buy horses. Then, too, you know what we ought to take in the waggon for food, so I will ask you to set to work at once and make all arrangements—especially as to a driver for the waggon and men to go with us. I have a bell-tent, so you need not procure that.’

‘The waggon, oxen, and horses I can best procure at Pietermaritzburg,’ replied John; ‘but I don’t know yet whether father will allow me to go.’

‘No doubt about that,’ said Grant, ‘after the manner in which you took care of yourself on the last trip. I fancy that he is aware you can be trusted alone.’

Mr. Dean told John that he thought such a trip as was proposed was just the thing to suit him, and would enable him to gain most useful experience. Such a companion also as Lieutenant Grant was likely to be of benefit to him, as this officer was clever, well skilled in science, and knew a great deal on matters with which John was unacquainted.

‘You know many things that he knows but little of, such as sporing, dodges in hunting, and the languages of the country; so,’ said Mr. Dean, ‘there will be benefit to both of you in going on this expedition. I know you won’t be rash or attempt things where the odds are very much against you, so go by all means, and good luck attend you.’

It was a great pleasure to John when he reached Pietermaritzburg to make a selection of a waggon, which was not so heavy as the usual Boer’s waggon,

but was strong and well constructed. He bought eighteen good strong oxen, fourteen only being the usual number for drawing a waggon. He bought tea, coffee, flour, salt, gunpowder, and lead. Small shot for shooting birds, a couple of spades, two saws, a pickaxe, half-a-dozen large knives, a dozen bottles of French brandy, three large waterproof sheets, and then set to work to look out for guns and horses.

Fortunately, two officers, who were sportsmen, were going home to England very shortly, and were possessed of two guns, each made by the best English makers. Two of these guns were double-barrelled ten to the pound smooth-bores, and two were twelve to the pound. These guns, with their cases, and all the other necessaries, John purchased at little more than half their original cost. He also purchased a case of double-barrelled pistols, one of which he could carry in his belt, and at close quarters this was a useful weapon. From the same officers he purchased two thoroughly trained shooting ponies. Hearing that there was a settler who possessed a horse celebrated for its speed and endurance, and who lived near Pietermaritzburg, he visited this man, and after some bargaining purchased the animal at a fair price. Lieutenant Grant possessed two good horses, so with five sound and healthy horses he thought they would be well provided.

For men, John had arranged with three Caffres, who were men he well knew, and who lived near him. He selected these three because they had often been with him in the bush, and he knew them to be brave and cool, consequently he could depend upon them. His former

companion, E Bomvu, also was one of the party, and two Hottentots whom he had known at Natal were engaged as drivers of the waggon and servants.

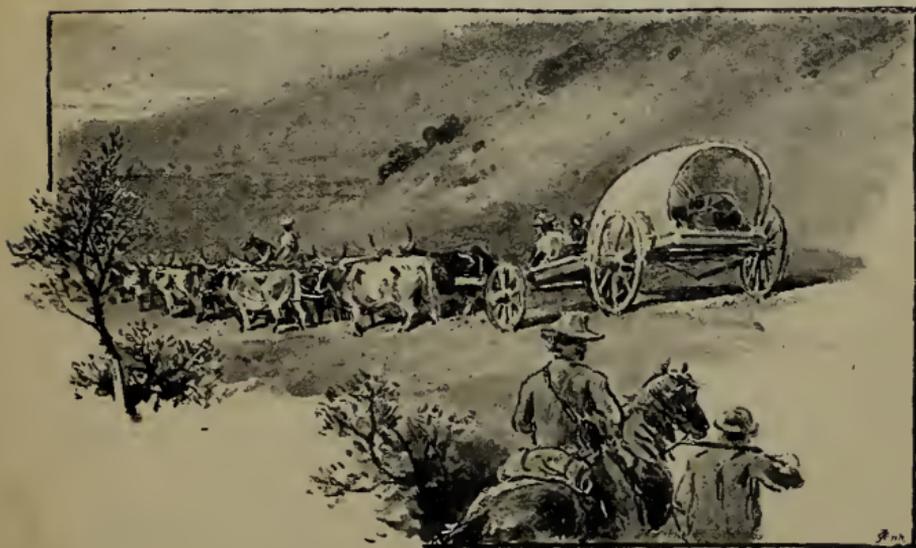
Having made all these arrangements, John wrote to Lieutenant Grant telling him that it would be better if the waggon and party started without delay, and tracked on so as to get away from the town. 'You,' wrote John, 'can ride in one day as far as we can go with the waggon in three, so you can ride after us and overtake us. This will give you three days' more time.'

The course that it was decided to take was to cross the Draakensberg mountains, and from thence to cross the Orange River, or that eastern portion of it termed the Vaal River, and then to proceed in a north-easterly direction, examining the various streams and hills in order to discover, if possible, some indication of gold.

It was one of those lovely mornings which so often occur in this favoured climate, when John and his men started from the town and ascended the hill to the north of it. John rode one of the newly purchased horses, whilst the others were led by the Caffres. The dog Spot had now four companions, with which, however, he did not fraternize, as they were merely curs belonging to the Caffres; but these dogs were likely to be useful in many ways. At night there is nothing so watchful as a dog; his hearing and sense of smell are both acute, and no enemy could sneak up to a camp without these animals, curs as they were, giving the alarm. Then again, animals, especially some of the antelope, such as rietbuck and duikers, would conceal themselves in long grass, and would not move even though the hunter rode within a few yards of them, but

one of these dogs would smell the buck, and cause it to run, and so give the hunter a chance.

During the first two days of the journey nothing of interest occurred. The waggon being tolerably light was easily drawn by the fourteen oxen that were inspanned, the remaining four being fastened to the rear of the waggon. At the first outspan, John put up



JOHN DEAN'S WAGGON.

a mark at a distance of about one hundred paces, and fired a few shots with the new guns in order to find how they were sighted. After two or three shots he knew what these guns would do, and felt tolerably certain that any animal at that distance would be hit, within one or two inches of the spot at which the barrel pointed.

On the third day, the waggon had crossed the drift

of the Umganie river, just above the waterfall ; and John having arranged the locality at which the outspan for the night was to be placed, took one of the Hottentots on a spare horse, and mounting the new purchase which was said to be very fast, rode off to the left of the road in search of game.

He had ridden but a few miles when, as he ascended a slight ridge, he saw about half a mile in front of him a solitary bull eland grazing on the plain. This animal was of great size, and had a splendid pair of horns. Reining back his horse so as to be out of sight, he told Jacob, the Hottentot, what he had seen, and that he was desirous of driving the eland towards the locality he had selected for the outspan.

The eland is an antelope as large as the largest ox, some specimens attaining to a height of over seventeen hands,—that is, taller than the tallest horse. It can trot at a rate of about fifteen miles an hour, and has great endurance. If, however, it can be made to gallop it soon tires, and can, when blown, be driven in any direction ; few horses, however, are fast enough to make an eland gallop, except on the plains. If the country be hilly, the eland goes down the hills like a cannon ball, and then goes up the next hill obliquely. In such a country a horseman can rarely keep pace with one of these antelope.

John was anxious to find out what his new horse could do with one of these creatures, and he soon had an opportunity of trying. Having directed the Hottentot to ride on some three hundred paces and then to approach the eland, he remained concealed, only peeping over the ridge of the hill so as to see the

game. The eland, on perceiving the Hottentot, at once started at a trot towards John, who then showed himself in front of it. The eland at once turned and trotted off in the direction that John wished it to travel. He allowed it to get a good start, and then lifting his horse into a gallop pursued it.

He soon found that the report he had received of his new purchase was correct. Without any apparent exertion the horse bounded onwards, evidently delighting in the chase. Feeling as though carried by an animal with steel springs, John shook his reins, and in an instant his horse, putting back its ears, laid itself out for a real gallop, and, after a few minutes, was within thirty yards of the eland, whose trot instantly was turned into a gallop.

John was now obliged to use his reins, or he would have passed the eland; but wishing to drive it in the direction of his intended outspan, he kept a short distance behind it. The ease with which his horse kept up with the eland convinced John that he possessed an animal with rare speed; and if its endurance was equally as good, he believed that the horse was a treasure. The Hottentot was following John, but the horse he rode could not keep pace with its companion, though the Hottentot was the lighter weight of the two.

It required fully two miles to be traversed at this racing speed before the eland showed signs of distress. Its coat, which at first was of a light fawn colour, had now assumed a bluish tint, in consequence of the animal becoming heated from its great exertion. A long streak of foam from its mouth blew on either side as the

animal turned its head from side to side to have a good look at its pursuer.

During the whole of this chase John had not attempted to fire. To make a good shot is almost impossible when going at full gallop, unless the object be very much above you. He knew that he could pass the eland at any time, and then by dismounting he could obtain a steady shot.

At some distance in advance, John could now see the beaten track over which his waggon would pass later on in the day. So, signalling to the Hottentot to ride to the right, John diverged to the left, and pushed on so as to get in advance of the eland. Pulling up and dismounting, he waited till the eland was broadside to him ; then taking a long breath, he aimed behind the animal's shoulder, allowing about a yard's distance for the speed at which the eland was travelling. This distance he found was too much, for instead of his bullet striking behind the shoulder, it struck the shoulder itself, and the eland, instead of dropping dead, moved onwards on three legs. The second bullet, however, was better placed, and the magnificent antelope fell dead in its track.

John stood for some time admiring his prize ; its horns were fully three feet long, with nearly two twists in them, and very solid near the base. The Hottentot suggested that the skin should be at once taken off, and, drawing his long knife from his belt, at once set to work to take off the skin.

Both horses were knee-haltered, and John observed that his horse seemed as fresh as when he first mounted him in the morning.

‘Barnie hartloop,’ said the Hottentot, referring to the horse (that is, very fast); so John at once decided to name the horse Hartloop.

Sitting down quietly whilst the Hottentot cleaned and skinned the eland, John soon saw the vultures coming apparently from the distant sky, and circling high over head. They had seen from afar that food would be theirs, and they were preparing for the feast. Other eyes, however, saw these birds, and the Caffres who were with the waggon having observed the vultures, ran on in advance, suspecting that the Inkosi (chief) had killed some large animal.

Shortly after midday the waggon reached the point in the road nearest to which the eland lay. E Bomvu and the Caffres had come on, and all the men were busy cutting the animal up, so that the waggon was soon filled with venison, there being enough meat to last the party for several days. The dogs also had a grand feast, so that very little was left for the vultures.

The outspan that night was close to a small stream that ran into the Mooi river, and soon after dark Lieutenant Grant joined the party. He rode a strong well-bred horse, and stated that he had started from Pietermaritzburg soon after daybreak, and had tracked hard all day, so that he believed he had ridden little short of fifty miles.

Hyenas and jackals serenaded the camp that night, and the dogs, by barks and fierce growls, responded to those animals. In spite of these noises, however, the travellers managed to sleep.

Soon after daybreak the oxen were inspanned, and the journey continued, and the waggon reached the

drift of the Bushman's river, near which were the houses of four or five Boers. Outspanning here, John and Lieutenant Grant were visited by the Dutchmen, who were anxious to learn all details about them, where they were travelling, what were their names, what they were going to do, etc. Hunting and shooting was the reply given, not a word being said about gold or diamonds.

One of these Boers was very much attracted by the horse Hartloop, and wanted to buy it; but John declined to sell, stating that he wanted a fast horse to enable him to overtake the fastest game in the country. 'Then,' replied the Boer, 'if that is your wish, I have the fastest horse in the country, and will sell him to you.'

'I don't think you have one faster than mine,' replied John.

'Yes, I have,' said the Boer; 'my horse has never been beaten, he can go like a hartebeest.'

'My horse, I believe, is faster than anything in the country,' replied John.

'Well,' continued the Boer, 'I tell you what we will do. We will race. If your horse beats mine, I will give you my horse. If mine beats yours, you give me your horse.'

John hesitated during a few seconds, because he had not seen the Boer's horse, and it might be something quite exceptional; but as he had never been on the back of any horse which possessed the speed of Hartloop, he accepted the challenge.

It was arranged that the race should take place by starting from the outspan, galloping out about two

miles round some bushes in the distance, and then back to the outspan.

The Boer immediately called his son, a youth about seventeen, but equally as heavy as John, and told him to saddle *Wildebeest*. This was done, and the Boer's horse appeared. It was a tall, lean, long-legged horse, evidently possessing great speed, and seemed in excellent condition. All the Boers in the vicinity assembled to see the race, and appeared very confident of the result. *Hartloop* was smaller than the Boer's horse, but his perfect form indicated that he had endurance, which it was doubtful if the larger horse possessed in an equal degree.

'Do you know how to ride a race?' inquired Grant of John.

'I fancy I do.'

'That's all right, then; but I only suggest that you don't go too fast at first. Wait till about half a mile from home before you go at speed, only take care you don't let him get too far ahead. That horse, I can see, has great speed, but he cannot stay, and half a mile at full speed is more than he can stand.'

The Boers seemed to think that the race was a foregone conclusion, and smiled at one another as much as to say that they had taken in the young Englishman and his *Roebargie* (red-coated) companion.

Before starting for the race, the young Boer went at full gallop for about half a mile to get his horse into good wind, and then came back to the spot from which he was to start.

At the words, 'Ready, go!' the two started, the young Boer commencing to use his *sjambok* (whip),

so that the big horse took the lead, and continued to do so till he rounded the bushes some three lengths in advance of John.

‘He is too fast for the little horse,’ said the Boers; ‘there is no horse in this country can show him his tail.’

‘Wait a bit,’ said Grant, who saw that John had been using his reins more than his whip; ‘we shall see.’

About three-quarters of a mile from the waggon the young Boer was seen using his whip, whilst John, with hands down, was riding quietly.

‘Your horse is beaten,’ said Grant to the Boer.

‘No,’ replied the owner of the horse; ‘that cannot be.’

As the horses approached, the young Boer was seen to be frantically using his whip, whilst John never raised his hand, and in a few seconds the horses rushed past the waggon, John’s horse fully three lengths in front.

The Boers ran up to John’s horse and looked at it in astonishment. The animal appeared by no means distressed, and had not been touched by either whip or spur, whereas the Boer’s horse had received a free use of both.

‘He is a mooi horse, a pretty horse,’ said the Boers, ‘and he goes like the wind; we will buy him.’

‘No, thank you,’ said John, ‘I want him to ride up to camelopards. I don’t think there is a horse in the country can come near him.’

‘Well, we have lost,’ said the owner of the other horse, ‘and there he is for you; he is good, and we believed we could beat you.’

‘The horse is mine,’ said John, ‘is he not, and I can do what I like with him?’

‘Yes.’

‘Then,’ said John, ‘I give him to your son, who rode him well.’

‘What?’ said the Boer, ‘you won’t keep him?’

‘No,’ replied John, ‘we have enough, and if young Jan will accept him he is his.’

The Boers looked at one another in surprise; they were hard at a bargain, and to them it was a surprise that such liberality should be shown by any one, especially by an Englishman, because the English with whom they were best acquainted were traders, who were not disposed to be very liberal.

One of these Boers, named Kemp, was a celebrated hunter, and had been far up the country to shoot large game. He knew the country well that is now called the Transvaal, and gave John and Grant some very useful information about the journey, the climate, the game, and the natives that would be found there. This Boer either did not know, or, if he knew, would not say anything about gold being found in that country, and Lieutenant Grant was too cautious to put the question direct.

From the accounts given by Kemp, it appeared that game was very plentiful in that distant country, especially such large game as elephants, buffaloes, and rhinoceros. Smaller game, such as bontebok, rietbuck, ouribi, etc., were not so plentiful; but elands could almost always be found, and, as the flesh of the eland was better for food than that of any other animal, there was no fear of running short of provisions.

The oxen, having had a good rest and a plentiful feed during the race, and the talking which followed, were inspanned, the Boers were shaken hands with, the long waggon whip was whirled like a salmon rod, and crack sounded the lash like a pistol-shot. 'Trek!' was shouted by the Hottentot driver, and the vehicle moved forward over the scarcely perceptible track, which had to be followed, in order to reach the pass in the mountains, through which it was intended to travel.





## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### SEARCHING FOR GOLD.



THREE weeks had elapsed since the victory of Hartloop over the Boer's horse, during which John and Grant had journeyed onwards. They had crossed the Draakensberg mountains by Bezudenhuit's pass, and had reached the country beyond, and had also crossed the Vaal river. Such scenes as those through which these travellers passed cannot now be viewed in that country. Man the destroyer has acted his part, and plains on which thousands of springbok, blesbok, and bontebok formerly roamed are now almost deserted by wild animals.

Had these two explorers possessed the same ideas of sport that are possessed by certain types of Englishmen, they might have slaughtered hundreds of these antelopes, and then have boasted of the grand sport they had enjoyed. Having, however, killed some four or five animals, whose horns they retained as specimens, and whose flesh was required at the camp, they ceased firing, and allowed these animals to effect a safe retreat.

It was a grand sight for a man to see who had previously been accustomed only to civilized countries, viz. vast undulating plains covered with every variety of the antelope tribe. As John and Lieutenant Grant stood near the ridge of a hill in advance of their waggon, they saw near to them a herd of some thousands of springbok; further on were a troop of zebras, among which were several ostriches; away to the left were a large herd of wildebeest; on the right some fifty or more elands. In the far distance were a countless herd of bontebok.

All these animals were grazing peacefully, unaware that their enemy, man, was in their neighbourhood. There were other enemies, however, near, from which they were not free. As the sun set, and night spread her mantle over the scene, the deep, sighing sort of roar that the lion utters was heard at the outspan. The horses snorted with terror on hearing this, the dogs gave low, half-frightened growls, and the Hottentots and Caffres muttered to each other, and threw more fuel on the fire.

The morning's light would reveal some of the proceedings of the previous night, for as the travellers advanced the half-eaten carcasses of two or three antelope would be found, whilst the footprints seen by the keen eyes of the Caffres, indicated that the lord of the desert had taken his prey during the night, and was probably concealed in the bushes, or long grass, not far from his dinner, or supper of the previous evening.

Although the two white travellers were bent upon two special objects, viz., to discover gold or diamonds,

yet they were not neglectful of such sport as was to be obtained in this untrodden country. To slay animals was absolutely necessary in order to supply themselves, their followers, and dogs with food. When any animal very suitable for food, such as the young eland, was shot, the flesh was converted into biltong, because in that condition it would keep during several weeks ; and as the game is given to migrating in order to procure suitable pasture, they could never be sure that they might not have to travel several days, in a country quite destitute of animals. They therefore always took care to have at least a week's supply of meat in their waggon.

Lieutenant Grant instructed John about various matters on which the latter was quite ignorant. He taught him how to measure an altitude of the sun at mid-day by means of a reflecting fluid, such as oil, and how from this and the aid of a nautical almanac, to obtain his latitude, and so to find out how far they were from the equator. He also showed him how to find his height above the sea-level by aid of a small barometer. The course they followed was indicated by a compass, and the rate at which they travelled and the number of hours they journeyed were registered, so a map of their course was made each day, and the rivers and mountains were marked on this.

The country in which John was now outspanned was very little known. The journey was made before Livingstone had given up missionary work and taken to exploring, or Stanley had gone in search of Livingstone. A few enterprising Boers had made trips into this country for the purpose of obtaining

ivory, but otherwise the district was unknown to travellers.

That man was not a frequent visitor in this locality was manifested by the tameness of the animals. Instead of starting off at full speed immediately a man was seen, the animals would stand and gaze in astonishment when a horseman approached them, and when too late would slowly move off. Thus to shoot such



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animals as elands, koodoo, and waterbuck was not difficult, and the camp consequently was well supplied with venison, while several splendid pairs of horns were placed in the waggon, and eventually decorated the hall of Lieutenant Grant's house in England.

This country was well watered at this season, several small streams running from the various hills, and following a north-easterly direction, eventually joining

to form, so Lieutenant Grant thought, the Oliphant or Elephant river. The beds and banks of these streams were carefully examined by Grant, and on one or two occasions he found large pieces of quartz rock ; but upon breaking these, and using his large magnifying glass, he could find no gold in it. Still he believed there might be gold, only in such minute quantities as not to be seen, even by aid of his glass.





## CHAPTER XXXV.

### GOLD IN ABUNDANCE.



NE morning very early, just as the sun was rising, Lieutenant Grant, taking his gun, told John that he was going to take a stroll and see if he could get a shot at something. John remained at the outspan, and superintended the making of biltong from the flesh of a koodoo which had been killed on the previous day.

The sun rose and had attained a considerable altitude, but no sound of a shot had been heard, and John began to wonder what had become of his companion, when he saw him returning to the outspan, though he carried neither a buck nor a bird.

‘No luck?’ inquired John.

‘Did not see either fur or feathers,’ replied Grant. ‘I merely examined the country.’

‘Did you find anything interesting?’

‘Yes,’ replied Grant; ‘I did. I may say, “Eureka!”’

‘What have you found?’

‘Come inside the waggon and I will show you.’

Grant having secured a position in the waggon from

which he could not be seen by any of his attendants, extracted from his coat pocket a large white stone, on one side of which was a lump of yellow as large as a hen's egg.

'That,' said Grant, 'is pure gold; it must weigh some twenty or twenty-five ounces, and is worth about seventy pounds. I found it in a stream, and where that was many other similar nuggets may be found. We have settled the question about gold being in South Africa.'

John examined the nugget carefully, scratched it with his knife, and gave it as his opinion that it was gold and no mistake.

'Now,' said Grant, 'we must keep this secret; if it become known, there will be a rush to this country. The first thing that will happen will be, that the place will be spoilt for sport, all the game will be driven away, and men will be fighting for the gold. We have a monopoly at present, and we ought to make a good thing out of it. We can break up the quartz with our hammer and pick out the gold, but we must not let the Hottentots know anything about it. After breakfast, you and I will go out with our haversacks, and pretend we are going out shooting, and leave the men to take charge of the camp.'

This nugget having been concealed in the waggon, the two white men left the outspan, and Grant followed his footsteps of the morning, and soon came to a stream which flowed from a neighbouring kloof. Proceeding up this, he showed John where he had found the large nugget. The two walked slowly up this stream, and soon found several pieces of quartz, which

they smashed with their hammer, and extracted pieces of gold—some little larger than a pea, whilst others were as big as a sparrow's egg.

'I think,' said Grant, 'the farther we go up the better bits we shall find, because these lumps of quartz have evidently been carried down by the action of water, and the heavy pieces could not be so easily brought down as could the lighter pieces.'

This belief they found to be true, as the farther they advanced up the stream the larger were the lumps of quartz. In some of these lumps no gold could be found, but in others there were several small pieces, though not one was as large as that picked up by Grant in the morning.

Several hours were occupied in this search, and the two explorers at length decided to return to camp. The proceeds of their morning's work they estimated was from ten to fifteen ounces of gold.

Day after day the same proceedings were adopted, the Hottentots and Caffres wondering why the white men did not go in search of elephants, two or three herds of which it was known were not far off.

One afternoon, having found a fresh stream leading in the same direction as the one they had formerly examined, they searched this, and were soon rewarded by coming on a lump of almost pure gold. This lump they found was as large as a common brick, and must have weighed more than thirty pounds. Such a prize caused John to dance about with excitement.

'Grant,' he exclaimed, 'we have come upon a regular Ophir! We shall become very rich men

‘I tell you what it is, John,’ replied Grant. ‘We are told that Solomon sent his ships down the Red Sea to obtain gold from Ophir. Now, if you hear a Caffre speak of the coast east of this, he calls it O-fa-la, and in the maps it is put down as Sofala. Perhaps it is about here that his people came to get gold. We have undoubtedly come on to some very rich gold mine, and are probably the first men who have made this discovery. But these lumps of gold and quartz must have been washed out of some rock higher up in the hills, so we must follow this stream up to the high ground, and endeavour to find the seam of gold quartz which must exist, for these pieces to be lying in the streams as they do.’

A walk of about two miles up the stream brought Grant and John to an almost perpendicular rock at the foot of a steep hill. The stream ran alongside of this rock, and was but a small stream; there were signs, however, which showed that after heavy rains this water rushed past this rock as a torrent. Some twenty feet up there were dead branches of trees that were held fast by projecting pieces of rock, thus showing that these branches once floated in water, and indicating that the rush of water must have been very great.

On examining this perpendicular rock, Grant found a seam of quartz running nearly parallel to the surface of the ground. To examine this seam closely it was necessary to climb up the rock, which was a work of some difficulty, but Grant managed to reach the required position, and then announced to John that the seam was rich with gold.

Using his hammer, Grant knocked down several

pieces of quartz, which fell into the stream below and were speedily examined by John, who found in these many pieces of gold, some not much larger than a pin's head but others as big as a pea. Whilst searching for the pieces of quartz that fell into the stream, John observed that the bed of the little river was sprinkled with lumps of quartz, in many of which he could see pieces of gold. He therefore told Grant that it was waste time knocking down the rock, as there was plenty already in the river.

The two men now occupied themselves in picking out the pieces of quartz from among the stones in the bed of the stream, and placing these on a flat piece of rock near the bank. Having collected a large quantity, Grant then broke these with his hammer, and the two then filled their haversacks with those pieces which contained the most gold. They had now each a heavy load and started for their waggon, but decided to shoot something, so as to prevent their followers from wondering why they went out day after day, and returned apparently with nothing.

Fortunately Lieutenant Grant's proceedings in taking altitudes of the sun and making a map, caused the Caffres to look upon him as a medicine-man who found out secret things, so they were not very curious to know why the white men did not always go out to shoot animals.

Some guinea-fowl having been found, two or three brace of these were shot, and John and Grant returned to the waggons with some evidence of having been out for sport.

Day after day quantities of gold were collected and

placed in the waggon, and Grant estimated that they had procured somewhere about two thousand ounces. This gold could not be entirely separated from the quartz, so there was some five or six hundred pounds' weight in the waggon. E Bomvu soon discovered this, and asked John why the officer collected these stones.

John told him that the officer was employed by the great chiefs to collect specimens of the land in which he travelled, so he had picked up stones to show them.

Fortunately neither the Hottentots nor the Caffres possessed enough curiosity to inquire very deeply into the matter, otherwise the fact that large quantities of gold existed in that country would not have remained a secret during so many years.

It was now agreed between Grant and John that they should turn their attention to sport, and should search for elephants. Their horses were in good condition, and they had plenty of ammunition. They inspanned their oxen and journeyed north, where the country was park-like in appearance, and where the spoor of the elephants seemed to lead. They were not long before they came on fresh spoor, and they were soon following the tracks of seven large bull-elephants.

'John,' said Grant, 'what would some Englishmen give to be with us? We are skimming the cream of this country; we find gold paving the beds of the streams, and we can enjoy sport compared to which the sport in England is mere child's play.

'A man who has enjoyed salmon-fishing would not find much pleasure or excitement in catching minnows,

and we who can encounter the giant elephant, the tough rhinoceros, or the savage buffalo would not feel very excited when we went out pheasant or partridge shooting in England. By-and-by this country is sure to be thickly inhabited, but the people will drive the game out of the country. There will be crowds fighting for the gold, and the solitary grandeur of the place will have disappeared. We are lucky to have lived at this time; the future would have been too late. But, see, is not that an elephant yonder under that tree? Yes, it is; and six others with him. Pull up, and let us observe them.'

The elephant which Grant had observed was an enormous bull. It was standing in the shade of a mimosa tree, lazily flapping its huge ears and swinging its trunk about to drive off the flies. It was about five hundred yards distant, and quite unconscious of the proximity of its most deadly enemy. Near it, and under the shade of other trees, were six other elephants, all with large tusks, but none were as gigantic as was the elephant first seen, though the white tusks of all were seen protruding far out of their mouths.

E Bomvu was riding behind Grant and John, and he became very excited when he saw these elephants. '*Inglovu umculu, yena Inkosi, wow beka impondo,*' he exclaimed ('Big elephant; he is the chief; see his tusks').

'Now for a plan of attack,' said John. 'We must bag that elephant, and it seems to me we are pretty sure to do it. Shall we try on foot or on horseback? I think, as there are seven, we had better stick to our horses, though I am not certain whether Hartloop will be

steady when near elephants. Perhaps we had better try a stalk, keeping our horses near us, then if the herd show fight we can remount and ride away.'

'That is a good plan,' said Grant; 'but where must we put our bullets?'

'Behind the shoulder,' said John, 'if we fire at a distance. Between the eye and the ear, if we are close and get a broadside shot; and if the brute comes straight at us, then give it him in the centre of the chest.'

This conversation was carried on in whispers, and partly under cover of some bushes, the wind fortunately blowing from the elephants, so that there was no fear of these animals scenting the hunters. The elephant does not possess very keen sight, though his powers of scent and hearing are very acute.

Taking advantage of every tree and bush, the three horsemen rode to within about one hundred and fifty paces of the large elephant. John and Grant then dismounted, gave the reins of their horses to E Bomvu, and stalked towards their prey, until within about fifty yards.

'I can put a bullet within six inches of where I aim now,' whispered John.

'All right,' replied Grant; 'I will try to do the same. Are you ready?'

'Yes.'

'Then fire.'

Two heavy reports followed instantly the last words, and the sound of the bullets striking the elephant was immediately audible. The next instant John's gun was again discharged, and another hit was made.

The elephant, on receiving these three bullets, instead

of falling dead as any inexperienced hunter would have expected, quickly turned, and raising his trunk uttered a terrific scream, and charged at where he had seen the smoke of the guns.

The two hunters ran towards their horses, which were held by E Bomvu ; but the loud screams of the elephant had frightened these animals, and they were snorting and plunging, endeavouring to get free. E Bomvu, although a good rider, and strong in the arms, had more than he could manage. He held his gun, and in one hand held the reins of one horse firmly, but the other hand holding his gun had not a firm hold of the other horse's reins, and the sound of footsteps running caused both horses to dash forward, and in an instant they were racing off with no chance of being overtaken by their would-be riders.

Although John and Grant were good runners, they stood no chance with an elephant, and had they run in a straight line would soon have been overtaken, and crushed by their pursuer. E Bomvu was not the man to lose his presence of mind at a critical time like the present, and though he could not hold the horses, he determined to do his best to help his masters. Shouting to them to turn round a thick bush, and so to avoid running in a straight line, he rode as near the elephant as he dared, and gave a Zulu yell of defiance ; then turning his horse he rode away, closely followed by the elephant, which was striding after him not thirty yards behind.

Suddenly turning his horse, E Bomvu rode towards John, and, pulling up, handed him the loaded gun which he had carried.

'I go on, elephant follow me, then you shoot,' said E Bomvu.

Neither John nor Grant had been able to reload their guns. It required some time to load the old muzzle-loading guns, and the noise of ramming down the charges would have attracted the elephant's attention; therefore, to receive a gun already loaded caused John to feel doubly a man again.

The elephant, instead of continuing its pursuit of E Bomvu, walked quickly off towards some thick bush that could be seen, distant about a mile.

'I make him come after me,' said E Bomvu; 'you look out.'

Starting at a canter, he rode to the elephant's left, and then circled round and rode across the elephant's track, and not more than fifty yards from him. When nearest the elephant he yelled at it, and abused it in Zulu. Enraged by its wounds, and its failure to catch its foes, the monster, uttering a loud trumpeting noise, immediately chased E Bomvu, who now rode near where John and Grant were concealed, and passed within forty yards of them.

There is a small place in the head of the African elephant, between the eye and the ear, that if a bullet enters causes instant death. If, however, this spot is not hit the bullet does not produce much harm, as it merely lodges in a mass of bone. It is a shot worth trying only when the hunter is a dead shot; for if the fatal place be missed, the elephant becomes mad with rage, and is consequently more dangerous than ever.

John was one of those men who do not show all their powers until they are placed in critical positions. Some

men seem as though they could accomplish wonderful things, but when the conditions are trying, they break down and fail. Such men are not to be relied on in dangerous cases.

John was well aware that if he fired at the elephant's head, and failed to hit the vital spot, he would probably be charged and caught by the elephant. He, however, determined to try the shot, and as the enraged animal rushed past him in pursuit of E Bomvu, he took aim and discharged his gun, with the result of seeing the elephant pitch forward and fall to the ground.

'Well done!' called out Grant, who was slightly behind him; 'that was a shot to be proud of.'

E Bomvu pulled up his horse, and coming back to near where the elephant had fallen, called out, 'Yena gofile' ('he is dead').

'Where have the horses gone?' inquired John.

'Not so far,' replied E Bomvu. 'You mount this horse. I will run, and we will soon catch them. The other inkosi had better remain near the elephant.'

This plan having been arranged, the two runaway horses, which were trying to graze, although their bits interfered with their feeding, were easily recaptured and brought back to the dead elephant, when the three men, having reloaded their guns, at once started in pursuit of those elephants which had moved rapidly away on hearing the first shot.

After about half-an-hour's hard riding the remaining elephants were seen grouped together under the shade of some large trees. The ground was suitable for stalking, and John and Lieutenant Grant crept to within fifty yards of them, and selecting the elephant with the

largest tusks, they fired at this animal, selecting behind the shoulder as the spot at which they should aim. The discharge of their guns was followed by the dropping of the elephant, which had evidently been hit in a vital spot. The remaining elephants immediately shuffled off, without making any noise other than that caused by the smashing of the branches which obstructed their progress.

Further pursuit on that day was not considered advisable, as the waggon was at a considerable distance, and it was desirable to cut out the tusks of the two elephants as quickly as possible. This work was accomplished by John and E Bomvu, whilst Grant rode back to the waggon, and acted as guide to bring it to the first of the two elephants that had been shot.

Elephant's flesh is by no means a dainty dish, but is certainly coarse food ; yet the Caffres and Hottentots set to work to gorge themselves with this meat as though it were the most choice venison in the world, and to attempt to get any work out of these men as long as meat abounded was utterly useless. The two white men therefore left their men to feast, whilst they rode about the country exploring, and occasionally shooting a small antelope or a bustard, the flesh of which they preferred to that of elephant.

'John,' said Lieutenant Grant, as they were riding over some beautiful undulating and park-like scenery, 'before I leave this country I should like to shoot a lion, and to ride down a camelopard. We have killed two elephants, we have found gold, we must try to find some diamonds, though I fear there is not much

chance of our doing so ; but if we can come across camelopards and a lion, I shall have something to think of for the remainder of my life.'

'I don't see why we should not,' said John. 'Up by the Limpopo river, camelopards are usually found, and where game is plentiful there is no fear of not finding lions—too many sometimes. We will track north, and look out for camelopards' spoor.'





## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### AMONG THE LARGE GAME.

**F**IVE days had elapsed since the conversation related in the last chapter, when Grant and John, attended by E Bomvu, were riding early one morning, and following the fresh tracks of a troop of camelopards.

The waggon had been drawn by the remaining fourteen oxen (four having died) during these five days in a northerly direction. The footprints of camelopards were numerous, but it was not until this morning that very fresh spoor was discovered.

It was evident from the trail that these animals had passed over the ground only a short time previous, and they were travelling leisurely, feeding as they walked.

E Bomvu, who was a skilful tracker, was riding slowly, and following the trail like a bloodhound. Every now and then a halt was called to examine the surrounding country, because, large as is the camelopard, it is yet easily overlooked amidst the dead trees and thick foliage that exist in this country.

Suddenly reining in his horse, E Bomvu, without

turning his head, half raised his arm, and pointed to a clump of bushes and trees, distant about a quarter of a mile. Grant at first saw nothing, but John perceived some of the topmost branches of the trees shaking in a manner that could not be caused by the wind. A more careful examination showed him the heads and long ears of three camelopards, which were feeding on the delicate branches of the trees.

The horsemen sat motionless for nearly five minutes watching the movements of these extraordinary animals, which, quite unconscious of the vicinity of their enemy, man, moved about with the greatest dignity. Just as the three men had decided to ride as near as possible to the camelopards before alarming them, they observed two animals moving rapidly through the grass and approaching the long-necked giants. Waiting to see what was taking place, they observed a lion and lioness so intent in stalking their prey that they had failed to see the horsemen in their vicinity.

Just as a cat approaches a mouse, so did the lion approach one of the camelopards, which, although a large and powerful animal, is yet quite unable to defend itself against such a foe as a lion.

A South African poet has written a poem, in which he describes how a lion sprung on the back of a camelopard which was drinking, and was carried several miles over the plains until the long-necked animal sank to the ground exhausted by its loss of blood. Such a description is a poetic licence, and does not occur.

In the present instance, the lion sprang on to the camelopard, and in an instant struck it to the earth.

There was scarcely a struggle, so soon was the affair finished. The remaining camelopards bounded off, and John at once followed them ; but Grant waited a few seconds, and sent two bullets into the lion which was holding on to the camelopard's throat. He then started after John, and, having learned to load his gun



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whilst riding at full gallop, did not lose any very large amount of distance in consequence of his delay.

There are few men who could ride close to a herd of giant camelopards in the wild, untrodden, and beautiful country which these creatures inhabit, without experiencing the greatest excitement. Camelopards

are not very numerous in any country, and are shy and watchful in the extreme. Their quaint forms and great speed, their curious movements and strange shape, make them appear almost like denizens of another planet; and though they seemed to move without any apparent exertion, yet John found that he had to make his horse travel at its best speed before he was able to ride alongside of them. Then, jumping off his horse, he placed two bullets behind the shoulder of the largest bull, whose rich-coloured chestnut hide showed him to be the patriarch of the herd, and in an instant the towering head was laid low, and the grandest animal of the wilderness was vanquished.

Grant, who was a few hundred yards behind John, now came on at full gallop, closely followed by E Bomvu. John pointed to the direction in which the remainder of the herd had travelled, and shouted, 'On! on! You can ride them down and kill one by yourself.'

John then took the saddle off Hartloop, knee-haltered him, and sat down to contemplate the magnificent prize he had obtained. From measurements which he made with his ramrod, he found that this camelopard must have measured about twenty-two feet from the hoof to the top of its head, and it seemed strange that so small a thing as a bullet should have caused so large an animal almost instant death.

The bullets, however, were well placed, for it is quite within the experience of hunters, that some half-dozen or more bullets may have been fired into the body of a camelopard, and yet the animal travels on as though none the worse for such treatment.

There are only a few parts of a large animal's body where a bullet will produce instant death, and men who are bad shots will cause much unnecessary suffering to an animal by merely wounding it, when the wound will eventually produce death after three or four days.

Many years ago an elephant that was kept in London was supposed to have gone mad, and a detachment of soldiers was employed to shoot it. The men of this detachment fired more than one hundred shots, each of which struck the animal, but did not produce death till several hours afterwards.

To kill so large an animal as a camelopard with only two bullets indicated that the sportsman knew his business and possessed a good gun, and John studied carefully the spot where his bullets had entered the body of the animal, so that on any future occasion when fortunate to come within range of one of these giants, he should be able to make an equally successful shot.

Whilst John was examining his prize he heard from the far distance two shots, then another; and as he believed no man with a gun except Grant and E Bomvu were in the vicinity, he concluded that they had managed to ride within shot of a camelopard. Ascending a small hill, he looked in the direction from which the sound of the guns had come, and saw the two horses of his companions grazing quietly on some open ground.

On returning to the dead camelopard he saw his three Caffres and one of the Hottentots approaching. These men having heard the reports of the guns,

had followed the horses' trail, and had found the first camelopard that had been killed by the lion, and also the lion dead near it; they had then hurried on, and came to the second camelopard. One of the Caffres was sent back to bring on the waggon, whilst the other men at once set to work to skin the great bull which John had shot.

A great feast now took place. Camelopard's flesh is excellent eating, and the marrow bones are a dainty. Biltong in large quantities was made during the next day, and as Grant had succeeded in killing a camelopard, there was sufficient meat to fill the waggon.

Lieutenant Grant was delighted he had killed a lion, and had ridden alongside a camelopard and succeeded in killing it. Two such events in one day was what few sportsmen have had the good fortune to experience, and he announced that such success exceeded his most sanguine expectations.

During the night the camp was serenaded by the shrieks of hyenas, the long mournful howl of the strand wolf, the occasional deep roar of a lion, and the hysterical screams of numerous jackal, all these carnivora being attracted to the neighbourhood by the smell of the flesh.

There was but little sleep for the men during that night, for when the various wild animals came near the waggon the dogs barked and growled, and so kept the bipeds awake; but there was rest in even lying down, and refreshment in breathing the pure air of this wild country.

The waggon was now nearly full, and was also heavy,

for though there was not very much in bulk, yet the quartz and gold and the elephants' tusks weighed a great many pounds. It was therefore decided to commence the return journey, and to travel along the banks of the Vaal River and reach Colesburg, and then either to enter the old Colony of the Cape, or return through the Draakensberg mountains to Natal.

So far the travellers had been very fortunate. They had enjoyed excellent health. Four oxen only had died, and not a single horse had been sick. They had enjoyed grand sport, and had discovered large quantities of gold.

Ten days' journey through a country swarming with game gave the hunters an opportunity of shooting several antelope possessing very handsome horns, and they at length determined to outspan and rest during a few days before quitting this country so rich in game.

One morning, being desirous of obtaining some fresh venison, E Bomvu was told to go out at daybreak and bring in a buck. This Zulu was now a very good shot, and was very skilful as a tracker and stalker. Grant and John had just finished their breakfast, and were sitting near the waggon talking, when E Bomvu returned, bearing on his shoulders a rietbuck. He said he had seen the horns of this buck in the long grass, and had crept very close, and had then shot it. He had carried it down to the river and had cleaned it, and being very hot had bathed. When he came out of the water and moved the ground with his feet, he had found something which he named 'muti,' or medicine, and showed John a small stone.

It was with great difficulty that John concealed his excitement on receiving this stone; but E Bomvu was occupied with his buck, and did not pay much attention to John, who, when the Zulu had left, showed the stone to Grant.

‘A diamond!’ exclaimed Grant; ‘no doubt of it, and certainly one of eight or ten carats. Where did E Bomvu get this from?’

‘In the mud by the river.’

‘We are certainly in luck, but must be as cautious as a leopard. Can you trace back E Bomvu’s trail, do you think, and find out where the stone came from?’

‘Yes,’ replied John; ‘I can do that, so we will take our guns and say we are going after guinea-fowl or a pouw, and tell the “boys” to remain at the waggon.’

In a few minutes the two white men were following E Bomvu’s footmarks, and soon came to the river and saw where the soil had been disturbed. They glanced round to see if any one was observing them, and then commenced turning over the soil and searching for these precious stones. They had not laboured long before they were rewarded by finding another diamond, not so large as that which E Bomvu had picked up, but yet worth several pounds. Continuing their examination, they, in the course of a few hours, had gathered more than a dozen stones varying in size. They had walked up the banks of the river, and wherever they had found likely soil they had searched most diligently.

‘This will pay better than elephant-hunting,’ said Grant. ‘I estimate that our day’s work will be worth

at least £400. If it were known in England that diamonds were here, there would be such a rush of people that the country would soon be crowded, and therefore spoilt. We need not dig, though no doubt beneath the surface diamonds are more plentiful. Keep the matter quiet, and our fortunes are made. What a piece of luck E Bomvu finding that stone !'

Several days were now passed by Grant and John in examining the soil around. Sometimes they searched all day and found nothing ; on other days they would obtain a dozen or more fine stones in a few hours. The work was fascinating and exciting ; there was not only the gain, but also the sport, as it were, of hunting for these diamonds.

Sometimes John would be the more lucky, then it was Grant's turn ; but between them they managed to collect nearly three hundred stones, some large, others little bigger than a pea. The majority of the stones possessed a yellowish tinge, which Grant stated reduced their value ; but there were a dozen or more large stones which were of a pure white, and these, when cut, would be perfect gems.

The Hottentots and Caffres were quite content to lounge about the waggons all day, eating and smoking, and did not trouble about what the white men were doing, so that John and Grant experienced no interruption—a condition which greatly added to the charm of their researches.

'There must be thousands more of these stones about here,' said Grant, 'and the beauty of it is that no geologist has ever dreamed of there being diamonds in

Africa. All depends on our keeping the fact a secret. We will have another turn at this place, but to-morrow we ought to inspan and track back to Natal, as my leave will be up by the time we get back; and if we are delayed by any accident, I may arrive at Natal too late, for we must not leave the waggon, or our gold may be discovered.'





## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### A TRAITOR AT THE CAMP.

**I**N order to carry their diamonds in safety, Grant and John had made two small bags, constructed from the skin of a duiker. These bags they fastened to their belts; and as several thousand pounds' worth of diamonds occupy only a small space, and weigh very little, they did not find these bags at all inconvenient to carry.

During the night these bags were taken off and placed under their pillows, so as to keep them secure. Neither John nor Grant had any suspicion that their attendants were dishonest; but what was even a better security, none of these men had any idea that such a valuable stone as a diamond existed in the country, nor did they even know that a diamond was of any value, except as a curiosity or medicine stone. At the present time matters are very different in South Africa, the Kimberley diamond mines now being well known; and to natives employed to work at them the value of these gems is well known, and the theft of diamonds by the workmen is not an uncommon occurrence.

Grant, in talking to John about diamonds, told him that the value increased enormously with the size, and the purity of the colour or water, as it was termed. A diamond is weighed by what is called carats, a carat being about four grains. Now, a diamond of one carat, and of pure water, is worth about £18; one of two carats is worth about £65; of three carats, £125; of four carats, £220; of five carats, £320; and fancy prices are paid for diamonds of greater weight. 'You see,' continued Grant, 'we could carry fifty thousand pounds' worth of diamonds about us, if they were of large size, and yet not be distressed by their weight.'

'What do you think our largest diamonds weigh?' asked John.

'We have at least a dozen that, I believe, would weigh between fifteen and twenty carats,' replied Grant, 'and they ought to be worth two or three thousand pounds each. We have each of us a fortune in these small bags, and, if we keep the secret, we can again visit the same locality and gather another harvest, provided no one discovers the mines in the meantime.'

It was on the following day, soon after sunrise, that the camp was visited by a solitary man, a half-caste, who spoke Dutch, and who stated that he was driver of a waggon, all the oxen of which had died up the country; that the men of the waggon had all been killed by the 'matebili,' but that he, being away from the waggon, had seen the slaughter of his companions from a distance, and had concealed himself in the bush till he could make his escape. He gave a detailed account of the slaughter, and said he had fed on wild honey and tortoises for several days. He came from the old

Colony, but wished to get to Natal if he could, and hoped the white men would let him go with them. He had no weapons with him except a hunting-knife, and seemed very much fatigued with his long journey from the interior.

Both John and Grant received him hospitably, and immediately gave him some food and tea. He stated that he had crossed the spoor of the waggon on the previous day, and seeing it to be quite fresh, had followed it up, and had walked during the night as long as the moon gave light enough for him to see the track.

There being no reason to doubt the man's story, he was allowed to join the party, and he soon tried to make friends, not only with the Hottentots and Caffres, but also with the dogs, to whom he gave small pieces of meat when he was eating. Spot, however, John's dog, would not be made a friend of, and always growled when this man, who stated his name was Plache, came near him. E Bomvu also did not take to the man, and asked John to tell him what the man said, because E Bomvu could not understand Dutch. When John had repeated to E Bomvu what Plache had said, E Bomvu waited a minute, and then, giving a grunt of dissatisfaction, exclaimed, 'Yena amanga!' (he is a liar).

'What makes you think that?' inquired John.

'I don't know,' replied E Bomvu; 'but I know it. And see your dog, he knows too, and growls at him; he must be watched.'

Although John smiled at these remarks, he told Grant what had been said, but added, 'I don't see what harm he can do us, and it would be hard lines for us

not to let him go with us, the poor beggar might starve if we turned him away.'

'Oh, it's all right, depend on it,' said Grant. 'What object could the man have in coming to tell us a lie, and where could he have come from, unless his tale be true?'

The stranger had remained with the waggons three days, and had done his best to help in every way. He could drive the oxen, and understood everything about inspanning them, and had made himself very useful, so that any suspicions as to the man's honesty and good faith had been lulled as far as the two white men were concerned. E Bomvu, however, did not seem to have altered his opinion, and in reply to John, said, 'Yena shingana, yena coclesa' (he is a rascal, he is a cheat).

'Why?' asked John.

'I know it,' replied E Bomvu; 'I see before, you will only see after.'

John smiled at the prejudices of this son of Nature, for there was nothing to show that the stranger was not an honest, well-meaning man.

On the third night the waggon was outspanned on the slope of a hill about a quarter of a mile from a large stream; a small stream ran close beside the waggon, and supplied the camp with water. In the large stream there was a deep hole containing water as clear as crystal, the banks being of hard rock.

This bath of Nature's construction had attracted the attention of John and Grant, who, just as the sun had risen, walked down to the stream to have a swim. Taking E Bomvu with them to carry their towels and hair brushes, they left the camp with no other clothes

on them than those in which they had slept. On reaching the pool, E Bomvu jumped in and swam for a short time, and then announced that the water was too cold, and that he should like it better when the sun was high up. When E Bomvu came out of the water, and John and Grant were swimming, he said to John, 'I go back to the waggon; I feel something wrong.'

'What does the fellow mean?' said Grant. 'Is he ill?'

'No,' replied John; 'but he is, like many of his people, very superstitious, and fancies every now and then that he feels what will happen. There can be nothing wrong at the waggon, or we should have heard some shouting.'

E Bomvu returned to the waggon with a feeling that something was wrong; why he had this feeling he could not explain. He looked around the outspan, but saw nothing wrong. The oxen were fastened to the waggon, and the horses were knee-haltered and grazing near it; the two Hottentots were sitting smoking, the Caffres were eating biltong, and the dogs were near them. Everything seemed as it should be; but E Bomvu suddenly missed the stranger.

'Where is the new man?' he asked of one of the Caffres.

'He has taken the chief's gun and belts to him for him to shoot the great koodoo.'

'What do you mean?' inquired E Bomvu.

'The strange man came running to the camp, and said the chief had sent him for his gun and belts, as a large koodoo was near and they wished to shoot it.'

'And he took the gun and the belts?' inquired E Bomvu.

‘Yes.’

‘Which way did he go?’

‘Kona empeshaer’ (over the other side), replied the Caffre.

‘You are fools!’ exclaimed E Bomvu. ‘He has stolen these things. Run to the chief and tell him this at once,—cachema’ (run fast).

E Bomvu having seen the Caffre run off to where John and Grant were bathing, seized his assagies, a knob-kerrie, and shield, and ran to the hill over which the stranger had gone. The dew was still on the ground, and following the footprints was easy work. He ascended the hill at a run, passed over its crest, and was lost sight of from the camp.

The Caffre to whom E Bomvu had spoken ran to the pool where the white men were bathing, and told John what had happened. John immediately informed Grant, and the two ran back to the camp, dressed rapidly, whilst two horses were being saddled, and taking their guns and ammunition, mounted their horses and started at once in pursuit.

‘Where is E Bomvu?’ inquired John, as he was riding away.

‘Yena mukili’ (he has gone away), replied the Caffres.

‘Can it be possible,’ said Grant, ‘that the Zulu is in the swim with the thief and knows about the diamonds?’

‘No,’ said John, ‘I can swear by E Bomvu; he is staunch to the back-bone, but I wish we had him here to spoor for us.’ As he made this remark, the dog Spot galloped on in front of them, the hair on his back bristling up, and he looking very fierce.

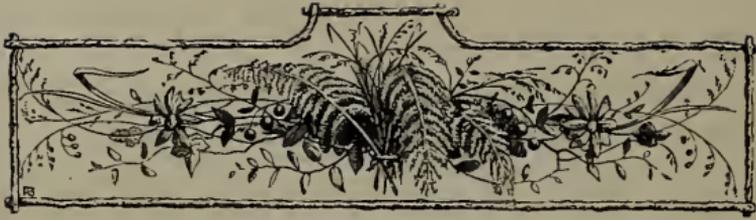
‘Hi on, Spot! fetch him out!’ called John; and the dog, evidently understanding what was wanted from him, put his nose to the ground and started forward at a gallop, a pace which, on the rough and broken ground over which they were riding, was difficult to keep up with.

Spot never seemed in doubt as to the course he was to pursue, but galloped on, looking round occasionally to see if his master was following. The country was sprinkled with thick patches of bush, in any one of which a man might have been concealed; but the dog never hesitated, but galloped on, stopping only now and then to make a cast right or left, and then silently pursuing his way.

The two horsemen conversed as they cantered on, each wondering whether the stranger knew of the diamonds, or whether he believed their belts contained only their money.

‘I fear the rascal has a long start of us,’ said John, ‘and if he once get into that dense bush out yonder, or among the kloofs, we shall never find him; but see, Spot is more eager than ever, so I hope we are not far behind him. See!’ he exclaimed, ‘there is the villain running like a buck,—he will escape us!’





## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### PURSUIT AND DEATH OF THE TRAITOR.

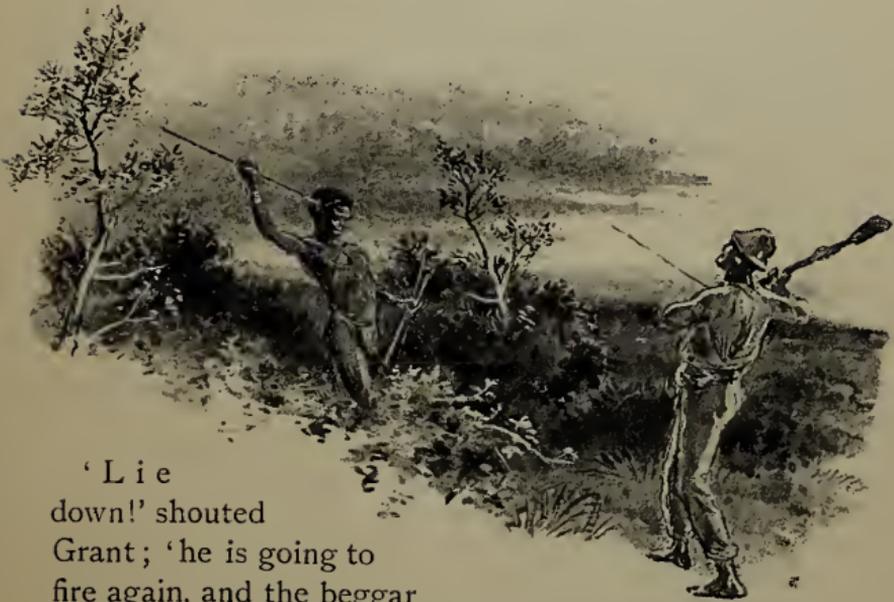


THE country in advance of that over which John and Grant had ridden was densely wooded, and was also broken up into deep and steep ravines, colonially termed kloofs. It was impossible for a horseman to traverse these except at a walk, and many kloofs were so steep that a horse could not either ascend or descend them. An active man on foot, therefore, could easily escape from a horseman, and when armed, as was this thief, he could lay in wait for his pursuers and shoot them before they could see him.

When John caught sight of the thief, the man was within about one hundred paces of some dense bush, whilst his pursuers were fully six hundred paces from him. It was evident the man could not be overtaken before he reached the cover of the bush. So John, pulling up his horse, jumped off, and calling to Spot to stop, dropped on his knee, and taking a steady shot at the thief, fired. The bullet struck the ground close to the man, but failed to hit him. The second barrel was discharged, but with the same want of success—

the range was too far for accurate shooting with a smooth bore.

The thief, evidently enraged by the whistle of the bullets near him, stopped when within a few yards of the dense cover, and, turning, raised his gun,—a puff of smoke was seen, and almost immediately after a bullet whistled close over John's head.



‘Lie down!’ shouted Grant; ‘he is going to fire again, and the beggar can shoot straight.’

E BOMVU AND THE THIEF.

Both white men lay flat on the ground, and the second bullet passed harmlessly over them, but so close that had they been standing upright they might have been hit.

John now took Grant's gun to try two more shots, as there was not time to reload his own; but as he was taking aim at the man, who was now close to the bush, he saw a dark figure suddenly rise from the ground

close to the thief, who stopped, and seizing his gun by the muzzle, stood ready to wield his empty weapon as a club.

Then the arm of the dark figure was raised, and an assagy was hurled at the thief; but before this assagy had struck its mark, another was hurled, and a third was ready to be thrown. The first, however, had struck its mark, as also had the second, and the dark figure sprang forward with a rhinoceros horn knobkerrie, and with one blow smashed the skull of the thief. Then came a shout in a voice that John knew well, '*Yena shieli, yena gofle, Inkosi*' (he is hit, he is killed, chief).

This scene had been in progress whilst John and Grant were galloping down to the combatants, and on coming close they saw E Bomvu quietly pulling his assagies out of the body of the thief, and wiping the blades on the grass.

'There is your gun, chief; there are your medicine belts,' said E Bomvu. 'Did I not tell you he was a rascal?' and, giving the body of the man a kick, he handed the belts to John.

The dog Spot growled around the body of the thief, then sniffed at it, and going to E Bomvu, stood on his hind legs, looking at him and licking his hands.

'The dog know too,' said E Bomvu. 'He very clever; he find out by smell the man a rascal.'

'How did you get here?' inquired John.

'I follow rascal some time, then I think where he was going to. If I show, he shoot me. So I run on faster than him, and get in front, as I had no gun to carry. Then if he go in bush, I follow till he lay down,

then I creep on him ; but the fool fire off his gun, then before he load again I come on him, and he was only like a baby then. He never would have escaped, though ; I follow him day after day, and be sure to bring back the chief's gun and his belts, but he has saved me a journey by being a fool, though a rascal.'

On the body of the man being searched, there was found among various articles, such as a pipe, tobacco, a knife, etc., a portion of a Graham's Town paper, in which there was an account of a murder committed by a half-caste man, who had escaped, and of whom no traces could be found. There was a description of the man, giving his height and general appearance, and mentioning that he had lost a portion of his right ear. On looking at the dead man's right ear, a portion was missing ; and as the man's appearance corresponded accurately with the description given of the murderer, there was no doubt that they were one and the same person. The murderer, however, had had his chance, poor though it was, and had been killed in a fair fight by E Bomvu.

The body of the man was left where it was, there being no implements for digging a grave ; and this rascal, who had first committed a murder, and had then robbed those who had received him with kindness and hospitality, received a fitting grave in the maws of the hyenas and vultures which soon assembled to feast on his remains.

The three men who had taken part in the tragedy returned quickly to camp—E Bomvu every now and then flourishing his assagy, and strutting along as though proud of his performance.

On reaching the camp, the Caffres at once inquired of E Bomvu whether he had caught the thief. E Bomvu, instead of answering the question, commenced abusing these men, calling them various unpleasant names, and telling them that, though men in years, they were mere babies in wisdom ; and that the fact of having helped the thief to steal the gun and belts, made him think they were as bad as the rascal.

‘Some men,’ said E Bomvu, ‘injure their chief because they are rascals, others because they are fools. It comes to the same thing whether they are rascals or fools, as far as the chief is concerned. If you had been rascals, you would have done the same thing that you did, because you were fools. That’s enough talk.’

E Bomvu walked away from the Caffres, and coming to John, said, ‘Better not tell Caffres or Hottentots what has become of the thief ; they may talk too much when they arrive at Natal. I have heard that there some men make a fuss even when a rascal is killed. In three days the hyenas and vultures will leave nothing for other men to see, so we will say nothing. Tell other white chief the same.’

This suggestion was certainly prudent, for although such things as coroners’ inquests were unknown in the desert, yet some unpleasant inquiries might be made by officious people as to why a man had been killed in so very offhand a manner.

The oxen were attached to the waggon, and the party proceeded on their journey—John and Grant taking care never to part again with their belts or bags of diamonds. It did not appear that the thief was aware that the belts contained diamonds, as the bags

had not been opened, nor had any diamonds been abstracted; he probably thought that money was contained in these receptacles, or perhaps only ammunition; and a man in the desert without gun or powder and lead is in a bad way. If the thief had entered Natal with the waggon he would certainly have been shortly identified, in consequence of a part of his ear being deficient, so he evidently from the first joined John's party for the sole purpose of robbery.

One night, when the waggon was outspanned after passing through the Draakensberg mountains, the dogs suddenly rushed away, barking savagely at some intruder that had approached the camp. Thinking it must be a hyena or some jackal, no great notice was taken of this. One of the dogs, however, gave a sharp cry, and came running back to camp, when a small arrow was seen sticking in his side. This arrow was recognised as a poisoned arrow, and it was then known that one or more bushmen must have crept up to the camp in hopes of stealing a horse or killing an ox, for the bushmen will eat the flesh of animals they have killed with a poisoned arrow. Seeing this, John and Grant seized their guns and fired several shots in the direction in which they believed the bushmen had retreated.

On the following morning, as soon as it was light, John and E Bomvu went out on horseback to try to find the trail of the bushmen, leaving Grant in charge of the camp. But after following the footprints of two bushmen for several miles, they found that these men had evidently entered some of those dense kloofs which were at the foot of the mountains, a locality where it

would not be safe to follow them. Before mid-day the dog which had been hit by the bushman's arrow was dead.

Between the Bushman's River and the mountains John and Grant came upon a large herd of elands, and succeeded in shooting two fine bulls, whose splendid horns were added to the other hunting trophies in the waggon.

Three days later Pietermaritzburg was reached, and the waggon was unloaded, the quartz and gold being conveyed into Grant's house by night by John and Lieutenant Grant, who would trust no one else with their treasure.

John remained at Pietermaritzburg with Grant during a few days, but sent E Bomvu to D'Urban with letters to his father and sisters. He heard that his brother had obtained his commission in the Cape Mounted Rifles, and liked the style of life very much. Grant immediately set to work to construct a furnace, and to break the quartz into small pieces, picking out all the gold that was large enough to see ; he then placed the quartz in his furnace, and raising this to a very great heat, caused the gold to melt, and consequently to run down to the bottom of his furnace.

This was a rough and ready method, by which he procured large quantities of gold, though a more scientific and elaborate process would have enabled him to procure much more.

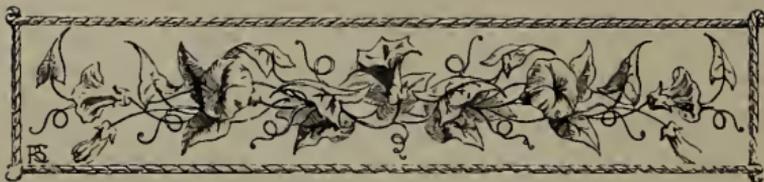
On weighing the lumps of gold that they had procured in the form of nuggets, and what Grant had obtained by melting, it was found they possessed about

one hundred and thirty pounds weight, counting sixteen ounces to the pound, and this quantity Grant stated was worth more than seven thousand pounds sterling. This sum, however, he stated, was small compared to what the diamonds would amount to.

'Some of these days,' said Grant, 'it will be generally known that gold and diamonds exist in abundance in this country, and then there will be a rush, and the place will be ruined for sporting. It is a great thing to have had the cream of these things.'

Grant, having finished his surveying work, applied for a year's leave to proceed to England, taking with him the gold and diamonds, which he was to dispose of in London. If matters turned out as satisfactorily as he anticipated, he said that he should come back and make another expedition with John in search of diamonds; but in order to ensure success, the matter must be kept secret.





## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE VALUE OF THE DIAMONDS.

**S**EVERAL months had elapsed since Lieutenant Grant had left D'Urban, and with the exception of a letter from Cape Town, saying that he had arrived there safely and was about to start for England, John had received no letter or intelligence. He was naturally anxious to hear what had been done, and sometimes he had fears that perhaps the ship in which Grant had taken his passage might have been lost, and all his sanguine expectations come to nothing. One morning, however, the gun which announced the arrival of the mail was fired from the point at the entrance to Natal Bay, so John, mounting his horse, rode down to D'Urban to obtain any letters that might have arrived for him. This time he was not disappointed, as a letter from Grant, with the English post-mark, was handed to him.

After giving the date of his arrival, and stating that the passage was a very quick one, he went on to say that he had deferred writing until he could give some definite information, and was now enabled to do so.

‘I lost no time,’ he wrote, ‘in getting an introduction, through Professor Tennant, to one of the leading diamond merchants in London, and showed him some forty or fifty of the smallest diamonds. He found fault with the colour, stating they were not the best, but after some bargaining he agreed to give me fifteen hundred pounds for these. I told him that I expected some to arrive soon, of much better colour and larger, which I would also bring to him.

‘He was very anxious to know whether they came from India or Brazil, but I told him the merchant for whom I was agent was anxious that the position of his mines should not be known.

‘Some days after I took thirty more diamonds, but none of the very best, to the same merchant, and disposed of these for eleven thousand pounds. Some of them I found would, when cut, weigh nearly four carats, so that at present we have obtained twelve thousand five hundred pounds for not half our treasure. It will not do to put the whole lot in the market at once, or it might produce a glut, and bring down the price.

‘One of the fine stones I am arranging with Tennant to sell; he thinks the price in the trade will be about two thousand five hundred pounds, as it weighs uncut over sixteen carats, and is very pure in colour. I am also in treaty with Emmanuel & Hunt for the purchase of four other diamonds.

‘The gold I had no difficulty of disposing of at the regular price per ounce, and have received seven thousand three hundred and ten pounds for it.

‘If you add up these sums, you will find they

amount to nineteen thousand eight hundred and ten pounds, the half of which is nine thousand nine hundred and five pounds, which is your share, and by this mail I have had placed at your credit, at Ross & Co.'s, Cape Town, that amount. I fully expect some fifteen thousand pounds more for the remaining diamonds, but will write to you by next mail.

‘It all seems like a dream, and I can scarcely realize that it is true, but keep as silent as the grave, or we shall have no more walking over for our prizes, as thousands of men would rush out and prevent our having another chance. If I were not certain of coming out again, I should leave the service and become a diamond hunter.’

With a few remarks relative to the bad climate of England, Grant concluded his letter, stating that such luck as had fallen to their share was not to be thrown away, and that he had carefully invested his money, so that the old saying of ‘Easily made, easily lost,’ should not hold good in his case.

This letter John read under the shade of one of the giant euphorbia trees that then grew on the Natal flat, and where no inquisitive eyes could see him. He then mounted his horse and rode slowly home, where on his arrival he found great difficulty in keeping his secret. To him the money he now possessed seemed enormous wealth, which would enable him to accomplish anything. He therefore asked his father what was about the income of some of the richest men in England.

‘There are plenty of men who have more than thirty thousand pounds a year,’ replied Mr. Dean, ‘and I dare say there are several noblemen, for example, who have twice as much.’

John thought of his few thousands of capital, and at once came to the conclusion that as yet he was far from being a rich man. 'What can a man do with thirty thousand a year,' inquired John, 'except give a great part away? He cannot spend one-tenth of it on eating, drinking, clothing, horses, cattle, or a house. It seems to me it must be something like sitting down to a dinner where there are half a dozen roasted elands, four or five bustards, and a dozen guinea-fowl. A man can eat only a very little of all these. What is he to do with the remainder? It strikes me that enough money to buy food, clothing, a horse or two, and to have a comfortable house, is all that is necessary.'

'Keep to those ideas, John, and act up to them, and you will live a happy man; but the question is, What is enough money? From my experience, it seems that enough money is a little more than what we have. Now, what would you think enough money for yourself?'

'I should think, in this country, a man would be able to obtain everything he wanted on three hundred pounds a year.'

'And so he would if he merely desired the necessities of life, and a few of the luxuries; but in England and America I have heard that some men's wives will spend as much as six or seven hundred pounds a year on dress alone.'

'But what are they the better for that? I can understand a Zulu being proud to wear a necklace of lion's teeth or claws when he has killed the lion himself; but I can't comprehend how any one can ever feel very proud when wearing a dress that some one else has made. I

don't think I should care to live in England, where so much money is wanted.'

The result of this conversation was that John realized the fact, that in spite of his possessing several thousand pounds, he was not what would be termed a rich man in England ; but at the same time he knew that, as far as his wants were concerned, he possessed sufficient for everything.

A fortnight after the receipt of Grant's letter, John received a second from him, in which an account was given of the sale of six large diamonds, which had brought ten thousand pounds, so that John had now nearly fifteen thousand pounds to his credit at Cape Town. What to do with this money he did not know, and he now experienced a trouble which very rich men in England sometimes suffer from, viz. how was he to invest his money? He felt bound by his promise to Grant not to mention to his father that diamonds and gold had been found, so he determined to wait for further information from Grant before investing any money.

John now passed his time very pleasantly. He owned a good boat, in which he went out fishing in the Bay, where he had excellent sport, several varieties of fish being plentiful in that locality. He took trips occasionally to the country west of the Bay, and visited some of the chiefs there, and also went up eastwards to the country near the Imvoti and Tugela rivers. No white men then resided in those parts, and as the Caffres did not possess guns, the game was in great abundance. The sport, however, of which John was most fond was to be had close at home.

During some four or five months of each year one or two herds of elephants used to cross the Umganie River and visit the Berea bush, living in this bush between the



Umganie and the Umlass River. These gigantic animals made regular paths through the otherwise impenetrable bush, and a man on foot by following these could move quietly, as the dead leaves and fallen branches were trodden into the ground.

John, carrying a light double-barrelled gun, and

attended by E Bomvu, who was entrusted with a heavy gun suitable for large game, would enter the forest, and, following the tracks or paths made by the elephants, walk slowly and silently amidst the trees and underwood, taking care to travel up wind, so that their approach should not be made known to the keen-scented animals that were residents in this bush.

Peeping in all directions, the two hunters would endeavour to catch sight of some of the antelope which resided in this bush. The black bush buck was a very handsome and fine animal, and its venison was excellent eating, its head and horns also supplying an ornament for the hall or dining-room ; it was very shy and watchful, and unless the hunter was skilled in bushcraft, he was not likely to ever see one of these creatures.

The red bush buck was more common, but smaller, and was more easily seen on account of the colour of its coat.

The tiny blue buck, whose scientific name is *cephalopus pygmæa*, was also common in the bush, and being of a neutral tint colour, was very difficult to see in the bush.

The skill and watchfulness required to gain success in this class of sport, gave John and E Bomvu great pleasure ; the animals were fairly hunted, and it required not only careful walking, but keen sight and most accurate shooting. The grand solitude of the forest, broken only by the chirp of a bird, the rustling of the leaves, or the cry of a monkey, was alone charming. When, however, there was the chance of coming face to face with an elephant or buffalo, and almost a cer-

tainty of seeing an antelope, the delight of these bush rambles grew upon one.

Not only was it necessary to use caution in walking to prevent making any noise, but also to avoid other dangers, for in this bush the deadly puff-adder lurked, whose bite was certain death. The cobra was also not uncommon, and the bush was also a favourite resort of the Natal rock snake or python, which sometimes reached the length of thirty feet. There were also numbers of birds of the most brilliant plumage flitting from branch to branch, whilst lizards of every variety were common. Before Natal was crowded by white men, it was a true hunter's paradise.

An officer stationed at Natal, who was very fond of sport, sometimes accompanied John into the bush ; but when he did so, success rarely occurred. This officer could not walk with the requisite skill, and usually trod on a dry stick and made a noise, or coughed, and thus alarmed the bush, so that John was not anxious for his company.

During the autumn John took this officer on a shooting trip on the plains near the Draakensberg, where they had excellent sport with elands and hartebeest, but he did not stay long, as he was now daily expecting Grant to arrive.





## CHAPTER XL.

### MORE DIAMONDS.



FEW weeks after John had returned from his shooting excursion, the ship was signalled off Natal in which he expected Grant to arrive. Riding down on his horse Hartloop, he took E Bomvu with a spare horse, in order that he might supply Grant with a mount in case he was on board. The tide and wind being favourable for the small vessel to cross the bar and enter the harbour, there was no delay, and the ship had just dropped its anchor as John reached the landing-place. A boat soon put off to the ship, and John jumped on board, and was received by Grant.

‘Welcome back,’ said John. ‘I am glad to see you, and thank you for the splendid manner in which you have done the business.’

‘Thank me?’ replied Grant. ‘Why, it is I who owe you a fortune, or at least to make me independent all my life.’

‘Never mind, if it had not been for you, I could have accomplished nothing.’

‘And if it had not been for you, I never should have

obtained what I have, so we are quits, old fellow ; so don't let us talk any more about thanks.'

Grant, having cleared his luggage at the custom house, and reported his arrival to the officer commanding, rode with John to his house, where he was asked to stop for a few days. During this ride, which was performed at a slow pace to allow of conversation, Grant told John that the sale of the diamonds in London had caused considerable excitement.

'You see,' said Grant, 'so many, and such fine diamonds, coming suddenly in the market, and from an unknown source, excited the curiosity of the merchants. I had to be very crafty in my replies to the various inquiries as to where these came from. It was known that I had been stationed in South Africa, and I began to fear that the fact of diamonds being plentiful in South Africa would become known. Fortunately, I have a brother in India, and in the course of conversation I mentioned as if by chance that such was the case. This remark at once led the merchants to conclude that the diamonds came from India, and I did not undeceive them. Have you mentioned to any one here that you had found diamonds?'

'Not to a soul,' replied John. 'I have not even told my father, much as I wished to do so.'

'You are quite right, John. If you cannot keep a secret, how can you expect any other person to do so? My great difficulty now is to obtain leave. Having just returned from long leave in England, I am not likely to get two months' leave for some time, but if we keep quiet we may safely wait. As these diamonds have remained undiscovered all these years, it is not

likely they will be found during the next twelve months. I have had four large diamonds cut and sent out to India. Some of the rajahs there are very fond of diamonds, and will give a large price for those which are of great size and brilliancy. Have you had any sport since I have been away?’

John described the sport he had obtained, and gave an account of the animals he had shot, but said he wanted some better guns.

‘That is luck,’ said Grant, ‘as I have brought out four splendid guns, suitable for large game, and two small ones that would do for buck or birds, and you can have your choice of these.’

On his arrival at the house, Grant received a hearty welcome from Mr. Dean and the family, with whom he was a great favourite, and during the next few days he was a guest at their residence.

Six months had elapsed since Grant’s return to Natal, during which time he and John had enjoyed some good sport in the vicinity of D’Urban. Grant could obtain a day or two’s leave occasionally, and accompanied by John, who knew the country well, and where each kind of animal was likely to be found, he shot plenty of game.

One day the bush close to D’Urban would be visited and bush buck sought for; another day the Umganie River would be crossed near its mouth, and the bush on its east side entered. In this bush there were, in addition to the common bush buck, buffaloes and elephants usually to be found, besides guinea-fowl and wild duck. Then the more open country farther inland would receive a visit, and the

rietbuck, called by the Caffres 'umseke,' would be the prize. Several visits were paid to Sea Cow Lake, in which there were several hippopotami. It was impossible to obtain a shot at these animals during the day, as the lake was surrounded by long reeds and swampy ground, and the animals would show only their nostrils above water; at night, however, they would leave the water and walk on shore to graze and browse. Grant and John, therefore, decided to pass a night there, and endeavour to obtain a shot at these animals.

During the first three trials they were unsuccessful; but early on the fourth night, they had not occupied their position long before they heard some large animal approaching them, and eventually saw the dark and heavy form of 'imvubu' (as the Caffres term the hippopotamus) within forty yards of them, and showing its broadside. Four bullets from these sportsmen's heavy guns were driven into this animal behind the shoulder, with the result that it ran only a few yards and then dropped dead.

From the hide of this animal upwards of thirty good whips were cut, whilst the curved tusks formed very handsome ornaments. The flesh of the hippopotamus is excellent for food, and though the animal looks coarse and tough, it is yet as good eating as is an ox.

Although this sport, varied as it was, helped to pass the time pleasantly, yet both Grant and John felt a strong desire to be once more hunting for diamonds. They neither of them now required money in order to procure the necessaries or even the luxuries of life,

but there was excitement in the search for such valuable gems, and Grant was anxiously looking forward to the time when he could obtain leave, in order to start for the proposed expedition.

In the meantime John had been buying land from the Government, selecting portions where the soil was good and water plentiful. Grant assured him that sooner or later thousands of people would come to Natal to reside there. 'I know no country more favoured than this,' he said. 'The climate is excellent; it is never too cold, rarely too hot. The soil is magnificent, and will produce anything. There is plenty of water, yet not too much. The place is very healthy, and there is but little chance of savages coming to murder the white men, as is sometimes the case in America where people settle down in a new country, so that land must increase in value. If we are successful in finding more diamonds, I shall invest all the money I obtain for them in buying land about here, so I will ask you to look out for suitable farms for me.'

Whilst affairs were going on in a peaceable manner at Natal, George Dean was having a rough time at the Cape frontier. The Gaika tribes had been anxious for war during some months, and had at length broken out in their usual way, viz. capturing the cattle of the colonists, murdering the defenders of these, burning the farmhouses, and attacking waggons that were travelling on the various roads.

John had wished that George should obtain leave, and travel up the country to meet him and Grant, and that the three should hunt for diamonds; but the war

rendered it impossible that any officer could obtain leave from the frontier.

As regards John and Grant, it was merely a game of patience ; they had to wait and to remain silent, and to trust that, after a few months, leave might be obtained by Grant, and another visit made to the district from which the diamonds had been previously taken.

At the end of twelve months after Grant's return from England, he informed John that he could obtain two months' leave, and desired John to make all preparations for the trip, and to start four or five days before this leave began.

'I know the road now,' said Grant, 'and with two horses for myself, and one for an after rider, I can do about sixty miles a day, and so shall have to sleep only one night on the journey from Pietermaritzburg to the waggons, for we had better take two waggons with us, so that we may have everything comfortable, and also carry some oats for the horses, because we shall have some sport on the way.'

There was a feeling of great independence on the part of John when buying the various articles required for the journey. Money was no great object, yet he made his purchases judiciously. Two excellent waggons were obtained, and thirty well-broken oxen, three of which were what is called pack oxen—that is, oxen which have been trained to carry packs on their backs. These animals were bought so that John and Grant could travel away from the waggons, and proceed into rough country where the waggons could not have been dragged.

Flour, biscuits, preserved meats, and vegetables were

also provided, whilst their weapons were numerous, and of the very best kind. Six good horses accompanied the party, and sufficient saddles to enable the whole of these to be ridden at the same time by six men. Some tin boxes, well secured by locks, were placed in the waggons, so that any diamonds found could be secured, and no risk incurred of the belts being carried away, as had formerly occurred.

Before leaving Pietermaritzburg, a report reached John that the country into which he purposed travelling was in an unsettled state, as a war had broken out between two neighbouring tribes ; but he did not place much confidence in these reports, and as in those days the natives did not possess firearms, he felt tolerably secure as regarded any attacks being made on his party. Four Hottentots, on whom John could depend, were taken with the waggons, and four of the Caffres from near John's house, E Bomvu having charge of these four men. Several dogs also accompanied the Caffres and Hottentots.

So well had John kept the secret about the results of his former expedition, that no one suspected that on the present occasion he was bent on any other object than sport. All his friends imagined that Grant was very rich, and supplied all the money required to purchase the waggons, horses, oxen, and other articles required for the trip, so that the object of the expedition was still kept secret.

Starting from Pietermaritzburg a week before Grant's leave commenced, John travelled slowly towards the Draakensberg, so as to save the oxen during the early part of the journey.

The vast plains near the Mooi and Bushman's River still contained elands and hartebeest, several of which John rode down and shot, and thus supplied the camp with abundance of meat.

Halting at the foot of the Draakensberg, John waited for Grant to join him, and allowed the oxen to have a good feed before they commenced the severe ascent through the pass in these mountains.

Fifteen days' journey after Grant had joined the waggons brought the party to within a few miles of the locality where diamonds had been previously found. An outspan was then formed close to an excellent stream, where there was plenty of wood. Brushwood was cut down, and a kraal formed, large enough to surround the waggons and to contain the oxen and horses of a night. Having seen everything made secure against lions, and also to prevent the cattle from straying, Grant and John loaded their pack oxen with such necessaries as they required, and taking E Bomvu and a Caffre with them, they mounted their horses, and telling the Hottentots to guard their camp, started on their search.

The Hottentots were informed that their masters might be absent two or three days, or perhaps a week. They were given guns with which to defend themselves, but they were cautioned never to leave the camp unprotected, or to hunt far from the waggons. Grant and John each took a rifle and a smooth-bore gun and a brace of double-barrelled pistols, whilst E Bomvu was entrusted with a double-barrelled smooth-bore gun. Plenty of ammunition was also taken, though very much sport was not anticipated.

A journey of about twenty miles brought this party close to where the diamonds had been previously found, and a convenient locality having been selected for a camp, E Bomvu and the Caffre were set to work to cut brushwood for making the camp secure, whilst the two white men erected the small patrol tents which they had brought to be used on this occasion. There being about an hour's daylight remaining, John and Grant went out in search of game, and succeeded in shooting a rietbuck, a duiker, and three guinea-fowl; so that the camp was well provided with food.

Shortly after night set in, the party were serenaded by hyenas, jackals, and lions, but the kraal made by the brushwood was thick and high, and the fire that was kept up rendered the camp secure from these visitors.

Having breakfasted shortly after sunrise, and provided themselves with food, John and Grant left E Bomvu and the Caffre in charge of their camp, and walked out to the locality where their searches had previously been successful. They separated some few yards, and turned up the ground with trowels, thus making only a sort of surface search. It was not long before each was successful in finding diamonds, and before midday several very valuable stones had been secured.

Each evening, about an hour before sundown, they ceased diamond hunting, and turned their attention to hunting, so as to carry some food into camp. In this endeavour they were always successful, as game was plentiful.

E Bomvu, however, told John that he thought it a waste of time to come all this way to shoot buck,

pouw, and guinea-fowl, as such game could be obtained in Natal; but John informed him that Grant was employed to make a picture of the country, and to take specimens of the soil for the great chiefs in England, and that was the principal reason for him coming to the country.

Six days had been occupied in this manner, and upwards of one hundred diamonds had been obtained. It was then considered desirable to return to the camp, and to see how matters were going on there.

To prevent the Hottentots from suspecting that their masters were employed in any other way than in making maps of the country and in shooting, was one of the principal objects about which John and Grant had to be cautious; because, as long as they kept the secret about valuable gems being found in this locality, they had a mine of wealth which they could visit whenever they felt disposed, or had the opportunity. They could also inform their friends of the position of this treasure, and give to these a chance of procuring wealth when they themselves were satisfied.

E Bomvu and the Caffre, who had come to the small camp, seemed perfectly satisfied with the reason that John had given for remaining in this locality and for not shooting all day. To them a map was a mystery that they could not understand, and so they did not trouble themselves about it. They had plenty to eat, little to do, and were quite contented to let matters go on, as they had gone, without troubling themselves with inquiries.

On the evening of the sixth day, John told

E Bomvu that on the following morning they intended returning to the waggons, and would start some hours after daylight, and would search for game on their journey.

It was estimated by Grant that they had gathered more than ten thousand pounds' worth of diamonds, but it seemed as though they had just hit off a sort of pocket of these, for in several likely places they had found none during their last day's search. They therefore decided to strike off in another direction after they had remained a day or so at the waggons, and had found that everything was in order.

It was a lovely morning when Grant and John turned out of their small tents and went down to the stream to bathe previous to having their breakfast. The sun had risen about one hour, and they were sitting enjoying their breakfast, when E Bomvu, starting up, exclaimed, 'Umlao!' (the Hottentots). On looking round, John saw the three Hottentots who had been left in charge of the waggons, riding at full speed towards them, and raising their arms as though signalling.

'Up! saddle the horses,' said John; 'something is the matter.'

In two minutes the three Hottentots had reached the camp, and in the greatest excitement said, 'Bas, the Verdam Caffres have come and taken the waggons and oxen. We had only time to mount our horses, seize the guns and some ammunition, and ride for our lives.'

'Who are they?' inquired John; 'and how many?'

'They are a commando from the tribe north of

Zululand, and there are nearly three hundred of them.'

'Where are the Caffres?' inquired John.

'One is killed, and the others have run into the bush, but will probably be caught and assagied.'

'Now,' said John, 'tell me quietly how this happened.'

In the meantime he told E Bomvu to pack everything on the oxen, and to be ready to move according to orders.

'I and the two other men had saddled our horses, as we heard that some elands were near, and we wanted meat. We took the guns, and were getting the ammunition when the dogs barked, and, looking up, we saw the commando running towards the waggons and trying to surround the läger. One of the Caffres, who had been in charge of the oxen, we saw running in front of the commando, but an assagy struck him, and he fell. There were only three of us, and there were three hundred of the enemy; so we jumped on our horses and escaped, and, finding your spoor, galloped on here.'

'You saw one of my Caffres assagied?' said John.

'Yes, Bas; he was "doot gemacht"' (killed).

'Then,' said John to Grant, 'it is war between us, and we are justified in seeking redress; but three hundred men, although only armed with assagies, must be dealt with cautiously. How many rounds of ammunition have you, Cobus?'

'We have about forty, Bas.'

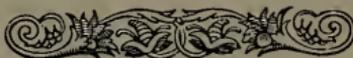
'And we,' said John, 'have more than fifty. We must lose no time, but must give these fellows a lesson.'

E Bomvu, who had listened to what the Hottentot had said, and had understood enough to comprehend the situation, now came to John, and said, 'Andries cannot shoot straight; may I mount his horse and take his gun and ammunition? Then Andries and the Caffre here hide the oxen in the bush, and we five go and fight. We shall have plenty to do to drive the rascals away, but we should lose no time, or they may drive off the oxen, and then we cannot move our waggons; so let us be going, as we must not ride too fast or we shall tire our horses.'

John agreed to this arrangement, and gave the necessary orders, and then John, Grant, E Bomvu, and the two Hottentots started in the direction of the waggons.

On reaching a ridge within about half a mile of the first camp, E Bomvu rode forward to see what was going on, and quickly returned to announce that the enemy were sitting down around the waggons having a feast.

John now gave his directions as to how the fight was to be conducted, his tactics being the same as those practised by the Boers during their battles with the Zulus. All details being arranged, the five horsemen rode over the ridge, and cantered down to within about two hundred yards of their enemy.





## CHAPTER XLI.

ATTACKED BY NATIVES—ZULUS TO THE RESCUE.



SOONER were the horsemen observed than the enemy at the waggons jumped to their feet, and seized their assagies and shields, and stood ready to receive the charge which they seemed to think the horsemen were going to make on them.

This, however, was a proceeding which John was far too experienced to attempt. Raising his hand to give the signal to halt, the five men raised their guns and sent ten bullets at their enemies. The effect was shown by eight of the enemy falling, and two others limping under cover of the waggons. The natives, as we will term them, immediately rushed towards the horsemen, knowing that their guns were now empty, but John's system of fighting now came into practice. Turning his horse, as did the other horsemen, he rode away at speed, loading as he went.

When at a convenient distance he pulled up his horse, and the whole party turned and sent ten more bullets at their approaching foe, six of whom fell dead; the remainder, however, still rushed on, but with horses

they could not compete in speed, and the five horsemen were soon at a distance, and reloaded, when they again sent their bullets at their foe.

'This is a very easy game,' said John in a cheerful tone to Grant. 'We have plenty of bullets for the whole lot of them; they will soon tire of it.'

After the fourth discharge, and when the horsemen were retreating, six natives suddenly jumped out from some bushes where they had concealed themselves, and, assagy in hand, rushed towards the horsemen.

'Load quick,' said John to the Hottentots. At the same time he passed his gun into his bridle hand, and drawing one of his pistols from his belt, shot the leading native dead; the bullet from his second barrel maimed a second man; whilst Grant had killed a third with his two bullets. John's second pistol was drawn, and another man was knocked over just as he was casting an assagy. The two remaining natives immediately retreated, as they seemed to think that the white men's power of shooting was inexhaustible.

'Load every barrel,' said John, 'pistols and all, before we return to the attack.'

This precaution having been adopted, there were now eighteen loaded barrels ready for the foe.

But the natives found this system of fighting anything but satisfactory; they had lost several men, and could not approach within assagy range of the horsemen, they therefore gave up the pursuit, and retreated towards the waggon, from which they were distant about two miles.

The pursuers now became the pursued, and acting by John's directions, followed the natives, peppering

them with bullets, and killing several of their warriors.

The difference in the result of the shooting of John, Grant, and the other horsemen, from those of the average soldier, was now manifest. These horsemen were all sportsmen who had been accustomed to depend on their guns for food, and when ammunition was scarce. They never pulled a trigger at random, but only when they knew that the bullet would speed true to its mark.

In our wars, even with such men as the Zulus, it required about one hundred and fifty bullets to be discharged by our young soldiers to kill one Zulu; whereas, out of some sixty bullets fired by John and his companions, fifty at least struck a man, and had it been safe to dismount and fire, probably not a single bullet would have missed its mark. It was such accurate shooting as this that had enabled some four hundred Boers to defeat upwards of ten thousand of Dingaan's Zulu warriors, and in quite modern times had proved so disastrous to our troops at Majuba Hill.

As the party of horsemen fired one of their volleys at the retreating natives, they saw to their surprise upwards of thirty men fall to the ground. The Hottentots shouted with delight at seeing this apparently wonderful shooting, but E Bomvu immediately exclaimed, 'They are cheating! More men have fallen than bullets were fired; they want to get us within range of their assagies.'

The simplicity of this explanation of why so many men fell as though dead, was at once accepted by John, who ordered that no man was to advance, but

all were to load as quickly as possible. When the bullets were safely down on the powder, E Bomvu asked permission to fire at one of the dead men, and John giving his consent, a bullet was fired and a man hit, who, immediately springing to his feet, shouted to his companions, when more than twenty men jumped up, and, assagy in hand, rushed at the horsemen.

Eight men fell as they came on, their fall on this occasion being due to bullets, and before the remainder could come within range of their enemies, the horsemen had galloped off and were again loaded.

E Bomvu now suggested that instead of advancing over the same ground, and therefore where men might be shamming, they should ride round and attack the natives from the opposite direction, and so avoid being struck by the assagy of a wounded native.

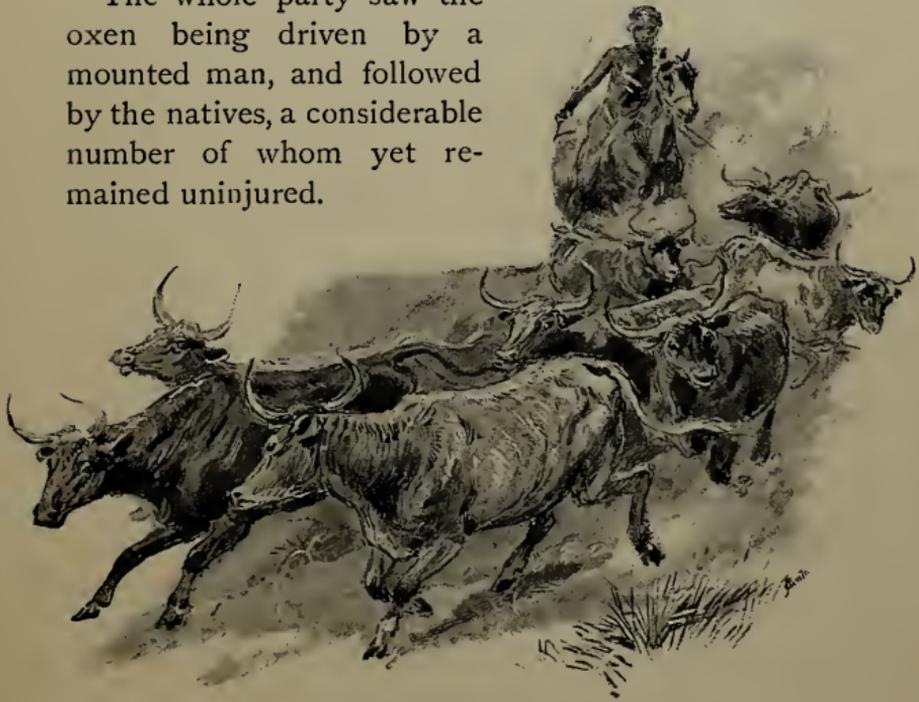
This plan having been adopted, several more shots were fired, and the natives then (at least those of them that were left) retreated rapidly from the waggons.

Immediately the battle had been won and the natives had retreated, the horsemen approached their waggons, and found that very little had been extracted from them except food, a great portion of which had been taken and eaten. Nothing was seen of the oxen, and it was now an important question to secure these. The Hottentots stated that the oxen had been turned out to graze only a few minutes before the natives had attacked the camp, and therefore could not be at any great distance. One horse was also missing, and as this animal had been made fast to the waggons, it was concluded that the natives had carried this off. Having obtained a plentiful supply of ammunition

from the waggons, two of the Hottentots were left in charge to guard them, whilst the other Hottentot, with John, Grant, and E Bomvu, cantered off in order to discover their oxen.

The party had ridden scarcely a mile from the camp, when E Bomvu, pointing to a ridge about a mile in advance, exclaimed, 'Nan-quer!' (there they are).

The whole party saw the oxen being driven by a mounted man, and followed by the natives, a considerable number of whom yet remained uninjured.



E BOMVU AND THE OXEN.

'Look out now for cheating,' said E Bomvu. 'We have hard work before us, but let us *cachema* (ride fast) till we see the men break into parties. I will ride round and get in front and stop the oxen; you follow behind and shoot the rascals.'

Turning his horse to the left, E Bomvu rode off at full gallop, and was soon lost to sight, whilst the remaining three horsemen followed the track of the cattle.

It seemed a dangerous proceeding for only three men to attack about one hundred and fifty, and if the encounter took place at close quarters numbers must gain the day, in spite of the deadly effects of the fire-arms. Repeating rifles were not invented in those days; if they had been, the horsemen need have had no fear. As, however, they could only fire six shots among them before reloading, they had to avoid coming within assagy range of their enemies.

The natives saw the three horsemen approaching them, and having learned a lesson from their previous experience, did not close in a compact body and endeavour to resist the charge of their opponents, but separated into various small parties, and ran right and left, so as to endeavour to close round the horsemen.

The first six shots were successful, and John and his party then retreated to reload, and riding hard to the left, outflanked the natives, so as to keep them all on their right. This proceeding defeated the object which the natives had in view of surrounding and then closing in on the horsemen, and they now seemed to be aware that their antagonists were well skilled in the artifices with which they were themselves so well acquainted, and that it was useless to compete with mounted men, who could gallop away when they chose, and thus keep out of range of their assagies.

The native who seemed to be the leader or chief of the party now gave several shrill whistles, which were evidently signals to his men, for the natives commenced

retreating at speed towards where the oxen had been driven. John could not imagine what this manœuvre meant, but followed at a safe distance, loading and firing with terrific effect until the natives disappeared over a ridge. He now suspected a trap, and instead of following the enemy and ascending the ridge, he galloped to the left, so as to obtain a view of the country beyond.

No natives were there visible; the whole party had disappeared, and John now saw how crafty had been their proceedings. Just over the ridge was some long grass, amidst which it was evident the natives were concealed, and had John and his two companions ridden recklessly over this ridge, they would at once have come to close quarters with their enemy. To approach this grass was dangerous, so John decided to wait for some time, in order to see what the natives would do.

Looking in the direction of the cattle, John saw them moving slowly back, but not directly towards where the natives were concealed. He also saw one horseman being pursued by another, the one riding in circles, so as not to get far from the cattle, the other pursuing him. These two men were too far off to be distinguished, but there was no doubt that one of these was E Bomvu, and the other the native who had mounted the horse that had been taken from the waggons.

The two circled and turned until one horseman came close to the other, when an assagy was apparently hurled by one, and the other fell from his horse, which immediately started at full gallop towards where the natives were concealed. This horse was soon recognised as the one that had been left at the waggons, conse-

quently John knew that E Bomvu had gained a victory over the mounted native.

As the horse rushed through the long grass in which the natives were concealed, about a hundred men sprang to their feet, evidently imagining that their enemies had fallen into a trap. Before they discovered their mistake, John and his party fired their six shots into the group, while almost at the same instant four shots were fired from nearly the opposite direction. By whom these shots were fired was soon apparent, as the two Hottentots who had been left at the waggons appeared over the ridge, and galloped towards John and his party.

‘Why have you left the waggons unguarded?’ said John.

‘No, Bas; the other Hottentot and the Caffres are at the waggons, so we thought we would come and help you,’ said one of the Hottentots, ‘and our bullets have knocked over four men.’

This last punishment seemed to convince the natives that they had no chance with the horsemen, and if any man wished to escape with his life, he must accomplish this by using his legs. There was no further attempt to practise tricks, but each man ran his best, whilst the five horsemen moved down the ridge, so as to place themselves between the natives and the oxen.

Upon approaching the oxen, E Bomvu was found busily driving them in the direction of the waggons, and proceeding as coolly as though no fight had occurred.

‘Why did you not shoot that rascal who was on the horse?’ inquired John.

‘No, chief,’ replied E Bomvu; ‘I was afraid I might shoot the horse, so I rode him down, and sent one of my assagies through him. He was like a child on a horse, and could only manage to hold on. I think the horse will go back all right to the waggons.’

The three Hottentots and E Bomvu were now employed in driving the oxen as rapidly as possible to the waggons, whilst John and Grant acted as scouts, and kept a sharp look-out to prevent a surprise.

On reaching the waggons it was agreed that no time was to be lost, but that the oxen were to be inspanned, and the waggons removed from their present position, because it was possible that if the natives were reinforced they might make another attack on the morrow.

Whilst the oxen were being inspanned, E Bomvu walked out to where the bodies of several of the natives lay, and gave each a stab with his assagy, to test whether they were shamming. He shortly returned, and told John that he had recognised some of the men, and that these were among those from whom he, and John, had escaped on the former occasion, and mentioned in the earlier chapters of this book.

‘Here,’ said E Bomvu, ‘is a medicine necklet that I took from the neck of a chief named Amanzi; he was a great rascal, but your bullet had hit him in the middle of the body, and he must have been killed at once.’

John examined the necklet, on which were several small pieces of wood, a small piece of quartz and gold, and, sewn up in a piece of buck skin, was a large white stone, which John at once knew to be a very large diamond. Grant was shown this stone, and at once

pronounced it to be a diamond of the purest water, and much larger than any that they had hitherto succeeded in finding.

As soon as the oxen were inspanned, the waggons were started, but the horses were allowed to remain for a short time, in order to have a feed of oats, which were in the waggons, a luxury which they had earned by the hard work they had gone through during the day.

The dogs, which had run away from the waggons during the fight, now rejoined their masters, and the whole party, except the one Caffre who had been assagied, proceeded in a southerly direction.

‘E Bomvu,’ said John, ‘come here.’

E Bomvu walked beside John’s horse, and seemed as cool and collected as though he had done nothing during the day but drive oxen.

‘Do you think,’ said John, ‘that we will be attacked again by these people?’

‘Yes, chief,’ said E Bomvu. ‘I feel we shall; and we may have to leave the waggons and oxen, and just escape with the horses. If those people attack again, they will do it in one of two ways. They will watch us till they find us in some bushy country, when they will try to surprise us, or they will surround us in the night and close in on us at daylight. If the chief wants to get back to Natal, he ought to leave the waggons and ride hard for many days.’

‘But our waggons and oxen are valuable,’ said John, ‘and it would not do to desert them.’

‘Waggons and oxen are of no value to a man with ten assagies through his body.’

‘What makes you think they are certain to attack us?’

‘Wow,’ said E Bomvu, as he waved his arm in the direction where the battle had been fought. ‘How many men have we shot, *ama shumu shumu* (tens of ten), and only one of our people assagied? Do you think this is satisfactory for the warriors to think of before they go to sleep? No. They will say we made a mistake in fighting the white men as we did, where they could ride away and escape our assagies; but if we can catch them in the bush and surprise them, or surround them by night, and close in on them at daylight, they will not be able to use their horses to gallop away. That is what I should do if I were a chief among them, and that is what they may do.’

‘I won’t desert the waggons,’ said John.

‘Then the chief must be prepared to fight for his life,’ said E Bomvu, as he walked off to drive a horse forward which had lingered some distance behind the waggons.

John informed Grant of what E Bomvu had said, and the two agreed that the position was critical, great confidence being placed in E Bomvu’s opinion by both white men.

‘We will be prepared,’ said John, ‘for such a contingency. We will keep the horses fresh and well fed; we will place all our diamonds in our belts, and have plenty of ammunition in our saddle-bags, as also in our belts; we can then be ready in a moment to up-saddle and ride if a night attack is attempted. The Caffres on foot must hold on to our horses or try to escape by running; we must have all our plans arranged in

case of an attack ; but I can hardly believe those fellows will try it on again, in spite of what E Bomvu says.'

Two days' journey had been accomplished since the fight, and the waggons were outspanned near a small stream. There had been no sign of an enemy. Two elands had been shot, and meat was plentiful at the outspan. Some bushes had been cut down and placed round the camp, and the fire had gone down very low, as it was about midnight. The shrieks of hyenas and jackals were the only sounds that broke the silence of the wilderness, and it was E Bomvu's turn to keep watch, all the other men being asleep.

Suddenly some dozen or more animals trotted past the camp, and E Bomvu knew by the sound that these animals were elands. Crawling on the ground to where John lay asleep, he awoke him, and said, 'Chief, there are enemies near. Keep very quiet, but tie up all the dogs, wake the other men, saddle the horses, and then wait till I come back. I am going out to look.'

At any other time John would have been amused at E Bomvu thus giving orders, as though he were the master ; but having seen the skill with which this Zulu managed affairs, and his coolness in dangerous positions, he acted as E Bomvu had directed, and then waited for E Bomvu to return.

A considerable time seemed to elapse, and there was no sound or sign of an enemy. Each of the party lay on the ground holding a gun or an assagy, and listening attentively for any sound which should indicate the return of E Bomvu, but nothing could be heard.

As the party thus sat eagerly watching and trying

to see into the darkness, John was startled by feeling a touch on his arm, and looking round could just perceive the crouching form of E Bomvu close to him.

‘Chief,’ said E Bomvu, ‘there are more than one hundred men within ten assagy throws of the waggons over there (pointing on their back track); they will surround the waggons before daylight, and will then rush in on us, and enclose us in a circle, so we will now try to cheat them.’

‘How did you know they were there?’ whispered John.

‘I heard elands trot past us, and thought they must have been alarmed by men to pass so close to the waggons, so I crept out and heard the people talking when I was close to them, and heard how they intended to assagy us in the morning.’

‘What is to be done?’ said John.

‘We move out of camp now,’ replied the Zulu, ‘and go some distance, then wait quiet till daybreak; then we shall be outside the circle of men, and see what happens.’

‘But will not the noise we make be heard? and shall we not be attacked at once?’

E Bomvu smiled, and said, ‘No, chief; when we move away the dogs will bark, because they will want to go with us, and the noise they make will prevent the horses’ footsteps from being heard; the men will think that as long as the dogs remain at the waggons we are there also; that’s why I wanted them tied up.’

‘My dog, Spot, may come,’ said John; ‘I should not like to leave him here, and he will be as quiet as a snake.’

The arrangement suggested by E Bomvu was whis-

pered to the whole party, and then, guided by E Bomvu, the six horses were quietly and slowly led away from the waggons, the dogs, as was expected, barking loudly on seeing their masters depart.

A small elevation of ground was ascended, and a ridge passed over, until about half a mile had been traversed, when E Bomvu whispered that they would halt there and wait for daylight, each man lying down and holding his horse's bridle.

When there was sufficient light to enable surrounding objects to be seen, John, Grant, and E Bomvu crept to the top of the ridge and peeped over. They then saw several natives crawling along the ground towards the waggons, at which all was quiet. Smaller and smaller became this circle of men, until they were within about forty yards of the waggons, when a shrill whistle from one of the natives was responded to by each native springing to his feet and closing in on the waggons, where they were received by the barks of the curs that had been made fast to the waggons.

E Bomvu, who had been anxiously watching the movements of the enemy, now burst out laughing; then, suddenly grasping his assagy, he said, 'Let us creep back, and now for our horses and bullets.'

The Caffres, who had no horses, were told to retreat and hide, whilst the horsemen cantered over the hill, and rapidly approached the natives, who seemed to be puzzled to know what had become of the men and horses. When about one hundred yards from the waggons, E Bomvu shouted, 'Rascals and dogs, did you think you could cheat a Zulu? Take that, and that.' As he uttered these words he sent two bullets into the

group of natives around the waggons, the remaining horsemen following his example.

The effect of this fire on the natives was terrific, some of the bullets evidently passing through one man and striking another beyond.

Before the natives had recovered from their surprise the guns were reloaded, and ten more bullets were discharged at the natives, not one of which missed its mark. A panic now seemed to seize these men, as without order or regularity each man ran for his life.

‘We must follow and shoot more,’ said E Bomvu, ‘and not leave a sufficient number alive to attack us again.’

John and Grant, seeing the natives retreating, felt indisposed to continue the slaughter; but E Bomvu asserted that unless more were shot another attack would certainly be made, ‘and perhaps,’ said he, ‘*we* may then be surprised.’

During more than two hours the pursuit was continued, and several brawny natives fell, never again to rise and hurl an assagy.

The remainder of the enemy had then made good their retreat by concealing themselves in the bush, or having gone too far to be easily overtaken.

Returning to the waggons, a hearty meal was made, and the horses were given a good feed of oats, and the waggons then proceeded on their journey towards Natal.

E Bomvu did not seem at all pleased with the results of the fight. He stated that the men who had escaped would occupy about seven days to reach some large

kraals, and seven more to return, so that in about twenty days they might come with two thousand men and overtake the waggons and revenge their loss. 'Four or five days for a waggon and oxen is one day for a warrior,' said E Bomvu, 'so we must travel quick as our only chance.'

John had now come to accept E Bomvu's opinions without question, and fully comprehended that as yet he was not safe from attack; but as the oxen were strong and in good condition, he thought that by pushing on with great rapidity they might get so far that the natives would not dare attack them.

Day after day now passed quietly, the speed of the party being limited by the rate at which the waggons travelled. John and Grant shot several animals during the journey, and thus kept a good supply of meat in camp.

During fourteen days the waggons were dragged a long way, and no sign of an enemy was visible; but on the morning of the fifteenth John saw a cloud of dust rising in the plain to his left, and by aid of his glasses discovered a large body of natives, numbering several hundreds, and moving towards the waggons. E Bomvu had seen these for some time, and he now asked John what he thought of them.

'They are our enemies again,' said John, 'and there are too many for us to fight. We shall have to lose our waggons and oxen, and we must ride for our lives.'

'*Carbo, inkosi*' (no, chief), replied E Bomvu; 'I don't think so. But I will ride near them and see, and then gallop back and tell you. There will be time for you

to ride off then if they should be our old enemies. I go now.'

Every arrangement was made at the waggons for a rapid retreat in case the large force of men proved to be that of an enemy. As much ammunition as could be carried was served out to each horseman. Biltong was carried in the saddle-bags, and water in soda-water bottles. When everything was ready John adjusted his glasses, and watched the proceedings of E Bomvu.

The army of men that had been seen were distant about two miles, and were advancing leisurely in the direction of the waggons. E Bomvu rode towards them at a slow canter, and when rather more than a quarter of a mile from the army was seen to pull up his horse, and it seemed as though he were carrying on a conversation with the leader of the army. After a few minutes he rode close to them, and was soon surrounded and lost sight of.

John related to Grant and the other men what he saw through the glasses, Grant at once expressing alarm that E Bomvu had been by some means deceived, and was now a prisoner. The Caffres, however, asserted that this was not probable, as E Bomvu knew what to do, and was not likely to be deceived.

Nearly half an hour passed without any apparent movement on the part of the large body of men; then E Bomvu was seen to emerge from the crowd, and, attended by four men, rode towards the waggons, whilst the remainder of this army lay down on the ground.

'This looks as if they were friends,' said John; 'four men would not come here to attack us. I wonder who they can be.'

The Caffres, who had been watching these proceedings, now exclaimed, 'Amazulu!' meaning that the army was a Zulu war party, and therefore friendly towards the white men.

When E Bomvu was within speaking distance he called out, 'Amazulu inkosi!' (Zulu's chief), whilst the men attending him shouted, 'Sarca-bona Umgarn' (How are you, friend?).



MEETING BETWEEN JOHN AND COPEN.

John replied to this salutation, and on the Zulus coming close to him he recognised one of them as Copen, the young chief whom he had met in the Zulu country.

The four Zulus now came to the waggons, and John ordered some eland venison to be cooked for them, and invited them to sit down and talk.

The first questions asked were, How so large a party of Zulus happened to be in this part of the country, and what they were doing here?

Copen replied that they had heard of a large party of Sikonyella's men having travelled into this part of the country, which the Zulu chief claimed as belonging to him, so he had sent this impi to look after them, and if they found them to attack and slay them. 'We have heard,' continued Copen, 'that they attacked you and killed one of your men, and would have killed you all if they could; but you fought them and scattered them. Your guns must be strong, and you must have shot straight to have killed so many.'

'Yes,' said John; 'we can shoot straight, but our lives were dependent on the way we used our ammunition. There were nearly one hundred of them to each two of us. We have been expecting that those who escaped would bring more men and come to attack us again, so when we saw your people we thought there would be another fight.'

'How many men attacked you?' inquired Copen.

'About three hundred.'

'Then those who fought with you were only a portion of Sikonyella's people who are about here. We know there are about ten hundred, so perhaps they may yet follow and attack you.'

'That is true,' said John, 'and that is what we were prepared for.'

'How are you going to fight nearly a thousand men?' inquired Copen.

'With our horses we could keep at a distance and

shoot them when they came near, then ride away and shoot them again.'

'But that is what you did before,' said Copen. 'They will not let you do that again; if they attack you, they will either hide in the bush till you come up, and then try to surround you, or two parties, perhaps three, will attack from three different places.'

'We must look out that we are not trapped in that way,' said John. 'But we are travelling fast, and in a few days shall be so near Natal that they probably dare not attack us.'

'They will attack you,' said Copen. 'There are only six of you who can shoot, and there will be nearly a thousand of them. If they returned to their chief and told him they had lost more than one hundred men, and brought neither oxen, horses, guns, nor white men's clothes, they would be assagied by their chief's order. They will come.'

'They had better not,' replied John.

'The young chief is brave and clever, and knows how to fight; but he must be cautious, or he will never reach Natal. But I have a plan, which I must talk over with my other chiefs, and we may after all be able to quietly count the number of Sikonyella's impi. I will now bring up our men.'

Copen rose to his feet, and moving away from the waggons where he stood alone, and could thus be easily seen by his people, he placed his shield in the end of an assagy, and held it over his head. He then walked backwards till he was lost sight of by his men. He then came and sat down with John, and said,

‘My impi of many hundreds will be here soon now.’

John was impressed with the value of this plan of signalling, for in those days army signalling was unknown, or at least unpractised, among the English, in spite of this method of sending simple messages being so quick and useful.

In less than half an hour upwards of a thousand stalwart Zulus were near the waggons. They sat down and waited for orders. A few questions were put by Copen to some of the minor chiefs, who answered in the affirmative; and John, on hearing these answers, learnt how well disciplined for war these men had been. He learned that twenty Zulus were concealed within a mile of the main body, keeping a sharp look-out for any enemy who might approach. Not one of these men could be seen; they were concealed behind rocks, among bushes, or in long grass, but were ready to give notice of the advance of any enemy.

Copen and five other chiefs now sat down for a ‘kaluma’ (talk). Copen commenced by telling the other chiefs what had happened, and how John had escaped the attacks of his enemies. Having described the details of the fights, he asked whether the white men were likely to be attacked again. To this question there was an unanimous reply of ‘Yes.’ Copen then laid his plans before his companions.

He suggested that the Zulus should keep out of sight, but at the same time should be near enough to the waggons to be able to make an attack on any enemy who might come to them. ‘The white chief,’ said Copen, ‘with his men can shoot down the enemy, and

we can surround them when they think they have only some six or seven men to fight against. The waggons and the white men will serve as a bait, and we shall catch our enemy in a trap. Has any chief a better plan in his brain ?'

There was a silence of some minutes ; then a chief rose and said, ' Will the enemy come and attack the waggons again ? Have they not had enough of the white men's guns ? If they do not come, we shall be waiting for no purpose ; all depends on that.'

Copen replied, and said, ' Would you dare go back to your chief and tell him, that five men on horseback and one Zulu, had killed more than one hundred of your men, and you could not show him a horse, an ox, a gun, or a white man's clothes ? No ; the chief of this party will be sure to come again with many more men, and a safer and more certain plan ; then he would hope to kill the white men and Hottentots, and carry their guns to the chief, and he would say the white men fought like wounded lions and killed many of our men ; but we have killed them, and bring you their horses, oxen, waggons, and guns. Here they are.'

Another chief now rose and said, ' Copen has spoken what will happen. The people will surely come again, and this time they will attack by night. They will know that the white men cannot shoot by night as well as by day, because they will not be able to see so well ; so each night a plan must be arranged to defeat them.'

' That is so,' said Copen ; ' so now I must think of a plan, and must talk of it with the young white chief.'

Copen now informed John of the result of his talk, and of the opinions that had been expressed that the waggons would be again attacked, and John told Copen that E Bomvu, who possessed 'the head of a chief,' had given the same opinion.

'If they come to attack the waggons,' said Copen, 'not one of them will escape alive; but we must take care not to let them know that the Ama Zulu are here, or they will fear too much to come. I suppose that you will inspan and travel on now. We shall go forward before you, and keep out of sight. Our men are all round keeping watch, so that you will not be surprised by the enemy.'

Darkness was setting in on the second night after the arrival of the Zulu army at the waggons, and John and his party had made two good journeys, when one of the look-out men ran into camp and reported to John that a large body of natives were marching towards his waggons. 'They will reach here when about one-third of the night has passed,' said the man. 'You know what to do. I now run on and tell the chief.'

This information caused considerable excitement to the party at the waggons, but now they knew there was nothing like the danger there had been when they were attacked on the former occasion. They had now a powerful ally in the Ama Zulu, who were eager to carry out the orders of their chief, and to defeat the warriors of Sikonyella.

John at once decided to move away from the waggons, for it was possible that he and his party might be surrounded during the night and assagied before the

Zulus came to the rescue. One of the Caffres was sent in the direction in which Copen and his army were concealed to tell him where John intended passing the night, so that no mistake should be made if the Zulus moved whilst darkness prevailed.

John and his party had not remained during more than two hours in the locality he had selected before a slight noise attracted his attention, and almost immediately he recognised the voice of Copen, who spoke in a whisper, and was close to him.

‘The enemy are not far on the other side of the waggons,’ said Copen; ‘and they are creeping round, so as to have a circle of men round them. They are sending four large parties in four directions; so that if you had been at the waggons and had ridden through the first lot of men, you would have been stopped by one of these parties as you were riding away. They have made a good plan, but have weakened themselves by sending away these parties. When it is light you will see a good fight.’

‘I and my people can be of most use in shooting their chiefs,’ said John.

‘Yes; that will spoil their plans.’

‘How far off are your men?’ inquired John.

‘Not farther than I could throw an assagy; they are all flat on the ground, and waiting for orders from me.’

The night seemed to pass slowly, scarcely a man slept, all were eager for the first signs of daylight; and when at length it did appear, the enemy were seen creeping towards the waggons.

‘Now,’ said Copen, ‘you ride towards the waggons and fire your guns, then come back this way; we shall

lie concealed, and when you have passed us dismount from your horses; the enemy will think they can catch you before you remount, and will rush down towards you, then you will see how the Ama Zulu can fight.'

John acted on this advice, and having fired at the enemy, slowly retreated; and when the Zulus were between him and his enemy, halted and dismounted, and examined his horse's legs as though something were the matter.

On seeing this the enemy uttered a yell, and rushed down towards John; but when within about one hundred yards of him a shrill whistle was heard, and instantly more than five hundred Zulus sprang to their feet, and closed with the advancing foe.

A few assagies only were thrown, the fight was mostly hand to hand, whilst John and his party kept out of the thick of the fight, but sent bullet after bullet into the dense masses of the enemy.

The Zulus far outnumbered their foe, and though some few of the Zulus were slain, yet it was not long before the enemy were in full retreat. Then, however, in front of the foe, another large body of Zulus, who had been concealed, sprang to their feet, and the retreat of the remnant of Sikonyella's men was cut off. A fearful slaughter now took place; not a man of the party who had come to attack the waggons was alive an hour after daylight had commenced.

There were yet other parties of men to be disposed of, viz. those who had been detached to intercept the white men when they attempted to escape. So Copen, leaving about one hundred men at the waggons, at once set off in search of these parties.

It was long past midday when Copen returned to the waggons, and announced to John that eight men only out of Sikonyella's people had escaped by running, and that twenty of his fastest runners were in pursuit, and before the sun set would certainly assagy these.

'I hope you have not lost many men,' said John.

'About one hundred,' replied Copen; 'but we have killed more than six hundred, and when we take their shields and assagies to our chief, he will say we have done well.'

John now suggested that he and the other horsemen should ascend a hill near, and endeavour to discover some game which they might shoot, and so supply Copen and his men with a feast. In this search John was successful, as he saw a large herd of eland grazing on the plain, and not more than two miles from him. Five of these were killed, and a large party of Zulus were sent out to bring in the meat and skins.

When John returned to the waggons he looked round for E Bomvu, but could not see either him or his horse, and on making inquiries found that he had not been seen since the thick of the fight. Anxious for the safety of his faithful Zulu, he spoke to Copen, who immediately sent out several parties to search for the spoor of the horse; but several hours elapsed before any of these parties returned. When they did return, they brought back E Bomvu's horse, which they had found near some thick bush, but said the spoor of E Bomvu led into this bush, and also the spoor of another man; but they had not followed this far, as they thought there might be an ambuscade.

It being now near sundown the oxen were inspanned

and dragged about two miles from where the fight had taken place, and where the ground was covered with dead bodies. Then the conditions were similar to those described by the South African poet, who wrote :

‘ The wind is loud howling, the eager jackal,  
As the lengthened shadows more drearily fall,  
Shrieks forth his hymn to the hornèd moon,  
And the lord of the desert will follow him soon,  
And the leopard and panther come leaping along,  
All hymning to Hecate a festival song ;  
For the tumult is o’er, the slaughter has ceased,  
And the vulture has bidden them all to the feast.’

As the last rays of the sun illumined the sky, hundreds of vultures were seen circling above the battle-field, whilst soon after darkness had set in the shrieks of hyenas were heard from the locality of the late battle-field.

Around the waggons, but at some distance, were grouped the victorious Zulus, feasting on the elands which John had shot, whilst at the waggons was Copen and five other chiefs similarly occupied, and talking over the events of the day.

Although the victory gained by the Zulus would no doubt have been achieved without the aid of John and his companions, yet the effect of his firearms had made the result much more easy. The deadly bullets had knocked over many a stalwart warrior who was urging on his men to make a rush at some weak part of his foe’s line, and as these bullets had been fired with deadly effect at from one hundred to two hundred paces, each man soon began to fear to make himself too prominent.

The night had considerably advanced before the whole party lay down to sleep, every precaution having been taken to prevent a surprise, in case another large force of Sikonyella's people happened to be in the neighbourhood. Copen, however, although he had taken every precaution to guard against a surprise, asserted that he knew there was this one force only, out at the present time, and he believed that its chief object was to capture the waggons and to slaughter John and his party, of whose expedition into this country they had heard.

For some time John could not sleep, his anxiety about E Bomvu caused him to be restless. That this brave and devoted follower should have fallen in the battle he feared was too probable, especially when his horse was found riderless; yet there were no wounds on the horse, nor were there any marks of blood on the saddle. That E Bomvu was prudent as well as daring John knew, yet his disappearance and absence were grave causes for anxiety, and John was anything but happy when he thought of him.





## CHAPTER XLII.

### E BOMVU'S NEWS.



BOMVU fikeli' (E Bomvu has arrived), were the first words that John heard as he awoke some time after sunrise on the morning after the battle.

'Where is he?' inquired John of the Caffre who had given this intelligence.

'He is having his arm bound up where he received an assagy wound.'

'Tell him to come here when the business is finished.'

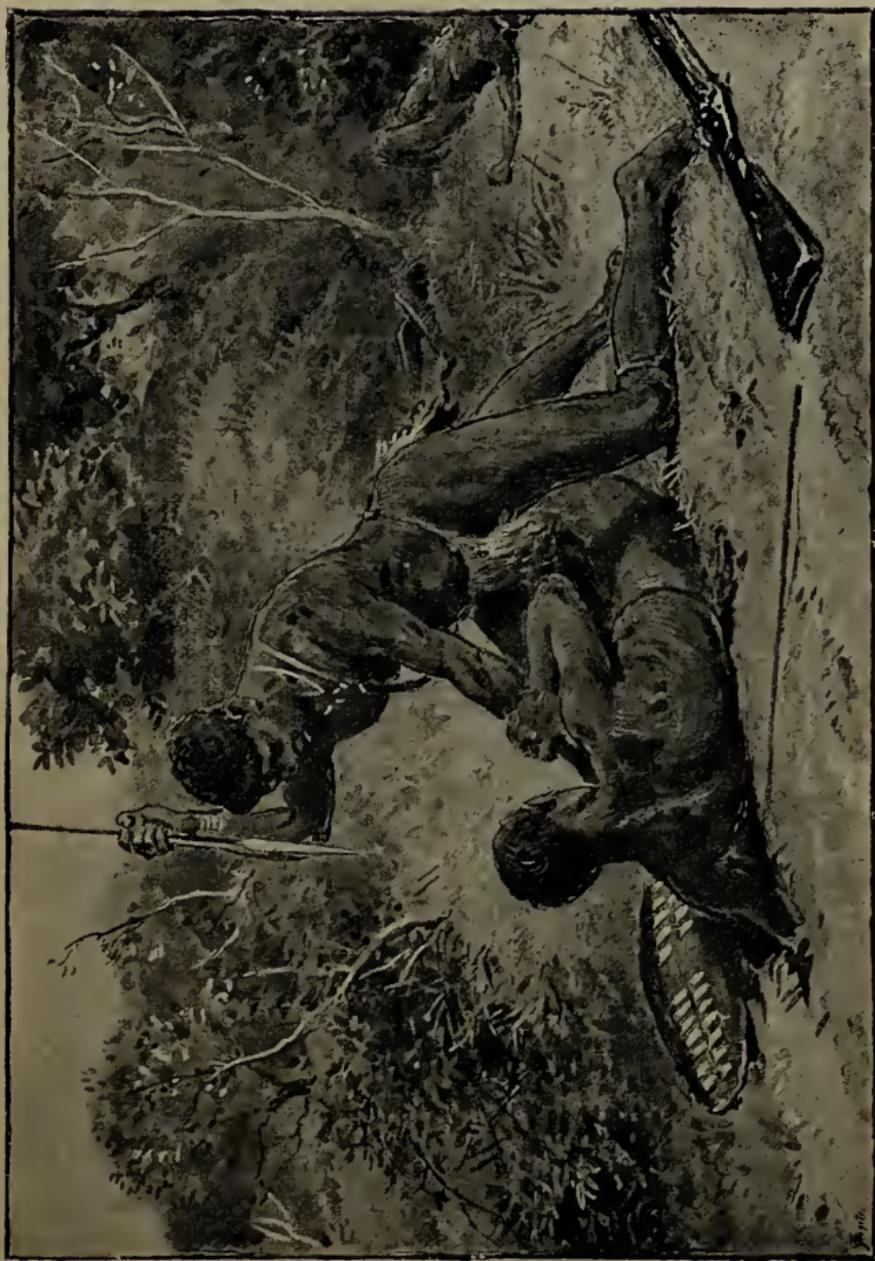
In a few minutes E Bomvu came to John, and was told to sit down and give an account of where he had been.

'Yesterday, chief,' said E Bomvu, 'in the fight I saw six men who were among those who intended to assagy you and your brother when I first saw you. These men knew me, and called me a runaway dog, and came at me all together. I fired my gun and killed two of them, then the others came on, and I rode away and loaded my gun; then these men ran away and I followed, but they separated and jumped about, getting behind bushes, so that I fired two shots and missed

them. Then they called me names again, so I followed them and shot two more, and only two men were left, and these two went into the bush. So I got off my horse and followed them into the bush, and went a long way through very thick cover, and then suddenly came on the two men I knew and two others whom I did not know. They had been waiting for me, and thought that as they were four to one that they would finish me. I had my assagy, but no shield, and I had my gun. These four men had no gun, but they had assagies and a shield each.

‘When I saw these men they were half an assagy’s throw from me, and I thought there might be twenty or thirty or more besides those I saw, and that I had better run to my horse, but I knew before I could get away two or three assagies would be in my back, and that then I should be caught. The two men I knew were the biggest and strongest of the four, so I shot one, then the other of these, although they jumped about very quick to prevent my taking a good aim.

‘Before I could load my gun the other two men came at me, and as they had shields and many assagies I knew I could not stand against them, so I went fast through the bush, and then turned round and came to where the men lay that I had shot. I dropped my gun and seized one of the shields and assagies, and sent an assagy through one of the two men who was coming at me. The other man threw an assagy at me at the same time, and it went through my arm, but I closed with him, and soon the blade of my assagy was to be seen coming out of his back.



E BOMVU'S EXPLOIT.



'I then loaded my gun, and cut the wood of the assagy that was through my arm, and pulled the wood out one way, the blade the other, but my arm bled very much, so I bound it up with the bark of a tree. Then I went back to where I had left the horse, and it was gone, but I saw the footprints of other horses, so I knew he had been taken back to the waggons. It was then nearly dark, so I went to another part of the bush where there was water, for I was very thirsty, and I rested there till it became light enough to see round me. Then I came on here, and had my arm bound up, and was told to come to you. *Indaba's am inkosi*' (that's my news, chief).

The whole of this account was given in the quietest manner by E Bomvu. He did not seem to think he had accomplished anything very wonderful in attacking single-handed four armed men, and gaining a victory over them; and when John told him that he might have lost the gun, he replied that he was at one time afraid that such might be the case.

It was decided that a short journey should be made during the day in the direction towards the Draakensberg, and then the Zulu army should accompany the waggons till they were safe through the passes of those mountains. This was not an entirely gratuitous proceeding on the part of the Zulus, because game was plentiful in the neighbourhood; but for the Zulus, unprovided as they were with firearms, it was difficult to obtain.

John and Grant enjoyed the sport, and each day shot elands, hartebeest, blesbok, and other game, and supplied meat in plenty to their companions.

Grant during this journey had gained experiences which rarely fall to the lot of English officers. He had learned how a few mounted men, armed with guns, could successfully fight against one hundred times their number on foot, when the latter were armed only with spears. He had learned how every shot fired must produce its result, and that it is a fatal error to waste



BLESBUCK AND GEMSBUCK.

ammunition. In fact, from being merely theoretical, he had become a practical soldier, and had learned not only how to destroy an enemy, but to take care of himself.

'John,' said Grant one evening, as they were sitting near the camp fire, 'it is a lucky thing that those Zulus came to us. I should not have minded the loss

of our waggons and oxen, for we probably should have lost them when the second attack was made on us, but we might have got into an awful row for having shot so many of those fellows. People in England don't understand these things, and there would certainly have been men who would have accused me of having shot down unnecessarily a lot of poor inoffensive natives. Now, however, the affair is pretty well mixed up. It may be described as a fight between two native tribes of which we were witnesses, and we need say nothing of the part we played in the affair.'

'Quite right,' said John; 'we happened to be near and saw it all, and only defended ourselves when attacked. That's the account to give; and I will tell the Hottentots to keep quiet, or there will be a row, and they may get into a scrape.'

A journey of eight days brought the waggons through the pass of the Draakensberg, and then Copen told John that on the following morning he and his men would return to their own country, but that he wished that evening to assemble his men and bid the white chief farewell.

Knowing the practice of these people, John agreed to this, and as the moon was full and the night fine, he had no objection to witness what he knew would be an interesting sight.

Shortly after the moon had risen, and her pale but bright light illuminated the scene, the Zulus formed a circle round the waggons and commenced a song, in which the leaders described the events of the battles. They first described how the two white men had

fought against hundreds, and had beaten them. Then how they had avoided the cunning of their enemies, who had tried to surround their waggons by night, and had again shot them down by tens.

Then came the Ama Zulu, and the white chief was their friend, and helped to defeat the enemy, and sent his bullets always into the bodies of his enemies. Accounts were given of several encounters that had taken place, among which that of E Bomvu against his four enemies occupied a prominent position; 'but,' shouted the men, 'E Bomvu is a Zulu and so can fight, and he has been with the white chief and so can shoot. We will tell our great chief what the young white chief has done to whom he gave permission to shoot elephants many moons ago.'

The singing and feasting were kept up long after midnight, and then the camp became quiet, except for the murmuring of a few Zulus who seemed not to need sleep, and to be capable of eating all night.

At daybreak on the following morning, Copen and the other chiefs bid good-by to John and Grant, and the Zulus started on their journey, laden with much meat and with the shields and assagies of their slain enemies. As John and Grant saw them depart, the latter said, 'What would people in England give to have seen the fight we saw, or even to have witnessed what occurred last night? These Zulus are fine fellows, and I never could have believed, had I not seen it, what perfect gentlemen they are, though probably in England they would be termed savages. I would not have missed what I have seen for anything, and

though our diamonds are valuable, my experience I consider more so. I hope our people may never go to war with the Zulus, or we shall have tough work, and it would be a shame to shoot down such really fine fellows, or to spoil them by half civilizing them.





## CHAPTER XLIII.

### CHANGES AT NATAL.



ON the return of John's expedition to Pietermaritzburg, a report was made by Grant of the fight that had taken place. He did not, however, think it necessary to give any details as to the active part which he and John had taken in the affair, and nothing unpleasant occurred in consequence. It was supposed that the two tribes had fought, and that Grant and his party happened to be in the neighbourhood when it occurred.

Grant, who was now well acquainted with the value of diamonds, weighed carefully the various stones that they had obtained, especially the very large one worn by the native. He announced to John that the smaller stones would be worth about ten thousand pounds, but the large one might be worth from thirty to forty thousand.

He considered that some Indian rajah might buy the large one when it was cut, and suggested that whilst the others should be sold in the rough in England, the large one should be sent to Holland to

be cut, and then disposed of in India. More than a year elapsed before these mercantile arrangements were completed, and it does not interfere with this tale to relate that Grant's estimate was within the value, the large diamond being purchased by an Indian rajah for four lacs of rupees, equal to forty thousand pounds, whilst the other diamonds were sold for twelve thousand pounds. Thus John and Grant, after paying all expenses, divided more than fifty-one thousand pounds between them as the result of their late expedition.

It was about this time that the value of Natal became generally known in England and other parts of Europe, and several ships came to the Bay laden with emigrants, English, German, Swiss, and others arriving in hundreds. Some of these emigrants possessed money, but several landed with nothing but their clothes and a small carpet bag. The land that had not been bought, was given in small portions by the Government to several of these emigrants, and the country, which had previously been uninhabited except by wild animals, soon became fairly, if not thickly populated.

To John this arrival of people was distasteful. He preferred the country as it was, and he soon found that various districts in which game formerly abounded was now deserted by wild animals, which had fled before the advance of civilization. The demand for good land became very great, and John had several offers for some of the land of which he was the owner; but as he desired to keep emigrants from crowding into certain localities, he refused to sell, although in some instances land that he had bought for forty

or fifty pounds he could have sold for more than one thousand.

This refusal to sell eventually proved to be a profitable proceeding, for one large tract of land that John had purchased for two hundred and fifty pounds was so much sought after that he eventually sold one half of it for fifteen thousand pounds. His companion, Grant, had also made some successful purchases, and had sold for ten times as much as he had given, large quantities of land, so that, profitable as had been the search for diamonds, the purchase of land had been equally successful.

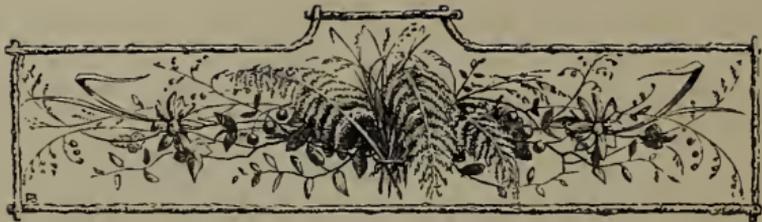
Strange to say, all this wealth did not add to John's happiness. The country now was not what it had been ; where he could formerly shoot a rietbuck or a duiker was now destitute of all game. The bush in which he could trap a leopard or get a shot at an elephant was now avoided by these animals, because the emigrants swarmed in the country ; and although they killed very little, yet the perpetual discharge of their guns alarmed the animals and caused them to avoid their former haunts, and to seek for more distant and safer regions, which man had not as yet invaded.

During these few years changes had taken place in other ways as regards John. His father had died somewhat suddenly ; his brother had been badly wounded by the frontier Caffres ; and Grant's term of service at Natal having expired, he was, according to army routine, ordered from Natal to England, and employed at office work, for which he was but imperfectly fitted, whilst an officer succeeded him who was utterly un-

acquainted with the country and the people among whom he was now located.

These changes had caused John to feel dissatisfied, although he possessed large quantities of land, money, horses, and cattle. The free wild life he had led had unfitted him for the bonds of civilization, and he longed once more to visit lands untrodden by man, and to experience the same excitement that he had really enjoyed during his former visits into the wilderness.





## CHAPTER XLIV.

### SETTLED IN THE ZULU COUNTRY.



EARLY one morning, as John was examining his guns and giving them a polish, E Bomvu came to him and said, 'Inkosi, Amazulu fikeli kaluma na we' (Chief, Zulus have arrived to talk with you).

John walked out to where he saw a group of Zulus sitting on the ground, and was at once welcomed by the chief Copen and some others, who had been in the fight with John when his waggons had been attacked.

Copen intimated to John that he had something to say to him which must not be listened to by everybody; so John, having given directions for food to be given to the other Zulus, asked Copen into his house, and then intimated that he would hear what he wished to say.

Copen then informed John that when he had returned to Zululand and had given his chief an account of the battle that had taken place, and how effective the white men's guns had proved against the enemy, the chief and his councillors had come to the conclusion that to give strength to the Zulu nation it was

necessary that they should possess guns. It was found, however, that these guns could not be procured from Natal, as traders were forbidden to supply the Zulus with guns or gunpowder.

There was no difficulty, however, in obtaining fire-arms from the east of Zululand, and lately the great chief had succeeded in becoming possessed of more than three hundred guns by a means which Copen was forbidden to reveal. The Zulus, however, did not know how to use these guns, and the great chief, knowing how ably John could use a gun, now sent to know if John would visit Zululand and teach the men how to be certain to kill with powder and bullets.

Having listened to this request, John, who was now an able business man, inquired what the great Zulu chief proposed to give him, in case he agreed to the proposal. 'If,' said John, 'I teach your soldiers how to use guns, it must be first understood that these are never to be used against white men. Then, when they know how to use them, your people will be stronger than any other tribe near you. So what will the chief give me for what I am asked to do?'

'I don't know,' replied Copen, 'what the chief will give you, but he would like you to name what you wish to have.'

'To-morrow I will talk to you again,' said John; 'in the meantime go to E Bomvu and tell him to supply you with food, as much as you require.'

When alone, John thought over this proposition, and fancied he saw a solution for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs at Natal. He believed that the guns obtained by the Zulus were most probably old muskets,

with which they could not do so much damage to white men as they could with their assagies and knobkerries. Besides, there appeared no chance of a collision between the Zulus and the English, so that no harm would be done by teaching them how to load, aim, and fire.

On the following morning John summoned Copen, and informed him that he had thought over the proposition, and he would teach everything about the guns and also help the Zulu chief in his first war against any one but white men, provided the chief would give him a large tract of country near the coast, in which were elephants, buffaloes, hippopotami, and other large game, and that the sole right of shooting these animals was to be given to him.

‘I will tell my chief what you say,’ replied Copen, ‘and then he may ask you to come and see him to talk about the matter ; but my chief likes elephants’ tusks, as he sells these to traders, and if he gives all these to you it will be much.’

‘I have spoken,’ replied John ; ‘the chief may do as he likes, but he must remember that I would also help him in his fights, and you have seen what I can do with my guns.’

‘I hope you will come,’ replied Copen ; ‘and if you do, that you will let me go with you when you shoot elephants and buffaloes. I and my people will now leave, and your words shall be given to the chief.’

The messengers of a great African chief travel quickly, although they merely make their way on foot, consequently little more than a week elapsed before Copen returned and again sought an interview with

John, whom he informed that the Zulu chief had listened to his words, and was favourably disposed to accept the conditions, and hoped that John would visit him without delay.

It required but a few hours for John to make his preparations for the journey. He took a light waggon and a splendid team of oxen. In the waggon were many presents for the chief, among which were a pair of opera-glasses, a mirror, and other articles, which he knew would be acceptable to the smaller chiefs. Three of his best horses were also taken on the journey, and a large stock of ammunition for his guns.

Giving the waggon two days' start to travel over that part of the country in which game was not very plentiful, John started at sunrise, attended by E Bomvu, and some hours before sundown reached the outspan. Once more in the wild open country, with no houses or white men near, John felt thoroughly happy. He had realized the fact that—

‘There is freedom and joy and pride  
Afar in the desert alone to ride ;’

and that, whatever may be the charms of civilization, yet the wild life of the desert, when once experienced, ever clings longingly to the memory.

On reaching the vicinity of the great chief's kraal in Zululand, John was received with great honour. Thousands of Zulus were drawn up in lines in their war dresses, and shouts of welcome were given him. The fame he had gained during his late battles was known to the whole Zulu nation, and the accuracy of his shooting and the skill he had shown in beating off

hundreds of enemies was fully appreciated by such warriors as were the Zulus.

The chief received John in a very friendly manner, and told him he had heard how he had helped his army to defeat their enemies, and he hoped he would now teach his young men to fight as well as he had fought. John asked if he had heard the terms he had named for his services.

‘Yes,’ replied the chief; ‘and you shall have what you require. I have much land, and can spare you plenty; you shall be a great chief, and my friend.’

It occupied several days to make all the arrangements in connection with the choice of land, boundaries, etc., but at length John found himself the possessor of an enormous tract of beautiful land, much of which was of park-like scenery, whilst other portions consisted of dense forest teeming with game. On the borders of this forest John saw the footprints of elephants, buffaloes, koodoos, and various antelopes. In the lakes and streams hippopotami were numerous, whilst the open country was suitable as grazing ground for cattle and horses.

Having selected a suitable locality for a house, John sent to Natal for some men, to whom he gave plans by aid of which they built a large and comfortable house, which he surrounded by a large and stout stockade. He at once set to work to plant orange and lemon trees, bananas, and several kinds of vegetables used in England. He selected several minor chiefs to come and form kraals at some distance from his house, and the wives and daughters of these chiefs and their people

were employed in cultivating the soil and in gathering the various crops.

In the meantime John had been instructing the Zulus how to load their guns, how to keep them clean and in good order, and how to take aim and fire; and though it was evident that these men would never be expert marksmen, yet they could make fair shots at stationary objects, and would be very formidable opponents to men armed only with assagies and knobkerries. The Zulu chief was quite satisfied with the instruction his men had obtained, and looked on John as a friend, whose advice he asked on all important occasions.

The position which John now occupied was that of a king, and few kings in civilized countries possessed as much power as he did. He ruled the large district which had been given him judiciously, but with an iron hand; for semi-savages, as the Zulus might be termed, could not be managed in the same manner as could white men.

Not a gun was allowed to be fired, nor an animal killed in John's country, without his special permission. He was very careful to establish and carry out a sort of game law, so as to allow the animals to increase in numbers rather than to be exterminated.

During several months of the breeding season no hunting or shooting was allowed. The females of the various animals were rarely killed, and where the various antelopes fed was almost a forbidden locality, whereon men were not allowed to trespass.

The laws made by William the Conqueror for the preservation of game in the New Forest were not more

rigidly carried out than were those framed by John for the same purpose in his district. But whilst the King of England could hunt only such game as red and fallow deer, wild boar, and other small game, John could have a day's sport with the mighty elephant, the formidable buffalo, the stately koodoo, or the ponderous hippopotamus. He could also have a quiet and less exciting day's sport, when he went in search of bush buck, riet-buck, duikers, bustards, partridges, guinea-fowl, or other feathered game. His hunting grounds were so extensive, and he never overshot any locality, that the game were never too much disturbed, and therefore did not travel to other countries. He could thus select what game he should shoot on particular days, and be certain of success. His large herds of cattle increased rapidly, and he also took to breeding horses, some nearly thoroughbred horses being now in his country.

George Dean, having recovered from his wounds, had decided to leave the army, and John had offered him his house at the Congella, Natal, and had given him half the land in that locality. The rapid increase in the value of land at Natal had tempted John to sell some, and he had now invested his capital in various ways, so that his income was very large; but in his case a small income would have been sufficient, as he had no desire for what people in civilization consider luxuries—his luxuries were the rights of shooting, and being undisturbed by crowds of white men.

On one occasion, when visiting his brother at Natal, he heard from one of the merchants at D'Urban that great excitement existed at Cape Town in consequence of diamonds having been found near the Vaal River,

and that a rush of diggers was being made to that locality.

On examining a map, John found that the locality where these diamonds had been discovered was hundreds of miles from where he and Grant had procured theirs. He therefore knew that there were two diamond fields—one known to the public, the other to him and Grant only. He determined to keep secret the fact of this second diamond deposit in case he ever wished to visit the country again; and knowing how the country would be ruined, as far as sport was concerned, if thousands of diamond diggers located on it, he determined that from him no information should be given, which should lead to a knowledge of what there existed.

John found that the town of D'Urban was much altered even during the few months that had elapsed since he had last seen it. Hundreds of houses had been built, and crowds of white men were now seen where formerly the bush or the plains contained merely wild animals. Nearly all the newly-arrived emigrants brought with them some kind of gun, and during the first few weeks after their arrival these men would wander about the country shooting small birds, monkeys, and other creatures, which hitherto had never been fired at by real sportsmen.

In the early morning the Bay of Natal was formerly visited by flamingoes, a beautiful bird with pale pink plumage; by pelicans, herons, and other aquatic fowls, which, being unfit for food, were unmolested by sportsmen, and were allowed to ornament the scenery of the Bay. To the newly-arrived emigrant these birds

offered great attractions, and were fired at (but rarely killed) on every possible occasion. Consequently these birds soon deserted this locality, and sought to obtain their food in less frequented parts.

All these changes John saw with regret and almost anger, and he determined to keep his own country unpolluted by such people.

Having laid in a large stock of groceries, such as coffee, tea, sugar, etc., John returned to his home in the Zulu country, feeling the greatest pleasure in being once more far removed from the crowds that he had seen at D'Urban.

Shortly after his return, John received a message from the Zulu chief, saying that an important meeting of chiefs was to be held, and that John's presence was requested, as great questions had to be talked about.

On reaching the chief's kraal, John found nearly all the minor chiefs assembled; these men received him as an honoured chief, and when the council assembled he was given the seat of honour next to the great chief. There were two subjects to be discussed on this occasion, each of considerable importance to the Zulu nation.

Not so many years ago the laws in England were much more severe than at present. For various crimes men suffered death, whereas now a few years of penal servitude, or even imprisonment, are considered a suitable punishment. In the Zulu country death was a punishment given for certain crimes, and possibly under the conditions then existing such sentences were unavoidable.

The question to be first discussed on the present

occasion was with regard to a minor chief who had stolen some cattle from a neighbouring chief, and upon the theft being discovered had refused to come to the great kraal to have the case tried, and had thus defied the authority of the chief. He had then seized as many cattle as he could procure, and with a few followers had crossed the Tugela River, and had thus entered the English colony, and had dared the Zulu chief to follow him.

A deputation had been sent by the Zulu chief to the Natal Government, asking that this man should be given up in order that he might be punished; but the Natal Government had replied, that as this man had sought the protection of the English, he should obtain this protection, for they knew that if this man were given up to the Zulu chief he would at once be assagied.

This refusal to surrender a criminal the Zulus considered most unjust. That a man might commit any crime, and then escape punishment by running away and placing himself under English protection, and then laugh at his former chief, was considered by the Zulus most unjust; and they could not understand how people who asserted that they wished to be friendly with them could behave in this manner.

One of the chiefs spoke most eloquently on this matter, and asserted that if any white men committed robbery in Natal, and then ran away into Zululand in order to escape punishment, these men would at once be given up.

‘If,’ said the chief, ‘one of my children committed a crime against me, and then ran away to a neighbouring

kraal to escape punishment, should I consider the chief of that kraal my friend if he refused to give up my child, and stated that if I endeavoured to capture that child he would attack me? Such proceedings would do away with all law and order, and that which is good between two kraals must be good between two great peoples such as the Ama Zulu and Umlungo (white man). We are strong,' said this chief; 'why should we be treated in this way by the white men? We could do by force what is refused in justice; why should we be treated like children?'

A murmur of applause was given by the younger chiefs at the termination of this speech.

Another chief then rose and said, 'I have been to Musi injlovu (Pietermaritzburg), and I have seen the white soldiers there. Not more than five hundred men are there. We could bring forty thousand warriors against them, and could eat them up. Why should we submit to be treated as we are treated? We are strong; they are weak. Our new white chief is just, and has come among us as one of us. He must know that what I say is true, and that we must not submit to be dealt with as though we were children.'

Applause followed this speech, and John, seeing that the matter was becoming serious, rose and spoke.

'I have heard,' said John, 'what the chiefs have said. It is true what they have spoken. There are few soldiers in Natal, and it is quite possible that *our* army might overrun Natal and might kill many white men, but the soldiers would make themselves secure in their fort, and you could not kill them.

'What you see of the army is nothing—there is only

one impi (army) there ; but in two or three months twenty or even one hundred such armies would be sent for ; and as all these would be provided with guns, they would come here and would drive us out of the country. We must not fight the white men. I know how numerous and strong they are, though but a few of them show here. We must try by talking to show them how unjust they are to protect our people, who are guilty of breaking our laws. I speak as a Zulu, not as a white man, and I know that what I say is true.'

The older and more experienced chiefs agreed with John, and the meeting, which at first seemed to threaten war, eventually decided on peace.

The second question to be decided on by this council was the proceedings of a neighbouring tribe, some members of which had encroached on the boundary and had stolen cattle, and had slaughtered men, women, and children.

After some of the chiefs had spoken, John rose and said that this was a case where the Zulus could not submit to be so insulted and unjustly treated, and proposed that an impi should be at once ordered to visit the neighbourhood, and teach the neighbouring tribe how to behave. He said that he was now the great friend of the chief, and wished to do his best for him and for the Zulus, and would accompany this impi with the men he had taught to use guns, and would if necessary show their enemies that the Ama Zulu must be treated with respect.

A loud murmur of applause greeted John's speech ;

and as preparations were not long in being made, a party of ten thousand Zulus, including John's trained men, were ordered to start on the following morning on this expedition.

The command of this army was given to Copen, who, however, consulted with John as regarded the principal movements. The boundary line between the two tribes was reached, and then messengers were sent to demand the surrender of the men who had stolen the cattle and killed the men. These messengers returned, but merely with the statement that the Zulus might come and take the men if they wished, an announcement equivalent to a defiance.

'Then it is war,' said John to Copen, 'and we must give them a lesson. They are probably prepared for us in some strong position, but I don't think they know that we have many guns among us.'

'We must fight,' said Copen, 'and you and your guns will surprise them.'

Half a day's journey had been made into the enemy's country, when a large force was seen drawn up to oppose the advance of the Zulus. Seeing this, John made arrangements for a surprise, and he explained his plan to Copen, who at once approved of it.

Two large companies of Zulus advanced towards the enemy, and when within about one hundred yards of them, suddenly wheeled outwards, leaving a wide open space between them. The enemy, seeing this open space, considered that a mistake had been made, and charged at it. Rising from the long grass in which they had been lying concealed, one hundred of John's men fired a volley at the advancing foe, and then fell

flat on the ground, when another body of one hundred Zulus sprang to their feet and fired another volley. The effect of these two volleys was fearful, as the second was delivered at a distance of little more than sixty yards. The enemy were at once panic-stricken, and retreated, followed by the Zulu army; whilst John's men reloaded, and stood ready in case a reverse occurred.

The enemy having fled, the Zulus proceeded to collect cattle and to burn kraals, and before evening were on their way back to their own country, having gained a complete victory over their enemy.

The Zulu chief was delighted with the success that had been obtained by the firearms, and was now most anxious to obtain larger numbers; but John told him that through him they could not be obtained. During the next few months, however, more than two hundred guns found their way by some means into the hands of the Zulus, and this nation was becoming slowly but surely armed with firearms, and consequently was less and less disposed to submit to the dictation of their neighbours.

Another difficulty now presented itself, viz. the encroachment of the Boers in the north-east of Zululand. The Boers had migrated from various parts, and had taken up their position in what is now termed the Transvaal, and had endeavoured to secure positions in localities which the Zulus claimed as their special property.

John thus found that he had plenty of occupation in attending the various councils, and endeavouring to maintain peace, and he distinctly intimated to the Zulu

chief that he would take no part in any war against either the Boers or the English.

It was impossible that a white man could occupy the position which John occupied without incurring the jealousy of some of the Zulus; but as several of the leading chiefs were partial to John, he managed to maintain his influence with the tribe. There were also among the colonists several men who found his presence in the Zulu country inconvenient, as these men could not cheat the Zulus as they had formerly succeeded in doing.

Some of these traders endeavoured to prove that John was supplying the Zulus with guns and gunpowder. All these matters, however, did not much affect John. He attended to his business, and devoted much of his time to cultivating various trees and plants, which the fine climate suited. Indigo, sugar-cane, pine apples, cotton, oranges, lemons, bananas, and other trees he found thrived admirably, and grew so rapidly that in a few years the grounds round his house were like a vast conservatory. To protect these trees from the visits of elephants, John had built a more extended stockade. His house and grounds were like a strong fort, into which it was difficult to enter without the consent of the owner.

The interior of the house was decorated with the heads and horns of several magnificent animals that had fallen to John's guns. The long spiral horns of several koodoos, the massive heads of several bull buffaloes, heads and horns of elands, hartebeest, gemsbok, water buck, bush buck, rietbuck, and other animals were arranged round the walls, whilst several lion and leopard skins were stretched on the floor.

As the game was driven far up the country by the crowds of emigrants and explorers, sport was becoming rare within a month's journey of Natal. But in John's country, owing to his care, and to the absence of indiscriminate slaughter, the wild animals increased in numbers; and as he waged a fierce war against leopards and hyenas, both of which animals destroyed numbers of antelopes, he succeeded in keeping his country well stocked with rare animals. It therefore became a matter of great competition to be asked to shoot with John; and when he did invite friends, he selected those who could enjoy sport without slaughter.

As more and more emigrants came to Natal, and that country became more crowded, the value of John's land was more thoroughly appreciated, and he consequently was more than ever particular that he should not be crowded out.

E Bomvu, his old companion, was the chief ruler under him, and kept the precincts of the house sacred from the tread of intruders. Many traders endeavoured to visit or locate themselves in the country; but they were turned out without ceremony, and rarely ventured a second time to pay a visit to the same locality.

As time went on the Zulus became more completely supplied with firearms, and had it not been for the influence exercised by John, and the peaceful disposition of Panda, the Zulu chief, there would have been war between the Zulus and the English, the former being conscious of their strength, and becoming irritated at the manner in which they were interfered with by the Natal Government.

Panda at length died, and was succeeded by his son

Cetewayo, and John found this chief just, but more anxious to increase the power of the Zulu nation than was his father. On every possible occasion John endeavoured to impress on the young chief the importance of not having a war with the English, and cautioned him not to judge of the strength of the English nation by the few soldiers he saw at Natal, as thousands of men would arrive in ships a month or two after war commenced, and the Zulu nation would be broken up.

Cetewayo stated that he had no wish for war ; but if he were interfered with, or his country invaded, he would show the English how his warriors could fight. He also stated that he would not allow the Boers to encroach on his land to the north-east. ' These Boers,' said Cetewayo, ' defeated my grandfather Dingaan, and shot down many hundreds of our people ; but then we had no guns and no horses, and could do nothing against them ; now we have both, and are far more numerous than are the Boers, so that I have no fear of them ; my warriors could wipe them out in a very short time.'

It was evident to John that sooner or later there would be war in the land. The English committed the fatal error of underrating the strength of the Zulus. Another influence, however, was at work, viz. that to many traders at Natal war meant a fortune. Every article of food, horses, cattle, waggons, etc., would increase enormously in value if a war took place, and great numbers of troops arrived in Natal. The only fear that these people had was whether the Zulus would overrun Natal and slaughter the inhabitants. Should

this proceeding not occur, then a Zulu war meant making money.

Matters were in this condition, that on the slightest pretext a war was likely to break out, with a result which it was easy to predict would eventually be fatal to the power of the Zulus, whatever damage these people might do before they were finally conquered.

When the Zulu war did break out, John endeavoured to maintain a neutral position, and to avoid being mixed up in the affair. He considered the invasion of the Zulu country unjust and uncalled for; but he felt it a duty to caution the English not to be too confident, as the Zulus were well armed, brave, and capable of moving with great rapidity.

The neglect of these precautions, and the reckless self-confidence of those in command, resulted in a slaughter at Isandula more disastrous than any which has occurred to our troops during the past fifty years.

The Zulu nation has been broken up; but John Dean still survives, and lives the life he has elected to live; and the diamond field from which he gathered so many valuable gems has yet to be found by the regular digger.



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