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SPORT AND TRAVEL  
PAPERS







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**SPORT AND TRAVEL PAPERS**





# SPORT AND TRAVEL PAPERS

BY

H. MELLADEW

LONDON : T. FISHER UNWIN  
ADELPHI TERRACE · MCMIX

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**To**  
**COLONEL R. F. T. GASCOIGNE, D.S.O.**  
**MY COMPANION IN SEVERAL OF**  
**THESE EXPEDITIONS**



SK31.  
M4

## PREFACE

**T**HESSE articles, with the exception of Nos. I. and II., were written immediately after the events described in them had occurred—in the year given above each—as a short record of travel and sport intended in old age to amuse and recall to my mind many delightful scenes then perhaps faded or forgotten.

They are now collected and printed privately to be offered to my friends, although I greatly fear that what I—it being part of my life—find interesting they might think the reverse.

As a compromise, therefore, I hope to provide an attractive cover.

Some of the articles having already been published, my sincere thanks are offered to the Editors of *Baily's Magazine*, *Field*, *Land and Water*, and *Glasgow Herald* for permission to reprint them.

4, DOWN STREET, W.





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# SPORT AND TRAVEL PAPERS

## I

### A REMINISCENCE

**T**HE 10th of December, 18—, was a great day for the village of G., situated in the northern part of Germany; for were not the adjoining coverts to be shot, and were not all the young men enlisted as beaters, and the old curious to know what the bag would be?—a matter already discussed and talked over for many an evening in the favourite beerhouse, over numerous glasses, and many a pipe.

The train from the neighbouring town had just come to a stop at the little station where the villagers were assembled to watch the arrival of the shooters, who, wrapped in enormous fur coats—for it was very cold—were slowly descending from the carriages. The keepers having taken charge of the several guns, all carefully cased in leathern covers, and of an equal number of those now old-fashioned carpet-bags, then so strikingly worked in wool, with designs of various animals of the chase, or with gorgeous wreaths of flowers more or less true to nature, or devices such as “safe voyage,” &c., the party walked to the Station inn, attended by an admiring crowd of villagers, to leave coats and get ready for the serious work before it. The buxom landlady with the latest baby in her arms, and her sleepy-looking husband in shirt sleeves and wooden shoes—with the mouth-piece of a long German pipe between his teeth—greet the arrivals, as host and hostess should, and usher them into the parlour; this very stuffy apartment has a sanded floor, a bar in one corner and iron stove in the other, and two or three tables and wooden benches ranged along the wall. Heavy coats are

now taken off, while the landlord, never letting go of his faithful pipe, the capacious china bowl of which is adorned by a brilliant painting of a lady's curly head, talks about the weather, the prospect of sport, the result of the last potato crop, &c., pouring out at the same time a glass of "Schnaps" for everybody to keep the cold out and for luck; then were the last preparations made before taking the field. Game-bags, with long roomy nets, closed by flaps either worked in wool in likeness, complimentary or otherwise, of fox, deer, or dog, or made of the skin of either of the two former, are slung over the right shoulder by means of embroidered straps—Christmas presents, no doubt, from the "frauen"—balanced by powder-horn and shot-bag over the other. Wads are safely stowed away in one pocket and caps in another, for this, of course, was long before breechloaders had come into use here.

It was a great event for me, boy as I was, for although both partridges and hares had already fallen to my gun, I had never shot anything as big as a fox—reader, hunting was here utterly unknown—or roe-deer, both of which, with luck, I was to see and perhaps even kill for the first time. It was indeed a great day for me—a day on which I intended to show the world what a mighty hunter I was. How long the minutes seemed before at last every one was ready to start, before the slowest had filled his pipe, finished his "Schnaps," wiped his spectacles, settled his accoutrements satisfactorily, and paid the last compliment to the pretty landlady! I, of course, had nothing to get ready, nothing to do except to throw off my coat, under which everything required had at home already been arranged to the smallest detail, ready to do battle at once with the beasts of the field. At last, to my intense satisfaction, a start was made; all were very warmly clothed, with long boots, some with fur collars and cuffs, fur caps, one or two even with muffs, or fur gloves suspended from the neck by a cord. The guns, provided with a strap, were slung over one shoulder, cigars and pipes were in full blast, and a good deal of chaff went the rounds, more particularly at the expense of a very stout, short-sighted, and spectacled individual, who trudged along with both hands deeply buried in a muff, upon which a fox's head was worked in the brightest colours, with the pinkest of noses and the bluest of eyes. Now at these annual shoots, to which the neighbouring



landowners and their friends were invited, certain regulations prevailed to which, unwritten though they were, every one bowed, including several fines, which, however, were not always easy to collect. There were penalties for missing and omitting to shoot when game was sufficiently close to the gun to make killing a reasonable certainty—a difficult point to prove, and likely to lead to a good deal of dispute. The fines for missing or not firing at a hare were of course small, but they rose when it came to a fox or a roe-deer. Only the bucks of the latter were allowed to be shot; to kill a doe was not only visited by the highest penalty, but was also, and very naturally (the deer being scarce), considered a great disgrace. However, the possibility of mistaking a harmless doe for a horned buck never entered my head when walking to the first covert along a road which, in my youthful impatience, appeared endless, as the pace at which we moved seemed to resemble that of a funeral procession. And then half-way we stopped to load, that long and tedious proceeding which, thank goodness, breechloaders have long since done away with. It always took a long time, commencing with the snapping of caps, the end of the barrel being held against a bit of grass, which showed by its recoil whether the nipples were clear or otherwise. As everything must end, so at last the loading also was completed; but I, of course, had finished first, and had not forgotten to add to the shot a pellet found a week before in a roasted partridge, and therefore considered a certain hitter; this pellet, after very nearly breaking my tooth, had since been carefully treasured in the waistcoat pocket, whence it now was disinterred once more to be despatched on its deadly errand. At last we arrived at a belt of young firs and larches, beeches and various shrubs, and were posted by the keeper with strict injunctions on no account to leave our places, and then the drive commenced, producing nothing, however, but a few hares, one of which I slew, and a woodcock, at which every one fired, to the great danger of everybody else. Next we went to a thick covert, part of an extensive wood, the remains of a forest which once had covered the whole of the country, where roe-deer were known to be. We were soon again in our places, mine being in a very thick patch of young firs and low oak scrub, growing under some higher birch and beech-trees, where I could see my neighbour on either side. My mind was terribly occupied

about the roe-deer, praying that a buck might come and not a doe, I having sundry misgivings as to being able to tell one from the other in the thick underwood at the pace they would probably come. After hiding myself as thoroughly as possible behind a tree, I had just full-cocked my gun when the cries and shouts of the beaters began to be heard, becoming louder and louder every minute, the magic word "deer" being distinctly audible. I well remember how intense was now my excitement, reaching its culminating point when I heard something heavy, which I knew must be a deer, come galloping straight to where I was; all at once something brown flashed past, visible for a moment only among some bushes. There was no time for thought of buck or doe, or of the direction of my neighbour—that was a matter altogether of secondary consideration—up and off went the gun, something heavy came down with a crash among the scrub behind me, and—it was not my spectacled friend; he, no doubt, scenting the mortal danger he was in, had had the sense to retire behind his tree. A few hares, a fox, &c., were shot at, missed, or killed, and the drive was over. Full of curiosity, though my curiosity had a strong leaven of anxiety as to the sex of my victim, about which, ever since the shot, the gravest misgiving had troubled me, I, with several others, went to look for it, when, to my horror, some inconsiderate brute proclaimed to the world that I had shot a doe! That moment I shall never forget; my pride at having killed something big, and with considerable skill, too, was utterly crushed; I prayed to sink into the ground, to be wafted thousands of miles away, and wished other impossibilities which people desire at similarly disagreeable moments. The excuse of youth, made for one who already considered himself a man, made me furious, and when, at the next beat, somebody suggested smilingly that I should shoot no more does, I could have killed him. However, for this I had my revenge before long. As the deed was done and no amount of talking could bring the unfortunate doe to life again, we were presently in our places once more, the short-sighted man who had offered me the above advice, and whom I therefore cordially hated, being posted on my left. In front of us was an open grassy space with a hedge on the further side. I was the right-hand gun, "spectacles" next to me, and beyond him the guns were placed along the edge of the covert. First came a

hare slowly lolloping along towards me, which I presently bowled over. I hope you are a female, you brute! I thought, for I was angry with the sex. My neighbour shot another, nearly giving me the opportunity to fine him for omitting to fire when engaged with a pinch of snuff. I missed a woodcock, but rolled over two more hares in gallant style, while a good deal of shooting went on all along the line. It was a long beat, and produced no more roe but something far heavier than any deer, this time added to the bag of my neighbour. The beat was nearly over, when "spectacles" espied something move behind the hedge on his left front; although very short-sighted, he came to the conclusion that it was a hare, and fired—with the most extraordinary result. A frightful yell was the first intimation that "spectacles" had hit his mark, followed by the most wonderful contortions and *pas-de-seul* danced on the other side of the hedge by one of the guns in a most peculiar *déshabille*, calling strongly to mind one of the toy figures which, on pulling a string, throw their arms about, dancing all the while madly with their legs. This was accompanied by some of the strongest language, levelled at the horrified author of the entertainment. Of course every one at once went to the assistance of the unfortunate man who was holding on with both hands to a certain part of his person as if afraid it would drop off. If the pain had not visibly been so severe, the spectacle would have been a most laughable one, for it was some time before the victim could be persuaded that standing still would be less painful than jumping about—poor devil—he could not sit down! The accident was partly his own fault, for having left his post; but he had tried to hide himself behind the fence, though not successfully altogether, for "spectacles" spotted him and held straight. I could not resist asking the latter afterwards not to shoot any more people, in revenge for his request to me (which had so unreasonably got my blood up) to leave the does alone in future.

## II

### A SKETCH IN AN INDIAN JUNGLE

1867

**E**IGHTEEN years ago, just before sunrise, and not a thousand miles from Calcutta: in the immediate foreground a swiftly rushing and beautifully clear mountain stream, noisily splashing here and there against an immense boulder, and lashing itself into foam and spray on its well-worn surface, as if in anger at the obstacle which it itself had brought there during its fiercer moods when, swollen by the rains into a powerful torrent, it had swept everything before it—rocks, trees, and whole clumps of bamboo, anything and everything in the greatest confusion, down through the narrow valleys and mountain gorges on its way to the great rivers of the plains. Only a small stream now remains in place of the raging torrent of the days when it had cut the high bank on this side so sharply, and hollowed it out so deeply; and when it ran its mad course over that wide expanse of rock and stone-covered sand which now stretches away dry on the other side as far as the edge of the forest—that long dense belt of high tree jungle opposite, which gradually rises to clothe the lofty mountains of the lower ranges of the Himalaya.

Now, in the early morn a whitish mist still covers the valley as with a shroud, and heavy clouds rest upon the higher peaks; soon these begin to lift, and the mist to disperse with the first rays of the rising sun. The effect is almost magical as the sun god appears; the damp mist, highly suggestive of malaria, rheumatism, and other unsatisfactory ailments, is gone at once; the heavy clouds speedily retire to the higher ranges; the sunny line creeps downward steadily, and widens quickly, covering with its golden light a sea of jungle of infinitely varied green.

The hills facing west are still dark and gloomy, while everything opposite is already bright and sparkling in a flood of light, under a sky of the deepest blue. Even the stream appears to rejoice at the return of day; it seems to splash more noisily, and is as clear as crystal down to its stony bed; the surface glassy, except where the wavelets rush round a rock or boulder, which still throws a deep shadow across its pellucid depths.

As fair a landscape as one could wish to see was spread out before the two tents pitched upon the bank in a small clearing, closely hemmed in on all sides but that of the river by dense forest—forest which stretches almost uninterruptedly to the Bay of Bengal and Burma on the one hand, and to the Persian Gulf on the other. Gloomy, but exceedingly grand, it hides in its recesses everything that hunter could desire; but, thanks to its almost trackless solitude, it is all against him and in favour of the game; besides the danger from elephant, tiger, or rhinoceros, another awaits him here in a very deadly garb—the subtle and treacherous poison of malaria. With the first rays of the warm morning light all nature seems to awake; the prowlers of the night are already far from the river, where, during the dark hours, they had come to drink, feeding their way slowly back along the narrow paths made by themselves to their silent jungle homes far away; the cicadæ cease their monotonous clicking, the barking deer's hoarse cry becomes less frequent and more distant, jungle cocks crow everywhere like their tame brothers at home, to welcome the new day; the cooing of doves and pigeons now come, from almost every bush; parrakeets rush about once more in their rapid flight, screeching with refreshed energy; squirrels run about and jump from branch to branch, and at last there is some movement among the corpse-like bodies stretched out at full length and covered from head to foot with a white cotton sheet or dirty blanket, very much like a shroud, ranged parallel to each other, and closely packed on some matting and leaves under a bamboo shed near the tents. Presently a very dirty face appears, and then another, followed by a still more dirty body clothed very scantily in, if possible, still more filthy rags. Shivering and yawning the men at last turn out—coolies who had been hired as baggage carriers, messengers, and trackers. Some of these are inhabitants of the swampy plains at the foot of the hills—deadly to other people; tall,



well-built men, very dark in colour, closely allied to the Bengalee whom they greatly resemble; their only garment is a cotton cloth round the loins; their hair is everywhere shaved except on the very top of the head, where the few remaining locks are tied in a knot. Some of these men had but yesterday arrived, each bringing two large black earthenware jars, filled with dhey—curdled buffalo milk—suspended from the end of a long bamboo balanced across the shoulders.

Then there are some Nepaulese—Ghoorkas—those broad-shouldered, sturdy little hill men, sallow complexioned, with their flat faces and noses and small eyes, always ready to do hard work, especially when there is also sport to be had; splendid trackers, untiring as they are brave and fearless, every one of them armed with the national weapon, carried in its leathern scabbard in the waistcloth, the heavy, curved, broad-bladed kookrie.

The Mongolian type of countenance is, however, still more apparent in some of their neighbours, men from Sikkim, a Himalayan province bordering on Thibet. There stands our head-man in that dark blue thick woollen sort of loose coat, reaching from the shoulder to the knees, and fastened round the waist by a cord. Not only has he the oblique eyes and high cheekbones of the Chinaman, but a long pigtail descends from the back of his head, carefully plaited and embellished with a red tassel at the end. His head is covered by a porkpie hat with a black velvet rim, a yellow headpiece, in the centre of which is a bright crimson knot. His naked legs, and the one shoulder and arm withdrawn from the sleeve, display his massive form; a long sword-like knife, protected by a bamboo sheath, hangs from the belt; in his hand he carries a large crimson umbrella, and he is further adorned by a necklet of beads and charms. A picturesque garb, which all the richer men affect such as this one who is put in authority over a gang of his poorer brethren, whose powerful frames thoroughly fit them for the hard work asked of porters in a mountainous country like their own. The garb of these coolies consists of the thickest layer of dirt, carefully nursed since birth, for they never wash—a layer which is guarded from external injury by a coarse woollen coat with wide sleeves, one side overlapping the other in front over the waist, where it is retained by a rope. The coat opens over the neck

and chest, and the pouches formed by its loose folds and the man's skin contain all the coolie's worldly goods—tobacco, meat (cooked or uncooked), and any other thing to eat good or bad, money (if he has it), a bottle of spirits (if he has been abstemious enough to keep any in it even for a moment, which is very rare), his pipe—in fact, everything which he can possibly beg or steal—rests snugly in that warm corner against his brawny bosom. The scenery around is certainly magnificent, and fresh and beautiful during the young hours of the day. The ever-present, beautifully shaded green is only broken and set off by the silvery stream and its yellow shore, now sparkling in the morning sun, as its rays catch the sand and broken quartz still wet with dew. The larger trees are teak and sál chiefly, with here and there a silvery barked gigantic cotton-tree, its leafless branches now one mass of bright crimson flowers, the resort of countless long-tailed, noisy parrakeets. The graceful tree fern with its delicately cut dark green leaves, and the fresher coloured plantain with heavy bunches of green fruit, raise themselves proudly above the dense underwood—an impenetrable interwoven network of canes, rattan, and creepers of every description.

How peacefully, almost noiselessly, the water glides past us as we walk up the rough bed of one of the smaller streams; so tiny is the rivulet now that it is difficult indeed to imagine how ever it could have been the mighty torrent which but lately had the strength to move those enormous boulders scattered about everywhere, when, all powerful, it had swept them down in its mad course like so many pebbles, far away from down the mountains, swept them down with resistless force, and then, by constant friction as it rushed past, had gradually smoothed their rough edges and polished them and even hollowed them out. There is a patch of giant "elephant" grass, 12 feet high and more, now dry and yellow, so thick that only the heaviest animals can force their way through. Then the mountains on either side approach each other more, and the valley contracts rapidly into a narrow gorge, into which the sun, except at noon, cannot send its warming rays. The air here is laden with moisture, there is a chilliness about, and, as a fit guardian to such a place, an immense snake slowly glides away at our approach. The vegetation is more luxuriant, and those shrubs and trees which rejoice in

swampy ground, and ferns, from the lovely tree fern to the delicate maidenhair, are very frequent. Instead of the bright yellow bed of sand, we now tread on soft, wet black mud, into which the foot sinks deeply. But ours are not the only feet which have left their mark here; every inch of the black mud is trodden over in every direction by apparently every kind of animal which roams about in these vast forests. Here are the deep oval impressions of the mighty elephant's foot, there those of the three-toed rhinoceros; here the cleft hoof of the buffalo, there the soft paw of the tiger; pig had wallowed here, deer of every species, pea and every other fowl and bird had found their way to this bog and trampled it into deep holes half filled with black ooze. So very recent seemed all these marks that we looked around in expectation of seeing some of the giants of the forest standing around angry at our intrusion and determined to resent it; but none were visible, and we were allowed to examine into the reason why this spot, so forbidding to us, should have such very great attractions for the beasts of the jungle. The reason was soon found. The black water and mud were strongly impregnated with salt, the springs which here issued from the soil brought with them that condiment which is as necessary to animals as it is to man, and, with their usual sagacity, here they had discovered it, and to it they no doubt came for miles and miles around, to lick the mud and wallow in the bog.

What a place for a hunter to watch at—to wait, well hidden in the bushes around, the advent of the quarry he was especially anxious to secure! The thorough hiding seemed the only difficulty to overcome, for, radiating in every direction from the salt-lick, were the hard-trodden paths made and used for generations probably by the beasts of the forest, having only thin strips of bush and jungle between them, where, but partially concealed, the hunter would have only a very poor chance of remaining undetected by the sharp sight and acute smell of the animal he wished to slay. Thus the chance which promised best was to follow the freshest spoor, until pursuer and pursued met face to face, generally in the deepest part of the forest, where during the heat of the day the latter either fed its way slowly along or was enjoying its siesta.

Unfortunately at the time I am speaking of circumstances had

prevented our being provided with such weapons as would have given us a chance against the largest game; yet a particularly fresh rhinoceros spoor, promising an early opportunity of seeing the ponderous beast at home, was too tempting to pass by, so with a gun only, and on no deadly thoughts intent, we followed it in single file.

The spoor was deeply sunk at first in the deep mud, the holes half filled with water; then the horny toes had sharply cut the smoothly-stamped oval footmarks of an elephant, crossed and recrossed here and there by those of many a deer species, before it had entered the forest on one of the many hard-trodden narrow paths. Soon a coolie called attention to the very recent spoor of three other rhinoceros which here had joined our path from another direction, followed it for a short distance, and then had left it again to seek other pastures.

On we went, sometimes having to stoop and sometimes almost to creep under the thick tangled bushes through which the animal had forced its way, scratching and scraping its back against the woven mass, leaving every branch covered with the mud which, when rolling in the morass, had adhered to the ponderous creature's back and sides. A little further on it had had another roll in a puddle by the way, the benefit of which we soon got when following it, sometimes on our hands and knees, and pushing our way through the jungle until the clothes were covered with mud. Suddenly, when turning the corner of a thick bush, without the slightest warning we came upon and almost slipped down the greasy bank into a small round pool, in which no less than four immense rhinoceros were lying, showing only their heads and backs. There they were, within two yards of us; but there they did not long remain, for apparently, as startled as we by the sudden *rencontre*, out they rushed with a snort like that of a wheezy steam engine and any amount of splashing, and up the bank they bounded with a speed which would have seemed impossible to an animal apparently so unwieldy. There was only just time to jump aside, during which decidedly hasty retreat I caught my foot in a root and fell headlong behind a tree luckily beyond the path, my gun being projected some distance further. Up rushed one rhinoceros along the path we had just quitted, snorting furiously, the others going in different directions, but all passing

some of us almost within touching distance. A startled rhinoceros will nearly always rush along a path in preference to crashing straight through the thick jungle, differing thus from the elephant, and will seldom turn except when wounded, so once out of the path one is generally safe. The whole affair was but of a moment, and when we had scrambled out of our several hasty retreats, a hearty laugh finished the adventure, in which it would have been difficult to say whether we or the rhinoceros had been startled the most. From all directions paths opened on to this favourite bathing resort; the ground around was as hard as iron, and the banks clean cut, and polished almost where the bathers had rested and rubbed their horny hides against it.

Having thoroughly disturbed the family party at its siesta in the cool water, we started back to the tent to have our mid-day rest and a bath in the little stream, taking as usual one of the paths made by some of our four-footed friends. A gloomy damp forest it was, with thick underwood and high trees excluding the sun's cheering and drying influence; immense, apparently endless, rope-like rattans and creepers hung in festoons everywhere, long beard-like silvery grey lichen, and here and there brilliantly coloured and fantastically shaped orchids adorned the giant stems, the only bright colour in the monotony of shades of green, except when a gorgeously coloured parakeet flashed past screeching, or a more sober-coloured tree dove flew startled from its hiding-place. Sometimes we met a party of laughing thrushes, chuckling to themselves as if over some very good joke, never quiet for one moment, perpetually bustling about from branch to branch. They nearly always attend a large company of jungle fowl, the ancestors of our domestic bird, under the leadership of that most magnificent potentate, the jungle cock, who struts about in his brilliant plumage armed with his long spurs, and makes the forest echo with his defiant crow. Startled by our approach, with a crowing and a cackling off they go, making for the nearest bush or tree, upon the branches of which they settle, but not before they have contributed their share to our larder. The young birds are very good eating, the old ones will only just do for soup of the thinnest nature. But we have also paid toll to the inhabitants of the forest—a toll collected in nothing less precious than in our own life-blood, inexorably exacted, in spite

of all precaution and care. The curse of these damp forests—the leech—is the tax-gatherer, and, do what one will, there is no escaping him. Tiny little corkscrew-like creatures wait for the traveller everywhere, standing up erect and twisting their attenuated head extremity about, constantly feeling about for something to fasten upon. Almost thread-like, half-starved, and hideous, they dispute the passage through the jungle paths, and cling to any living thing that may pass. Nothing will keep them out with their needle-like head; they work their way through any stocking, through the smallest opening in boot, gaiter, or garment, and very soon they are hard at work gorging themselves until they drop from sheer repletion and weight, leaving, however, the wound still bleeding. The leeches are horrid creatures; and not only is the attack made from below, but they find their way down the nape of one's neck brushed from the leaves and branches on the road. The natives, who generally go about bare-legged, discover the bloodsucker before he has done much damage; but the European, with his more elaborate clothing, has to wait patiently and suffer until he can remove it and wreak his vengeance on these pests of the jungle.

In that same year two powerful stimulants were administered to me, and having proved the efficacy of both I can strongly recommend their trial in cases of a similar urgent nature. An expedition from our fort was suddenly ordered into the hills beyond to disperse a gathering of hostile natives, a trip which entailed much severe climbing and heavy work generally, at a time when long-continued semi-starvation rations of generally mouldy food had reduced us all to a condition least able to stand much exertion. Owing to bad health and consequent great fatigue, I one day collapsed altogether on the march, fully convinced that my last hour had struck and anxious only to be left alone to die. Instead of bidding a long farewell, the commanding officer asked me as a last and personal favour to take his pipe and smoke it. Now tobacco had never agreed with me, to say the least of it, and the sight and smell of that black pipe seemed to rob me of the little remaining strength. However, what did it matter?—to die that way was probably easier than to be slowly drained by leeches and mosquitoes or made a meal of by some jungle beast, so orders as usual were

obeyed, and that reeking pipe found its way to my lips. After the first valorous draw a feeling altogether indescribable passed through me, through every part of my body, an intensely vivifying current, the late horrible sense of utter exhaustion changing swiftly to a most exhilarating sense of returning strength and spirits. The time—but a few moments—seemed to me like a beautiful dream during which new life had been given me. I was a man once more, well able to share the fatigues and discomforts of my fellow-soldiers. An extraordinary case, difficult to believe, of nerve stimulation and responsive muscular system. No doubt it was fortunate that I had not been a smoker.

Not very long after this dysentery and a severe attack of jungle fever brought me into the officers' hospital in Fort William, where I was taken from an hotel in a state of coma. After a long illness, and as a last chance when almost given up, they carried me on board a steamer bound for England. Far too weak to do anything for myself, I was at once put into a bunk and found myself alone in the cabin. My attention was presently called to a conversation evidently between a passenger and the chief steward in the saloon. The former had not a berth apparently, but reiterated the remark that he must have one, while the latter assured him that there was not one vacant, the ship being absolutely full. The passenger still insisting, the steward at last said—I felt convinced pointing to my door—"Well, then, you can have that in a day or two, for the present inmate cannot last much longer." I there and then made up my mind to keep that passenger out, and selfishly did so, very thankful to him and to my friend the steward for the stimulant administered and given in a full dose.

### III

## PIGS IN ALBANIA

1878

THEY were lovely mornings, those on which we steamed up the Butrinto River bound for the favourite haunts of the Albanian wild boar, coverts and marshes said by our Corfu beaters to be "more better" than any we had yet visited. We made but slow progress against the strong stream which rushed swiftly down the narrow river, the outlet of the lake above, and the launch had a hard task to tow the yacht's boat deeply laden with as many beaters and dogs as could be got into it. Following the zigzag course of the river as it ran through the low marshy country, the unwonted noise of our hard-working engine disturbed many a duck and water-fowl in their reedy retreat, and caused them to seek safety in flight or in the further recesses of some weed-covered swamp. Now we heard the "cheep," "cheep" of a snipe, then a bunch of ducks flew quacking over our heads; we disturbed coots and cormorants at breakfast, and lovely kingfishers anxiously watching for theirs from some branch overhanging the river. A gigantic pelican tried to race us on the water, but had soon to take to his wings and seek refuge on the lake beyond. We passed a well-preserved old Venetian fort, which in the great days of the great Republic had safeguarded the entrance to the river, then the picturesque ruins of another perched upon a solitary grey rock, commanding at that time the approach to the lake. Beyond this inland sea, the home of every variety of water-fowl which found shelter and food within its reedy shores, lay the great chain of the Albanian mountains, its snow-covered peaks rising far



into the deep blue sky, dazzling white as the sun shone on them. Below, the hills were clothed with forest, except where here and there a white village clung to the precipitous side, built against the rock in tiers of streets and houses. Behind us, that most lovely island, Corfu, confined the view, with its beautifully green hills and valleys, lofty San Salvator, crowned by its monastery, towering over all. A stake dam spanning the river near another old Venetian castle stops our progress for a while, but a small sum to the fishermen opens the way through, and the guard of Turkish soldiers stationed here lend a helping hand, their services being rewarded by a present of tobacco. Slow ahead is once more the word, until the heavily-weighted boats run aground; there is no help for it but to get out and tow them into deeper water; then on again through high reeds, where we hear ducks splashing about and quacking everywhere though we cannot see them, to the lake. Where not water, the plain at the foot of the mountains is marsh and swamp, a few solitary hills rising here and there, each surmounted by a house or even a small village sometimes, built there to be out of reach of malaria. Some of the marsh is covered with thick scrubby coverts, as are also the valleys as they run down from the mountain-side. These coverts and swamps are the home of the boar, and at one of the former we commenced operations.

Our two head beaters are Greeks from Corfu, who know every inch of this coast, visiting it as they do with their employers every year; we have brought with us also a number of Albanians, dirty-looking ruffians, clad in grey woollen garments with open sleeves, baggy trousers and tight gaiters. One or two are armed with antiquated guns, all with an arsenal of pistols and knives in their capacious leathern belts, which also contain tobacco, tinder, powder, and anything else of value. Their big, shaggy, and very ferocious sheep dogs are dangerous to meddle with, and object to strangers very strongly, but they are of the greatest use at a boar hunt. Our road now lay through the low oak scrub, which, we sincerely hoped, might shelter many an old tusker, and we were presently posted at some likely spots, where we made ourselves as comfortable and as little conspicuous as possible

behind a tree or bush and on a hastily improvised seat. It was delightful in these woods on glorious days like these. Once established in one's lair there was plenty of time to examine the surroundings and to settle in one's mind and to one's own satisfaction where the much-to-be-desired boar would be most likely to appear, and to make certain that no obstructing branch or other object would interfere with the aim in any direction. The report of the head beater's pistol, the signal for the men to advance, was soon followed by sounds from the far distance of the shouts of the men and the clatter of their sticks against the trees. The noise quickly became louder, and cries of "Futaro" and "Hi porko" are mingled with it. Some heavy animal approaches galloping noisily over the dry leaves, putting the nearest rifle on the *qui vive*; however, it is only a dog chasing a jackal. But now the loud barking of dogs and deafening shouts of the men proclaim that a pig has really been moved. A pistol or two fired by the beaters gets the game well under weigh; once more the clatter over the dry leaves is heard rapidly approaching, and a fine old boar appears, going well a long way in front of the dogs. He is rolled over or only wounded, or even missed altogether—for such things do happen occasionally—and the beat is over. The beaters, greatly excited, go to where the shot fell, and so do all the other guns, and woe to the unfortunate man if the pig be not there to show. He is treated with silent contempt, especially if the boar passed closely—for the men have a disagreeable habit of looking at the animal's footprints and making remarks as to how close it must have been and what an easy shot it must have offered. Well do I remember one day we spent in the woods on the further side of the Butrinto Lake. I enjoyed that day above all others, although the total bag consisted of but two boars; and why?—because it was I who killed both, neatly and in a business-like style, and because the others missed everything they shot at and got nothing; but then they had every excuse, they said. Nothing is more enjoyable than success over one's neighbour, especially in anything connected with sport. My chances certainly had been undeniably good, and non-success would have been simply disgraceful. Invisible to my neighbours as we were posted, would I not also have made every

kind of excuse had the bullets not gone true? A tree would probably have been in the way, or something wrong with the rifle, or—"How that pig got away I am sure is perfectly impossible to understand, for I certainly hit him!" Comfortably seated upon a big stone, the beat being in full swing, throats, sticks, pistols, everything at work, I suddenly saw a big pig galloping straight towards me. Letting him pass to avoid firing towards the beaters, I rolled him over—head over heels—with a bullet in the shoulder. During the next beat another pig gave me a broadside chance, and never moved after the bullet struck him. Several shots had been fired further down the line, but I alone could produce a pig, or rather two. I was the hero of the day and fear that my companions were not thought much of by the beaters, who always take a miss more to heart than the shooter himself. The greatest rivalry exists between the various head-men, and whoever can show the biggest bag at the end of the season is the lion of the year. Too late for woodcock, everybody turned his attention to "big game," by which high-sounding title this somewhat poor sport was honoured. The grolloching of the pig, always a disgusting performance, was here particularly so; the Albanians and their dogs quarrelling and fighting for the smoking intestines, the latter swallowing what they could on the spot, the former stowing away what remained either in the many folds of their loose garments or the big square bag they all carried, which bag would probably contain our next day's luncheon.

I will conclude with two recipes taken from a most amusing little book published in 1822, entitled "Essays—Moral, Philosophical, and Stomachical—on the Important Science of Good Living," by Launcelot Sturgeon, Esq.; they refer to the pig and the woodcock, the two chief attractions to the sportsman in Albania:—

No 1. "Strongly recommended to the Society for the Conversion of the Jews": Portuguese method of dressing a loin of pork. "Steep it during an entire week in red wine (claret in preference), with a strong infusion of garlick and a little spice; then sprinkle it with fine herbs, envelope it in bay leaves, and bake it along with Seville oranges and *piquées de girofle*."

No. 2. "Mix equal parts of fine salt, cayenne pepper, and currie powder with double the quantity of powdered truffles; dissect, *secundum artem*, a brace of woodcocks, rather under-roasted, split the heads, subdivide the wings, &c., &c.; powder the whole gently over with the mixture; crush the trails and brains along with the yolk of a hard-boiled egg, a small portion of powdered mace, the grated peel of half a lemon, and half a spoonful of soy, until the ingredients be brought to the consistence of a fine paste; then add a spoonful of catsup, a full wineglassful of Madeira, and the juice of two Seville oranges; throw this sauce, along with the birds, into a silver stew dish, to be heated with spirits of wine; cover close up, light the lamp, and keep gently simmering and occasionally stirring until the flesh has imbibed the greater part of the liquid. When you have reason to suppose that it is completely saturated, pour in a small quantity of salad oil, stir all once more well together, put out the light, and then!—serve it round instantly."

## IV

### SKETCHES IN THE SOUDAN

1882

#### I.—ON THE MARCH

G'S shout, "Untie the camels!" cuts short my dreams—  
G. dreams in which curiously confiding lions and rifles which would not go off at the critical moment had been strangely mingled—and another day of our African camp life has begun. One more quarter of an hour for meditation between the warm blankets is very pleasant, for the sun has not yet risen; it is chilly in the early morning, and everything is wet with dew. The stars have disappeared, but the pale crescent of the declining moon is still visible through the overhanging feathery branches of a juniper-tree. It is a truly Eastern scene the one now before and around me. Our camp lies in the sandy bed of a river which at this season of the year is perfectly dry; the banks are covered with juniper and other trees and bushes, their trunks and branches interlacing into a dense mass, the dark green of the juniper being relieved by the brighter and fresher shades of a luxuriant creeper, which in its very luxuriance envelops like a mantle everything within its reach, or by the delicately leaved and graceful tree acacia. The camp fire, nearly out, is soon brought into a blaze again by the Arabs, who, having slowly unrolled themselves from the folds of a cotton sheet, their sole garment by day and only covering by night, eagerly crowd round the flame, shivering in the chilly hour which precedes sunrise. The cook resumes his labours at another fire, and as the camels, which have been gravely lying in a circle round the fire with their heads towards it, are

being one after another untied, they slowly rise and stalk off towards some specially inviting branch on the green river bank in search of breakfast. Our factotum, the dragoman, is busy with his ablutions, consisting of washing his face, feet and hands—ablutions which must precede his morning prayers according to the tenets of the Mohammedan religion. There is abundance of water left in the skins, and we shall reach wells again to-night, so there is enough for every one, otherwise sand or earth would have to do instead, with which, in the absence of water, an Arab rubs his hands, afterwards passing them over his face. Thus cleansed, the worshipper, after spreading his mat, or smoothing the sand in front of him, turns to the east, standing bolt upright with naked feet; he slowly raises his hands, touches with the finger-tips the top of each shoulder, and then lets his arms fall again to the side, exclaiming, "Allahu Akbar!"—God is great!—the opening sentence of his worship. The Mohammedan's prayer is not a prayer in our sense of the word, it is adoration and praise of the Deity; prayer with him would be useless, his fate is unalterably fixed and nothing he can do can change it.

Suleiman Ayoob, a native of Berber on the Nile, and dragoman in Cairo, is an excellent man in every way; he never shirks hard work and speaks English extremely well. A most devout follower of Islam, and a violent opponent of the abolition of slavery, he had a great objection to the vicinity of wild beasts in general and of lions in particular, and at night would fence round his angareb—native bedstead—by a barricade of all our boxes, carefully filling up every crevasse, while two men, whom he had constituted his own special guards, slept at his side with shield and spear. We had engaged him in Cairo, and having already accompanied a shooting expedition into the Soudan, he was conversant with every detail and proved a most valuable head-man.

G. and I in the meantime had completed our toilets, for which but little time is required, and are already busy with breakfast. That over, the boxes are packed, corded, and the camels sent for. Every one as it comes in is made to lie down between two boxes, its destined load, which boxes are soon slung, one on each side, by means of cords across the saddle. The loaded camel rises, and, if the boxes are properly balanced and every-

thing is right, is attached, by means of a rope tied round the lower jaw, to the tail of another in front of it until the caravan is complete. One camel carries nothing but water-skins, now, however, nearly empty, for we shall encamp near wells to-night; two others are retained for G. and me, provided with comfortable riding saddles, to which are attached our rifles and guns, water-bottles, &c. Everything being now ready, the word is given to march, we jump into our saddles, up rise the camels, a guide takes the head of the caravan, and with shouts of "Bismillah!"—in the name of God—we start.

We follow again to-day, at all events during the first few hours, the sandy bed of the river, which has already been our road for more than one week. Our party is not a large one—G. and I, ten camels, the dragoman, cook, guide, and four camel men. These latter we engaged at our starting-place on the Red Sea with excellent characters, which characters three of them did most certainly not deserve; one we have nicknamed the "minstrel," on account of his singing at all hours of the day and night the most monotonous and dreary airs; love-songs I am told they were, but certainly they sounded more like funeral dirges to our perhaps unappreciative ears. He never did more work than absolutely obliged, and always had to be driven to do that; he never prayed like other Mohammedans, except when under the influence of drink, when the spirit moved him, the prayers generally ending in a fight with his companions. He was a good tracker, however, and very keen after meat, which he and his companions consumed in incredible quantities, and animal food not usually forming part of their repast during their ordinary life, the excess was followed by great sufferings next day, a complaint they were pleased to call "snake in the stomach." Two others also were town Arabs, and therefore not worth much. To protect them from all danger they had a number of charms cased in leather suspended on their arm above the elbow. The fourth was a native of the country, and made up in excellence for the defects of all the others. He wore his hair, as all the real Arabs hereabouts do, mop-like, in a dense mass on the top of the head, with long plaited ringlets hanging down all round to his shoulders almost. Away from towns this is the only mode in which hair is worn; the dressing it is a long and very peculiar process, which we shall have an

opportunity of witnessing this evening. All the men carry spears, weighted with iron at the butt, knives, and some of them shields, with all the wandering tribes made of buffalo or giraffe hide.

The river, a wide expanse of white sand, fringed thickly with juniper bushes on the banks, winds a good deal; now and then we pass an enormous granite rock, cropping up out of the river-bed; here the whirlpool formed by the river beating against and rushing round the boulder during the wet season has made a deep hollow at its base where even now the sand is wet and water within easy reach. This is well known to all animals, who, when no more favourable spot is within reach, will dig and scratch here, and, rewarded, find the wherewithal to quench their thirst. Even now we have just disturbed a flock of guinea-fowls during their morning drink, which, frightened, half flying, half running, seek the shelter of the thick bushes. Monkeys and pigs are often surprised at these spots busily seeking the refreshing draught; butterflies, bees—in fact, every animal which walks, flies or creeps—assemble here in quest of water, which at this season is scarce and not always within reach of the deeper wells. Here and there the river-bed widens and divides into two or more arms which encircle a sandbank thickly overgrown with deep-green, shiny-leaved nabbuk and laurel-like bushes, with juniper, and the pale, greyish-green eucalyptus plants. These latter are very common, and exude from their every part a thick milky fluid which is highly poisonous.

How fatiguing and ruffling to one's temper these long marches on a baggage-camel are! Its jolting motion is very trying to one's spine, which apparently divides into two parts, connected together by a painful hinge in the small of one's back. When for the moment somewhat more comfortable, having eased the more painful parts, the brute will suddenly stop, curl its head and neck under its stomach to brush and blow the flies away which have settled there; the jerk nearly sends the rider on to the ground, as everything in front of the saddle has temporarily disappeared. Relieved of the flies for the moment, a herb in the river-bed tempts his appetite, and he stops with a jerk to pluck it; or he rushes up to a thorny mimosa bush, of which a camel is particularly fond, brushing one's legs through the branches, and then, when vigorously rebuked, probably as promptly lies down well into the bush, when things become still



worse. It will walk under overhanging branches, and if not on his guard, brush the rider off like a fly, and go through all kinds of gymnastic exercises, putting one's bones in jeopardy; but all this is a trifle when compared with what one goes through when the camel trots. It is no use trying to talk; one's teeth are knocked together, with the probability of seeing half of one's tongue roll into the sand; the bumping is terrible; one's internal organs seem to jolt together in hopeless and painful confusion, and then you have to hold on to your saddle, to your guns, to your hat, to your everything, not to enlarge upon the aromatic breezes which the camel wafts into one's face direct from the laboratory of his stomach. No; somebody has truly said that the difference between the motion of a hygeen-trotting-camel and that of a baggage-camel is as great as that between a thoroughbred hack and a carthorse. We were not able to obtain hygeens, so had to be content with the best of our baggage-camels, which, in spite of all their roughness and the many annoyances they caused us, were far less tiring than horses would have been, as we afterwards found, on these long marches in the deep sand of the river-bed. These journeys seemed very long and monotonous; there was little variety in the scenery; the same green banks, high, arid mountains in the distance, and lower hills covered with mimosa bushes approaching the river, or some very black volcanic rocks, whose fantastic shapes were often very remarkable. We sometimes met a few natives, armed with spear and shield, who never failed to greet us with the usual "Salaam aleikoum"—May God protect you—which kindly wish we returned with "Aleikoum salaam." Then followed the customary shaking of hands, and mutual inquiries after one another's health, which it is the correct thing to repeat as often as possible, in order that each party may be thoroughly convinced of the excellence or otherwise of the other's health. Then, perhaps, a long string of camels would pass laden with dhurra, native corn, in large mat bags made of the plaited palm leaf; or we would meet some black soldiers, looking very black in contrast to their white tunic and trousers and red fez, returning from collecting taxes among the villages further south. These are, as a rule, very tall, often very powerful men, who take great pride in their arms, and often, no doubt, have very difficult tasks to perform in squeezing tribute out of the wily

sheikhs. The black troops are all liberated slaves, chiefly from the White Nile; the liberated female slaves are given them for wives.

Guinea-fowl and florican were plentiful along the march, and the common gazelle and ariel were seen every day, and one or two shot, for we had no other meat to live upon, and a good many mouths to feed. Guinea-fowl are most readily shot in the early morning, or about sunset, when they drink, but during the day they remain in the dense jungle and are very difficult to find. Florican feed all day long on the river-banks, especially if these are rocky and denuded of bushes, but covered with dry grass; we used to shoot these handsome and delicious birds from our camels. Gazelles generally feed close to the river during the early hours of the day, on the young shoots of the mimosa bushes, or the aromatic herbs which are sometimes found in the river-bed. Sometimes singly or in twos and threes, sometimes in large herds, they would generally require careful stalking, but the knowledge that one's dinner depended upon killing made the aim all the more steady. The larder supplied, one could watch these graceful animals without speculating on which would make the best soup, or produce the tenderest steak or cutlet, and admire their perfect shape and movements. Directly a gazelle or antelope has fallen, the Arabs rush up to it and cut its throat "in the name of God," before death has actually taken place, for not otherwise would a strict Moham-medan be allowed to eat of it. We had made a rule never to kill more than we required, whereby all waste and unsportsman-like slaughter was prevented.

Our only water supply during the last fortnight had been obtained from wells dug in the river-bed; at first these were scarce, but as we went higher up the river, and approached the tableland towards the Abyssinian mountains, they became much more frequent, and the water, which at first had been at a great depth, then came nearer the surface. To prevent the wells from falling in, the walls are lined with branches cut from any trees at hand; yet, after having been unused for some time, a great deal of sand had drifted in, which required to be removed before the water could be reached. It was, as a rule, fit to drink, though not, perhaps, very clear; now and then, however, its taste and smell were so strong, the result of rotting vegetable

matter, either from the green branches used to support the walls or from that contained in the sand, that no amount of filtering or boiling would get rid of it. Close to these wells are troughs, made of wet sand and earth hardened by the sun, whereat, when filled, the flocks are watered. At one of these wells we now make our mid-day halt, for the sun has become very hot, and rest for an hour or so is very grateful to man and beast. The camels are unloaded and march off to seek their favourite food; we lie down under shelter of some overhanging tree and eat our lunch, while the cook lights a fire in preparation for the usual cup of coffee. To-day we are not alone, for a large herd of female camels, kept for stud purposes, is being watered at the well; they are in magnificent condition, as sleek as possible, with enormous humps, beautiful skin, and some with thick, heavy manes. Most of them are followed by a young one, which, if a camel can be pretty, are certainly so, gambolling about around their mothers, who now, however, crowd together, anxiously waiting for their turn at the water. The men are a wild-looking lot, with the usual mop-like hair, whose only garment is a piece of leather tightly wound round the loins. Some draw the water from the well by means of leathern buckets, which they empty into the trough, chanting a monotonous song all the while; others are fully occupied in keeping the thirsty camels back, who are ranged in order preparatory to approaching the water: age first, and impudence after. The men almost entirely live on the milk, hence are the teats of the camels tightly wound round a small piece of wood, thereby preventing the youngsters from appropriating the whole supply.

Our siesta finished, our camels, which look poor and lean indeed compared with their fat sisters, are collected, loaded, and then off we go once more. It is still very hot; for, not only do we feel the full force of the sun's rays from above, but also the heat reflected from the sand; still, refreshed by the rest in the shade, we plod on towards our intended halting-place for the night, which is but a few miles distant. Suddenly, when turning the bend of one of the arms of the river, we came upon running water, a sight so unwonted that its reality seemed difficult to believe in at first. But there it was, running as clear as possible between beautifully green banks; under some rocks grew lovely ferns, high reedy grass luxuriated in the wet soil

here and there, birds were singing, and on a high rock were some noisy monkeys rolling down stones at us. It was as pretty a place as the sight of the cool, clear water was refreshing, but unfortunately it proved as short a pleasure as it was an enjoyable one. The water, welling up from some spring in the river-bed, was soon lost again in the sand, and the vision of camping that night at running water, with baths to follow, had soon vanished. We now leave the river for awhile, to cut off a corner, and march across a very stony plain, covered with thorny mimosa shrubs, some now leafless, a few brown pods alone remaining on the bare branches, others covered with their beautifully green and delicately shaped leaves, and exhaling a delightful perfume from their little yellow ball-like flowers. Their thorns are very long, straight, and sharp, but they are greedily eaten by camels, who strip them, together with the leaves, from off the branches, and by goats, which carefully pick the leaves out from between the thorns. It seems curious that almost every tree and shrub is here provided with thorns, and Nature seems to have expended a very great deal of ingenuity in devising them in their most objectionable shape. With what object it is indeed difficult to guess; that they are the cause of frequent bad language is very certain. If once in contact with a kittar bush, the worst of all, with its curved, double, fish-hook-like instruments of torture, the attempt to disentangle oneself by undoing the thorns in turn is simply useless; if free from one, another catches only the more firmly, until the entanglement seems utterly hopeless. The only way then is to screw up one's courage, make a rush, bear the pain, and leave patches of clothes, skin, and blood behind. Natives, thanks to the simplicity of their clothing, are naturally in great dread of these thorns, but have a simple way of avoiding them when passing the thorny bush; with their sticks they raise the dangerous branch, and press it against the one above; there it catches, and is held out of the way by its thorns, thus leaving the passage clear. These plains, covered with mimosa bush, are the favourite haunt of gazelles, who also are very fond of the succulent leaves; and here they are, thanks to the cover, more easily stalked. Camels naturally dislike this ground, covered as it is with loose, sharp stones, which hurt their feet and cause them to stumble—the latter a most uncomfortable sensation to the rider. Soon we once more see the green banks of the river

in the distance—a welcome sight, for there, where we shall strike it, are the wells, and there is our camping-ground for the night. We arrive earlier than usual to-day, the sun is high, and some shepherds are still busy watering a flock of goats as we reach the well. A beautifully shady spot is chosen on the river-bank, under a large spreading juniper-tree, and places fixed upon for G. and me, for the kitchen, and for our followers. We obtain some milk from the goatherds, simple-minded creatures, who, when offered money, refused it, saying that they had no use for it, and did not know what it was! These were the first people we had had the pleasure to meet who refused money, and none have we met since, sad to relate. A little dhurra they asked for, their only food besides milk.

While busy arranging our paraphernalia a small party of Arabs arrived, who, after shaking hands with us and exchanging the customary salutations, asked permission to remain near us for the night, which request was, of course, granted. On their way to a village some distance off, they had been no doubt tempted to stay with us by the display of meat in our camp, a great luxury to them. We constantly remarked the magnificent carriage of these wandering Arabs; they are as straight as the staff of their own spears, and carry their heads and walk as proudly as very lords of the soil. With the white, sheet-like garment fastened round their loins, and gracefully thrown over the shoulders; the shield hanging over their back; the richer carrying a large cross-handled broadsword, the wooden scabbard of which is carefully wound round with long strips of cotton; others, with the long double-edged spear, but all with the short, thick stick slightly curved at the end, which is held in the right hand, the curved part resting against the right shoulder; often some strings of beads hanging round their bare necks, and generally charms above the elbow, they present a very picturesque appearance. These swords are very much valued, and are handed down as heirlooms from father to son. Some are said to be centuries old, able easy to cut through a rifle barrel, and not parted with on any consideration. Most, however, are of later date, and manufactured at, and exported from Söllingen, in Germany, in large quantities. The sticks are about a yard long, some prettily veined, and all highly polished by use. They are made of the sacred "beshem" wood, sacred because

Mohammed carried sticks made of that tree. A stem of the required thickness is cut down and laid over a fire, which renders it pliable. The end is then bent slightly, and kept in that position by means of string; after a few days this is dispensed with, and the stick cut to the desired length, the grey bark peeled off, the hard wood polished with grease and hand-rubbing. No Arab ever is without one, even boys carry it, though one of smaller size. Its uses are many; by placing the two ends on the ground with the convex side up, the Arabs use it as a pillow or as a seat; they acquire considerable dexterity with it in knocking down their beloved dome-palm nuts, and no doubt many a guinea-fowl and florican falls a victim to it; it is very useful in pushing aside the branches when passing through a thorny jungle; and at discussions, when the Arabs squat round in a circle on the ground, the stick plays an important part, being constantly in motion emphasising words and assisting to explain the orator's meaning by drawing hieroglyphics and pictures in the sand. The dandies have rings on their ears and fingers; the stick of their spear is embellished with brass wire, the handle of their sword perhaps inlaid with silver, and their thick *chevelure* white with fat and dripping with melted butter—the more the quantity the better is the man dressed; the more it drips the more thoroughly is he satisfied, and the prouder is he of his appearance. This, to us Europeans, disgusting fashion, for not only does it look filthy, but the resulting odours are most trying when anywhere to leeward of such a *frisure*, entails a great deal of painstaking labour on the part of the hairdresser, and patience on that of the individual undergoing such a long and tedious process. It so happened that one of our men had procured some white suet-like fat, a scarce article; and another having undertaken the task of beautifying him, we had a good opportunity of watching the whole not very appetising proceeding. First of all the long, thin stick, resembling a greatly magnified hairpin, which every one carries stuck in his locks, is taken out, and with it every ringlet and every curl carefully undone and separated into its component parts. Then commences a thorough and minute hunt for any little animal which may creep, hop, or run in the dense preserves, a hunt which lasts long and is apparently rewarded by good bags. While fingers and stick are thus busily engaged and

much game hunted down, the man operated upon is not idle, but hard at work chewing the hard fat to reduce it to a soft pomatum-like consistence. Only when thoroughly triturated and made into a pulp by teeth, tongue, and saliva, is the material fit to be applied to the now disentangled and straightened-out hair. When everything is ready, small quantities of it are taken from the churn, but replaced by more rough material, and worked by the fingers of the operator into the hair, carefully, so that no part shall be without. This completed, the hair is once more divided, with the aid of the stick, into small masses, and made into ringlets to hang down from the woolly clump on the crown of the head, which has been worked up also and greased, to the shoulders. Then follows another coat of fat over everything and the task is done, with a result of the startling nature of which both may be equally proud. Hair thus dressed resembles a very full curly white wig, or more, perhaps, a mop thickly powdered with flour, and is all the more remarkable in contrast with the dark brown face it surrounds and adorns. The sun, however, soon begins to act upon this charming arrangement, thus completing the process to the thorough satisfaction of the delighted Arab; the fat melts, little glistening drops form and presently run down the ringlets and fall on to the shoulders, which are soon covered with a shining layer of grease; only thus thoroughly anointed is he quite *comme il faut*. Clarified butter, resembling the "ghee" of India, is most frequently used, simply, however, because it is more readily obtained. When an animal is killed and cut up, every little scrap of fat is pounced upon wherever discovered and hidden away, generally in the waist folds of the cotton garment, until wanted to adorn the hair. The fatty matter is supposed to kill and prevent certain insects making permanent settlement among the hair; but whether it can always be depended upon seems doubtful. The smell of this rancid butter is most disagreeable to any one unaccustomed to it, and when closely following a native who has lately been in the hair-dresser's hands, almost sickening. The dense mass of hair, so great a protection from the sun, where no other covering to the head is worn, retains the smell long after all the oily matter has run out and nothing remains but pieces of fibre, in the meshes of which it was contained.

Some sport among the sand-grouse at the well at dusk,

dinner, which always consisted of various arrangements of guinea-fowl, florican, sand-grouse, antelope, or gazelle, a talk about the morrow's programme, accompanied by a little tobacco, wound up the day as usual.

At the water-hole mentioned above, I afterwards lay out a night in wait for lions, but, as usual on such occasions, saw nothing larger than a hyena, so returned grumbling and stiff in the morning. Two of our Arabs accompanied me, and before sunset we arranged ourselves and our things as comfortably as the stony, uneven ground would permit. The Arabs had brought with them a small basket, neatly made of palm-leaves, filled with dhurra, boiled in water for supper, which simple meal I had to share with them; then followed their evening devotions, and hardly had they finished these, when, immediately before dusk, "cheep," "cheep" was heard overhead, and the first sand-grouse arrived, which, after wheeling once round in their rapid flight, darted down to the sandy bed of the river to settle, from which, on account of the resemblance in colour, it is very difficult to distinguish them. "Cheep," "cheep" is now heard everywhere, as covey after covey rapidly arrives. They come in hundreds and thousands until, as in this case, the bed of the river, from the water right across to the other bank, and I don't know for how many yards on either side, was literally covered with birds, so thickly crowded that a pebble could not have been placed anywhere on the sand without touching some of them. With incessant cries they gradually run towards the water, those behind pushing those in front, until at last each individual bird of that dense living mass is able to reach the edge of the pool and quench its thirst. This accomplished, after a great deal of struggling, the birds fly away as suddenly and rapidly as they came, and before darkness all have disappeared and are on the way to their homes on the stony, arid wastes, where they remain during the day. It is an extraordinary sight, this sudden arrival, general scramble, and sudden departure of these sand-grouse in so very many thousands; they always punctually arrive just before dusk, and leave before darkness has set in, while in the morning they drink at dawn. These beautifully plumaged birds, though somewhat dry, are excellent eating; their flesh is white in, and brown outside. After their departure night rapidly set in, and then we took it in turn to watch; but though I sat out



several times, of course always during moonlight nights, I never saw anything worth shooting at, and, disgusted, eventually preferred to spend my nights in bed. The sport, if, indeed, it deserves that name, seemed never to my liking. I was, however, very anxious to shoot a lion, so, as I never could find one by looking for him in his own jungles, I hoped to be more successful by waiting for him to come to me. G. was more fortunate; he saw several lions, and killed an elephant while sitting out at one of these water-holes at night. Yet this watching at night in the tropics has a very great charm. The cloudless, starry sky—and nowhere seem the stars so large, or are they so bright as in the tropics; the river-bed lighted up as brilliantly as by day almost by the radiant silvery moon, except where sharply defined and grotesque shadows are thrown across it by some immense mass of granite cropping up here and there, or by the dense fringe of jungle on the bank, beyond the outline of which, perhaps, stretch the fantastically grown branches of some huge baobab, clearly depicted on the almost snowy sand, like the uncanny arms of some giant octopus; while the jungle opposite is strongly illuminated by the rays of the powerful moon, so that almost every leaf becomes visible and stands out distinct from the darker shadows beyond.

All nature is hushed and silent, except when some night-bird flies past, uttering his shrill note, or some wandering hyena or jackal in search of water or food comes trotting along, apparently terrified by his own shadow. It is a very enjoyable scene; one is always on the *qui vive*, always longingly expecting the game to appear, speculating upon what it will be, whence it will come, if alone; whether it will, when it does come, present a fair shot, if that shot will really kill, &c., &c., and so on, until the eye, disappointed by not seeing anything worthy of powder and lead, at last refuses to keep open any longer; then the next in turn is aroused to take his watch, and with rifles within easy reach one is soon in the land of dreams. My slumbers were always undisturbed; nothing ever came, as verified by the want of spoor in the soft sand next morning, so I always returned disappointed to camp. Breakfast followed, then boot and saddle, and so off for another day in the jungle.

SKETCHES IN THE SOUDAN (*continued*)

## II.—THE ARAB VILLAGE

WHEN marching along the river-bed, G. and I frequently separated and rode by ourselves, generally in front of the caravan, on the look-out for anything which might afford sport. One day I followed an arm of the river, which made a longer detour than expected, and when I struck the main river again, the caravan was not visible. Thinking that it must be behind me, I dismounted from my camel and waited for an hour in vain—no signs of anybody. Concluding, therefore, that the others must be ahead, I started off once more at the best pace of my camel, expecting every turn of the river to see the rest of the party; but no, it had vanished. We had arranged that morning to march to the main river and to encamp when we should strike it, so, knowing the direction, I rode on by myself towards the appointed place of meeting. After leaving the bed of the tributary stream in which our last camp had been, I crossed an extensive plateau, bare and stony, covered here and there with mimosa shrub; a long, uninteresting ride, at the end of which I at last saw in the distance, like a green ribbon winding along over the sterile country, the dome-palm fringed banks of the main river, our intended resting-place for the night, and soon after rode down a steep incline into the sandy bed, to find a large village established there, but not a sign of our caravan. Thinking that it would arrive very shortly, I dismounted and let my camel feed on the bushes and grass about. My arrival was soon noticed, and before long about a dozen Arabs had sat down in the sand around me, after shaking hands in the most friendly manner and inquiring several times after the state of my health.

Thoroughly satisfied on that important point, my audience naturally wished to know where the solitary white man had suddenly appeared from, what he wanted, and where he was going. My stock of Arabic being very limited, consisting chiefly of such useful words and sentences as "stop," "give me the gun," "where is water," "go on," "is dinner ready?" &c., was hardly adapted for a lengthened conversation with a number of strangers of a most inquiring turn of mind, still, with the aid of explanatory sketches in the loose sand, they at last comprehended that I belonged to a party which would shortly arrive, and that it was bent on exploring and shooting in the country higher up the river. Then they brightened up at once as the idea of probable backsheesh developed itself in their brains; they "were all most experienced hunters who knew the country well," and they would be our guides; elephants, lions, buffaloes, giraffes, all "kabeer," "kabeer!" (enormous), were there in immense droves, in fact, jostled one another, like Paddy's trout in the famous stream, and his snipes in the Irish bog. These mighty hunters were most anxious to be there and then engaged, merely, though, on our account, so that there should be no chance of our losing their valuable services, without which the very idea of sport would be ridiculous. However much impressed with all these unselfish offers of assistance, I preferred to await the arrival of our caravan, even at the risk of losing by the delay part of this high talent so self-denyingly placed at our disposal. During the above conversation suggestions had been several times made that I should see the sheikh of the village, but it seemed best to await G.'s arrival. Evening was now, however, not far distant, and the prospects of passing the night, should the others not turn up, in the sole companionship of my camel, near a jungle known to harbour more than one lion, not very agreeable, I at last accepted the pressing invitation brought by the sheikh himself of food and lodging in his hospitable village. Led by my sleek host, who was clothed in a spotless white garment, and smelt strongly of butter, thanks to the grease with which his curly locks had been plentifully adorned, I passed through the opening in the thorny fence of the sereeba; followed by my camel and a large crowd of inquisitive villagers. Arrived at the sheikh's hut, he and I seated ourselves upon an angareb, native bedstead, placed in front of it, while my rifles, guns,

water-bottles, and everything else was taken from the camel-saddle and placed in an empty hut close by. Then, of course, followed the tedious inquiries after each other's health, so persistently repeated as greatly to try one's temper. As one after another the chief men of the village arrived this handshaking, &c., had to be gone through before they seated themselves on mats or squatted on their heels at the foot of the angareb. Coffee was now handed round and sipped, and then the company became more confidential. My well-fed friend, the sheikh-in-chief, showed me with great pride a revolver which had been presented to him by some wandering Englishman, and was astonished to see that I did not carry one also. I had to produce my rifles and ammunition, and hand everything round for general inspection, with explanatory pantomimes, feeling greatly relieved when nothing was asked for as a present. Many were the inquiries after the number of our camels, of our followers, guns, &c., and as to the probable length of our stay. The sheikh seemed disappointed with our having so few camels, for some other travellers had once come that way with several times that number, travellers who had given him this, his friends that, and everybody something. It soon began to dawn upon me that this wily sheikh took perhaps more interest in our things than in G. and me, and that probably he also had a very lucid idea of the meaning of the word "backsheesh." Nor was I mistaken, as events proved. These Arabs belonged to the Bakheet tribe, a division of the pastoral Beni Amer, who had pitched their camp here on account of the food found in the vicinity for their numerous flocks. The village itself was divided into several subdivisions, each surrounded by a circular thorny fence, built up with mimosa shrub, to keep out wild beasts, which, especially lions, were said to be very plentiful here, and daring. Placed parallel with the inner edge of the protecting fence were the low mat huts of the villagers, while the centre of the sereeba was taken up by the much larger establishment of the sheikh, consisting of several more roomy huts, also constructed of mats laid over a framework of poles and sticks, with two or three horses and camels picketed close by. The space in front of the sheikh's hut was evidently the place of assembly of the people, where all the business of the community was transacted. Here at sunset prayer-mats were laid down, and after every one had complied

with the ordained ablutions of mouth, face, hands, and feet, the members of the sheikh's family, women, of course, excluded, who alone pray privately, took up their positions barefoot on the mats, the sheikh himself in front, with his "faki"—holy man, secretary, and general factotum—by his side, as precentor. The Mohammedans have no priests, but commune direct with the Godhead.

"Allahu Akbar!" God is great! "There is no God but the Lord, and Mohammed is His Apostle," the simple confession of faith of Islam, repeated by every one in rising and falling cadence as the worshippers stand up or bend down to touch the ground with their foreheads. They always seemed most impressive to me, these daily devotions, the rapt meditation, the prostrations into the very dust, the truly devotional demeanour of the worshippers, and the melodious chant of faith and praise with which the simple shepherd-folk of these village communities, led by their sheikh, often accompanied the worship of their God.

The evening devotions finished and the sheikh once more seated by my side on the angareb, a large gourd dish was brought filled with very fat goat's meat, cut into small pieces, and placed between us. Into this we dipped our fingers turn about and made our evening meal; it was not very appetising, for, mixed with a great deal of white fat, it smelt exactly like the heads of the people around; however, I took my turn regularly for fear of offending my host. At last I was forced to stop, and placing my hand over the region of my stomach, confess that I could do no more; then the dish was handed to the others, who, squatting near us with hungry eyes, had been looking on at our feast. Some milk, which was excellent, followed, and then I, preferring the solitude and comparative warmth of a hut to sleeping on the angareb outside, was allowed to retire into one of the mat houses, and crept in on all fours, for the entrance was very low. There I found all my paraphernalia, and lying down on some matting upon the ground, with a cartridge-bag for a pillow and the saddle-rug for a blanket, I made myself at home, with the intention of hunting next morning for my lost companions, when a messenger arrived from them. G. had made a longer midday halt than usual, convinced that I must be behind him, but as nothing was to be seen of me, had moved on eventually, and thus not been able to reach the place originally agreed upon.

I had been asleep some little time when a man awoke me, who guided my hand, for it was very dark in the hut, into a vessel filled with bread boiled in fat but now cold. It was by no means an appetising dish, but, thanks to the darkness, the bringer was well satisfied with my apparent appetite, and having retired soon returned with a large gourd of delicious sour milk, to which I did ample justice. The remainder of the night passed undisturbed, except by the howling of the numerous village curs, aroused by some prowling hyena, jackal, or even lion. In the morning I was awake early, before any of the men lying on mats outside my hut had unrolled themselves from their white cotton sheets. These houseless and homeless individuals were probably bachelors, for the married men all had huts, and occupied them with their wives. The latter, who are almost invisible, make the mats of which the huts are constructed, plaiting them of dome-palm leaf strips. They are busily employed at this work almost all day long, and large quantities of matting are sent from these villages to other parts of the country where the dome-palm is unknown, or to the coast, where it is used for packing grain and other merchandise for export. The village is now, however, awake; the men are squatting here and there performing their ablutions, and busily employed polishing their brilliantly white teeth with the Arab's tooth-brush, a thin stick cut, a span long, from a particular bush which grows plentifully about. The stick by use soon unravels and becomes fibrous, almost brushlike, at the end. Then follows the morning worship, similar in every way to that in the evening, and coffee in the usual tiny cups. Thus refreshed, the sheikh and I started on our camels to search for the absent caravan, which we soon met on its way to the village.

A place for our camp was now chosen among the palms on the opposite bank, and soon everything arranged for a stay of three or four days, during which we hoped to engage hunters and get everything ready for our shooting trip towards the Abyssinian frontier. Of course, before our camp was in anything like order, men from the village, led by their sheikh, appeared, and settled themselves down for the day, with the fixed purpose of examining everything we had, and begging everything they saw. This went on during the whole of our stay, or rather their stay, for the village left before we did in search of fresh pastures

for the flocks. It now appeared that my host of the night before did not belong here at all, but as one of the head chiefs of the Beni Amer tribe was simply on a visit to the villages collecting contributions towards his marriage expenses, for he was about to take unto himself another wife, so that instead of one sheikh only, we had the honour of daily receiving no less than three, with all their relations and hangers-on, who generally arrived in the morning and remained until evening. They all were very jealous of and hated each other cordially, and no little diplomacy was necessary on the part of our dragoman in making a contract with one of them to supply us with hunters without the others interfering. However, we soon became great friends with all of them by the aid of numerous cups of coffee, various presents, and promises of more. We also gave two dinner parties to the sheikhs and two or three of their head-men, which they seemed to enjoy very greatly. Curiously enough, on each occasion the sheiks brought a poor relation with them, who, to judge from his appetite and capability of storing away food, had probably not been fed for a long time. We always then had a variety of dishes, soup, several meats, vegetables, birds, and sweets, which everybody ate with his fingers, while the conversation was mainly carried on through the interpreter. The poor relation was generally the first to clear his plate, and he then took to hunting among what remained on the plates of the other guests for anything which particularly took his fancy. His eyesight was very keen, and once fixed upon a tempting morsel, down would swoop his fingers into the plate, and carry off triumphantly the captured piece and place it in his mouth. We, seeing this manoeuvre, naturally wanted to refill the poor relation's plate, but our dragoman, who remarked our good intention, and was better versed in the manners and customs of the natives, objected, saying, "Let him dig, poor man, he likes it best." So, seeing that those who were being despoiled took it in good part, and were not likely to take defensive or offensive measures, we let him dig, and he dug and was happy. None of the sheikhs smoked. When we rolled a cigarette for them they took it out of compliment but never lighted it. Smoking altogether was almost unknown, and all were good Mohammedans in the matter of strong drinks. All the Arabs wore their hair in the usual mop-like fashion. Sheikhs carried a cross-handled

sword, the others spear and shield. The sheikhs of these villages are placed between two fires; they have to pay tribute not only to Egypt but also to Abyssinia. The former cannot, or at all events does not, protect them, and the latter threatens, in default of payment, immediate descent upon them. In fact, during our stay two envoys from the Abyssinian general commanding on the frontier arrived with the order that the village sheikh must either leave the country at once or go with them to Abyssinia and pay tribute. Rather than give up the pastures for his numerous flocks and seek others further inland, he chose the latter alternative and accompanied the envoys.

The head sheikhs squeeze what they can out of the minor ones, these again out of those below them. In this part of the country again tribute had to be paid to two governments, while to add still further to the distress, now and then the principal sheikh of the whole tribe, the Beni Amer, swooped down to collect what he could for his own personal expenses :

“Big sheikhs have smaller sheikhs  
Upon their backs to bite 'em,  
Little sheikhs have lesser sheikhs,  
And so on *ad infinitum*.”

Here it seems best to be a poor man, for directly he gets on a little, and owns a few cows or sheep, or a camel or two, the sheikh is down upon him at once, and makes him pay for everything he has. People are naturally afraid to grow dhurra, or make any attempt at agriculture, knowing well that they would not be gainers by it, but have all the proceeds of their labour taken from them. When a boy becomes a man he or his parents pay to the sheikh, and the sheikh to government, five dollars. The annual government tax on every ten goats or sheep is one dollar, on every cow three, and on every camel four dollars. The sheikh, however, extorts a good deal more from the owners of live stock, and annexes the cattle altogether if his demands cannot be satisfied. If the sheikh, on the other hand, fails to pay the government tax, he and his cattle are marched off to the nearest garrison town, and there the latter are sold by auction or straightway appropriated by the ruling power.

The sheikhs are well-to-do, and live on the best of the land.



The shepherds work very hard, live on nothing but milk, with occasionally perhaps a little dhurra, and get nothing for it. The women in these villages are busy all day long mat-making, and no doubt earn some money for their husband, hence the more wives a man has the more dollars he makes, and the more is afterwards squeezed out of him by his sheikh. Everything purchased from an Arab has to be paid for through the sheikh, who of course retains part. Only a small share of our hunters' wages reached them, and even backsheesh given for game found and killed had to be given up afterwards to the individual who certainly deserved it least. In name these men are not slaves, but I doubt whether anywhere greater tyranny exists than in these small village communities.

The flocks belonging to some of the villages are enormous. I have often watched them being watered, from sunrise to sunset sometimes without intermission, and not at one well only, but at six or eight at the same time, provided each with at least one mud tank constantly kept filled. At early dawn shepherds, naked but for a small leathern apron, in twos and threes, would go to the wells, one descending into it to fill the leathern bucket, the others pulling it up by its long rope and emptying it into the basin made of baked mud, accompanying their heavy task with a monotonous sing-song. Their work lasted during the whole day, and it must indeed be no easy matter to keep the reservoirs filled when thirsty animals, closely packed, are crowding round them without intermission slaking their thirst—thirst which they can satisfy but once in the twenty-four hours. Soon after sunrise the flocks come down into the river-bed, where the wells are always sunk, from both sides and by various tracks, always led and held in check by their shepherds, and accompanied by one or two others. Herds of goats, sheep, cows, and camels arrived one after another. Some were driven at once to a well, others had to wait until some drinking-place would be vacant. The men seemed to have great control over their numerous charges, and marshalled in compact bodies would keep them quietly lying and waiting in the sand. It was always a very picturesque scene, the numerous flocks and herds of every kind of domestic animal almost, some drinking, others waiting, some arriving, others leaving; the spears of the shepherds stuck upright into the sand near the wells, and their

shields hanging from them, while their owners were performing their ablutions or their devotions, and their comrades were busy keeping the mud tanks filled to the never-ceasing vocal accompaniment. Herds of kids and lambs were always kept separate, generally under the command of boys. All day long unceasingly they came and went, and it is no wonder that these villages have very frequently to be shifted, for everything green within possible reach of the wells must very rapidly be devoured by so many hungry mouths. The shepherd never leaves his flock, and lives entirely on the milk and a little native corn. With their primitive hatchets they cut down any branches out of reach of their charges, and at night they drive these into a thorn fence enclosure to protect them from wild beasts, frequently lighting fires around as an additional precautionary measure.

The milk is sent into the villages, made into butter by means of constant shaking in a (leathern) girba, and then sent in skins to the coast, whence it is exported in large quantities to Arabia. We sometimes were presented with gourds of sour milk, and, though at first a little afraid of it, soon liked it so much that we never could get enough. It is simply curdled, very refreshing and nutritious, of course, and agrees excellently well with the stomach, indeed far better than fresh milk, which, undergoing the curdling process after being swallowed, is almost certain to bring on a severe fit of indigestion, which the sour never does. This, excepting one lean goat, was the only present we ever received from the sheiks, and that not generally without the strongest hints, and sometimes only on payment even; with thousands and thousands of cattle the difficulty of obtaining milk was not easy to understand. The villagers complained greatly of the number of their beasts slain by lions, and no doubt with reason, for they were there in the jungles. One would therefore naturally expect to find the men only too glad to assist those who were so anxious to relieve them of some or all of these robbers, and that they would do everything in their power to beat the brushwood, as Indians certainly would have done, to get the lions out; but no, they had not the energy. "Inshallah! if the cattle were to be killed they would be; what would be the use, therefore, of troubling oneself about it?" The offer of backsheesh would, perhaps, tempt one man to

accompany us in search of the royal beast, but there was no energy about it, and therefore it always proved fruitless. The women, of course, had to do all the heavy work, staggering under ponderous waterskins, which it was their duty to fill at the well and carry back to the village. The young children run about naked, but afterwards wear a loincloth, or a cotton sheet wound round the loins and thrown over their shoulders, according to the condition in life of their parents. The children's heads are always shaved on both sides, leaving a narrow strip of hair across the crown of the skull; this is supposed to be a preventive against ophthalmia.

Why does this population not increase more? These villages have, no doubt, existed a great many centuries, and are probably no bigger now than they were long, long ago; nor does it seem likely that their number has increased, or is increasing, judging from the enormous tracts of country utterly deserted, and without a sign of a village or any human habitation. Probably the fevers raging here during the wet season, when the whole district becomes a swamp, kill off a great number of the children, and of the grown-up people too; for, although at that time the villages are moved up on to the hills and plateaux, the malarial poison claims many a victim. It is a favourable thing, however, that the population does not increase to any very appreciable extent, for, living as it does simply and solely on and by the flocks, without any industry and with no trade, it is very necessary that there should be plenty of space to allow of these large flocks to be frequently shifted about, a *sine qua non* where food for them is so very scarce, consisting, as it does, solely of the scanty foliage of trees and bushes, scattered sparsely over the parched country.

On the third morning after our arrival the village was on the move in search of fresh pastures to a place a few miles higher up the river. This shifting of the community is a very simple affair; the huts are rapidly taken to pieces, the matting is rolled up, the sticks and poles tied together, and then everything is ready for removal on some beast of burden, camel, ox, cow, or donkey. The female members of the sheikh's family travel in gaily decorated "shugdoofs" on camels, and are attended by several servants on foot. A "shugdoof" is simply a mat hut placed upon a camel, in which the fair occupant reposes, shel-

tered from the sun and curious people's prying eyes. Considerable expense is incurred in decorating these ambulant retreats, and with a very picturesque effect generally. Bright scarlet, yellow and black cloth prettily embroidered with cowrie shells hangs down on all sides in festoons, over tastefully worked and variously coloured fine matting, while here and there red flags flutter, and suspended brass tinkling bells give notice of Mrs. Sheikh's approach. Several camels are required to carry the several ladies of the sheikh's family; for fear of quarrelling, I suppose, they all travel alone in solitary grandeur. The other members of the female community have to walk, but their household goods are carried on animals, which, heavily laden, drag wearily along in the deep sand, urged on by stick or strong language, or both. The men, of course, leave most of the work to their ladies, and swagger along in front armed with spear and shield. The sheikhs are mounted on their small but good-looking horses, and, to show off their horsemanship, rush about frantically every now and then in full gallop, and suddenly pull their horses on to their haunches by the terribly severe Arab bit. Naked little children, whose only article of dress often is a necklace of coloured beads, and many half-starved curs accompany the caravan; the aged and helpless have to get on as best they can—they are of no use to any one, and therefore nobody cares for them.

Men have already been sent on in advance to the new camping-ground to dig wells and prepare the drinking-troughs. The beasts of burden, after arrival, are soon unloaded, and in a very short time the village is once more built up and protected by the usual circular fence of thorny mimosa shrub against the attacks of wild beasts.

These villagers, being so often on the move, have no time or opportunity, even if the energy were there, to grow corn, and are therefore dependent for their supplies of dhurra upon the grain-growing country further west. Dhurra—*Sorghum vulgare*—food for man and beast, seems to be of three kinds—red, white, and brown; horses will not eat the latter, but men prefer it on account of the larger size of the grains. Dhurra is eaten either whole boiled in water, with or without meat, or soaked for many days in sour milk, or, ground into a coarse flour, in the shape of bread. G. and I had porridge made of it, which, very nourish-

ing and palatable when eaten with milk or honey, formed the chief constituent of our breakfast. It is the women's task to grind the dhurra, not by any means an easy one, for the grains are very hard, and the only mills at their disposal consist of two stones, of which one is worked by hand over the other. The flour is then made into a paste with water, and afterwards divided into masses of sufficient size either to make small but thick loaves, or large circular very thin pancake-like bread, greatly resembling the Indian "chupattie." The latter are baked on a heated iron plate, the former in the interior of a large earthenware pot, which, similar to an oven, has previously been heated by means of coals inside.

Bread is also made of the powdered resinous envelope of the nut of the dome-palm, a tree which supplies as many wants of the natives as does the bamboo in India. Mats are made of the leaves; the Y-shaped division of the stem forms the main support of the mat hut, for which the leaf-stems furnish the framework; the top interior of the young shoots is eaten boiled as a vegetable; the fruit is eagerly sought after, and its eatable portion devoured by young and old; lastly, threads are obtained from the fibrous interior of the leaf-stem, and these threads twisted together form excellent ropes.

The youthful members of the sheikh's family, of course, do nothing, but the sons of those who are not born in the purple are soon sent out to tend the flocks, their first duties being generally with the lambs and kids. The girls, also, are not long left in idleness, but commence their life of drudgery early by collecting firewood and fetching water from the wells, under the weight of which, carried in ghirbas on their back, they stagger along morning and evening. Schools in these pastoral villages are naturally unknown, but when encamped some time before near a stationary settlement, G. and I visited the village school, which apparently was well attended. The scholars were taught, besides a little reading and writing, to recite verses from the Corân. These verses were written in ink prepared with gum and the black from the outside of a cooking-pot, upon flat oblong tablets of wood, about 12 in. by 4 in., whitened over with chalk, and made of the trunk of the eucalyptus. Mohammed is supposed to have said that anything written upon the wood of that tree settles more easily in the human brain.

To the hunting sheikh mentioned above I gave my revolver on leaving the country; it was in its brown leather case, with initials and regiment on the flap. On the Gordon relief expedition, three years later, I carried a similar revolver marked in the same way.

One day, when talking to G., my late companion near Abyssinia, in the mud fort at Gubat, on the other side of the Bayooda desert, one of Gordon's soldiers passed with what I thought looked like my revolver strapped on to his belt. Mine had been left at my usual sleeping-place near the river, and there I thought the Soudanee had annexed it, but that was not the case. When sent for the man told me that his revolver had been given to him by a sheikh on the Abyssinian border, and that it had done good work under Gordon twice. I at once recognised it as my old revolver, and regretted greatly that it was not able to tell its own story, which, no doubt, would have been highly interesting.

## VI

### SKETCHES IN THE SOUDAN (*continued*)

#### III.—DAYS AT KEREN

**WE** had been over three weeks on the march from Suakim, with the dry sandy beds of the Baraka and Anseba rivers for our road, when at last Fort Tschabab, on a hill of the same name, rose before us. It was noon, so we decided to rest awhile on the river-bank at the foot of the hill fort, and thence to send our interpreter on to Keren, only five miles distant, to arrange about quarters, for it was our intention to make a stay there of several days in order to rest our camels, and buy ponies, &c., for an expedition into the country bordering on the north-west frontier of Abyssinia. So the camels were unloaded, and soon busily engaged with the green branches of some juniper-trees on the banks of the river-bed, which everywhere showed signs of the water being but a very little way below the surface, for small excavations, made by man and beast, were plentiful, all being partially filled with water, at which birds of every hue were drinking. The deeper water-holes had been taken possession of by soldiers from the fort, who were busily engaged washing themselves or their linen, throwing water over their black, shiny bodies, while their only garments were drying spread out upon the sand. Most of these Egyptian negro soldiers are very fine and tall men, and every opportunity of judging of their physical development was given as they squatted or lay upon the sand, waiting until the sun should have dried their skin and their linen. They are all liberated slaves, chiefly from the White Nile regions, who, in return for their release from slavery, have to serve the government as soldiers, which, further to increase their happiness, generously

gives them the liberated female slaves for wives. Their bath over, they came to see us in various *négligé* costumes, some with only a cloth round their loins, others clad in their white tunic, others again enveloped in an enormous blue overcoat with hood, all with a tarboosh in a variety of shades of red, to ask where we came from and what we wanted. We always found these black soldiers very good-humoured, and with the aid of a little tobacco or coffee, made many friends among them. These men formed part of the garrison of Fort Tschabab, one of the Egyptian outposts against Abyssinia, from the frontier of which it is but a very few miles distant, the mighty mountains of the Habesh approaching quite closely. The fort overlooks the Anseba river, whence it draws its supply of water, and is in communication with Keren and Massowah by telegraph. After a short rest G. and our dragoman start off *en route* to Keren, while I get the camels together, load up, and follow at a slower pace. Poor brutes! they have become very slim lately, and are heavily laden, for the loss of two camels on the journey has put extra weight on the backs of the survivors. However, on they plod once more, soon leaving the bed of the Anseba for that of a small tributary in which the sand is very wet, and here and there even hidden by running water. As we approach the plateau on which Keren lies the road ascends rapidly, winding along the river-bed, which during the rains must be that of a swift mountain torrent, and presently a delightful sight refreshes our eyes as we come to, and pass between, charmingly green kitchen gardens on the high river banks, belonging to various inhabitants of Keren. We have not even seen any green vegetables during our long march, so the beds of luxuriantly growing lettuces, carrots, cabbages, onions, artichokes, and of various kitchen herbs, are very pleasing to the eye. In each little garden men are at work, some raising water by means of levers and leathern buckets from the deep wells in the river-bed at the foot of the perpendicular bank and pouring it into a reservoir, whence it finds its way into all the little channels which intersect the beds in all directions, while others are busily engaged planting or weeding. While meditating upon the delights of fresh salads in the future, we rapidly ascend the Keren plateau, and soon find ourselves surrounded on every side by high mountain ranges, covered but sparsely with brushwood,



with here and there some giant, many-armed, candelabra-like cactus, or large circular piles of white stones marking the graves of sheikhs. These dome-shaped mounds are in very conspicuous positions on the hill slopes. As we approach the capital of the Bogos province, formerly Abyssinian but now Egyptian, the road becomes more lively; we meet many boys and girls staggering along under enormous ghirbas filled with water, very severely trying their strength apparently; we see donkeys carrying water also, a few camels, a caravan bound for Massowah with matting; we pass several sheikhs' graves by the roadside, ornamented with white sparkling quartz, and red and white flags gaily fluttering in the breeze; and then suddenly the town lies before us, surrounded on all sides by high mountains, and overlooked also and guarded by its small but apparently strong hill fort. Our road to the market-place, where we hope to meet G. and the dragoman, passes close under it and then runs between rows of beehive-like reed huts, most of which seem occupied by soldiers, who, scattered about in groups, show a good deal of interest in our caravan. Our envoys have already procured us an empty house belonging to a Greek merchant, consisting of a room and a kitchen, with a fenced-in courtyard for our camels attached. So we soon unload and make ourselves at home, once more under a roof. G. and Suleiman, who, in the absence of the governor had gone to the commandant, had there had their patience severely tried, patience—the most important necessity for Eastern travel—for, on entering the house this high functionary was discovered busy washing his feet, after which he put on no less than three pairs of stockings, prayers, lasting exactly twenty minutes, following. Although highly edified, no doubt, by this interesting glimpse of everyday life at Keren, the visitors were greatly pleased when at last, the devotions over, coffee was ordered, without which nothing can be settled and nothing can be done. While regretting greatly that the "palace" was too full for our accommodation, he sent G. down to a Greek merchant, and the result was a house to ourselves looking out on to the most fashionable part of the capital, the market-place. Standing at the door of our one-roomed, one-storied, flat-roofed, windowless house, we obtain a very good idea of the two townlets which make up what is, since the Egyptians became masters here

about seven years ago, called Senheit. When the Habesh reigned only that part on our right, Keren proper, existed; since then an Egyptian colony has been added surrounding the hill fort, and divided from the other by a tobacco field, which colony is called Tantarua, while the whole is "Senheit." One is a garrison town—Egyptian, therefore Mohammedan; the other still a purely Abyssinian Christian village, consisting entirely of beehive-like reed huts surrounded by high stake fences and a few castor-oil plants, and watched over, like a shepherd watches his flock, by the stone-built French Catholic mission-house; while the Egyptian town nestles under the protecting guns of the fort, which encloses in its walls the residence of the governor, the public offices, and some very large wattle huts for soldiers, strengthened with clay and neatly arranged in rows on each side of the path leading from the gate to the "palace." Enterprising Greeks have built a row of stone houses on one side of the market-place, which are used as shops and stores, and, as in our case, by any chance traveller in search of lodging.

The governor also holds the important post of commander-in-chief on the Abyssinian frontier, a post which must entail a great deal of anxiety, judging from the frequently current rumours of an immediate outbreak of hostilities between the two countries. The garrison was said to consist of three thousand men, nearly all black troops; the few lower Egyptians among them serve here as a punishment for crimes committed elsewhere. Those soldiers now loafing about in the market-place seem on the best of terms with the well-shaped, pretty Abyssinian girls who sit about here and there selling bread and firewood. This bread, of which we had already laid in a store, as a pleasant change from the everlasting, hard, almost stone-like biscuit, on which, to the great danger of our teeth, we had lately subsisted, is made of the coarse flour of wheat, dhurra, or doochen (millet), in large flat circular, but very thin cakes.

All our house contained in the way of furniture were two native bedsteads. These we removed for entomological reasons, furnishing our apartment instead with our own camp bedsteads, table, chairs, &c. After dinner we soon turned in, but not to sleep, for apparently all the curs in the town had collected near our door, and the howls they set up were far too piercingly loud

and constant to allow of sleep. Sometimes there was a pause, and we both settled ourselves into as comfortable positions as possible to court Morpheus, when some brute in the distance gave tongue, and instantly every cur in the place did his utmost to outbark his neighbour. This infernal din lasted nearly all night, and many times did we vow to thin their numbers by fair means or foul in the morning. If they had only stayed outside, but they entered our chamber through a door we could not shut, drank our milk, and then affectionately and thankfully licked our faces. This would bring forth some very strong language, followed by a handy missile, which, even if it did not hit the intruder, at all events was successful in making one's neighbour wideawake, at which, curiously enough, he was not always best pleased. The early morning was very chilly, for Keren lies 4,469 feet above the sea, so we did not get up until long after the very pretty Egyptian réveillés had sounded. The air is remarkably taking, and is played on a dozen or more trumpets and key-bugles, the men marching up and down the while. After breakfast, it being too early to call upon the governor, we paid a visit to the convent, the seat of the French mission, which existed here long before the Egyptian sway extended as far as this. Crossing some tobacco-fields on which now only the short stumps of the roots remained, we reached the Abyssinian huts, and soon after the courtyard of the mission-house, and were presently most kindly received and welcomed by the bishop, and shown over the establishment, school, printing-press—Amharic, the language of the Habesh—and workshops. I fear, however, that this mission and the other near Massowah, of Protestant Swedes, have a very uphill task; not only are the Egyptians against them, but the Abyssinians also put every obstacle in their way; even now, after they have forced them to quit their territory, they educate Abyssinian orphan children with the view of their afterwards returning to their country and giving their countrymen the benefit of their knowledge. But lately the Abyssinians have taken the very strongest measures to prevent these scholars entering the country; and the French bishop, when lately on a tour in Abyssinia, after being robbed of everything he possessed, was kept in chains for a considerable time. Some time ago a Catholic mission arrived in Abyssinia with the

wish to establish itself there, and had an audience of the king, who, when told its object, put the somewhat puzzling question to the spokesman, "Why do you Catholic missionaries come to my kingdom, one of the oldest Catholic countries on earth? You tell me that you travelled through Egypt to get here; did it not strike you that it would have been much more suitable for you to have remained there to convert the Mohammedans, than to have come here to us who have the same faith as you?"

The mission on arrival of the Egyptians was allowed to remain, and is now the centre of the old Keren, the Abyssinian quarter of Senheit. The children, boys and girls, who all looked very happy, are taught the Bible and a variety of trades, while the Amharic translations of the Scriptures are sent into Abyssinia for distribution. The five or six members of the mission were kindness itself to us, and presented us several times with baskets of fresh vegetables, a valuable present which we most thoroughly appreciated. Visits to the governor and to the commandant followed, which commenced with coffee and cigarettes, and after numerous questions as to our late and future movements, came to an end with cigarettes and coffee. These visits became very monotonous, for directly after we had been viewed into our den all the officials came one after another in quest of news, tobacco, and coffee—and, methinks, I also heard whisky mentioned, but there my ears must have deceived me.

Then we take a walk to the public square, where again the "fair" Abyssinian bread vendors are sitting about with their wares on trays in front of them. And very pretty these young girls are—in fact, so much so that G. soon lost his heart altogether, and now at all hours of the day buys bread, a little at a time, but often; and well can I understand it, for their figures and carriage are perfect; they always seem happy, always joking and laughing, displaying their dazzling white teeth. The arrangement of their hair is a work of art, and must entail an immense amount of trouble; it is divided into innumerable small narrow plaits, which, extending from the forehead to the back of the neck, are neatly arranged side by side and then fixed there. The rich brown skin is set off by a blue bead necklace, or bracelets or anklets, or by all three, and

a good thick layer of butter by way of pomade completes the charming *tout ensemble*. The trays upon which the bread is brought are well worth looking at. They are made of the very finest basket-work, plaited in various colours, some in very pretty patterns. Water vessels are made of the same material, rendered watertight by means of the juice of the eucalyptus, or perhaps even by a mixture of cow-dung and clay.

Soldiers are lolling about everywhere, and a sentry paces up and down in front of a guard-tent in the market-place in his neat white uniform, cotton trousers and tunic with brass buttons and red tarboosh, contrasting most vividly with his jet black face and hands. These soldiers seemed to take the greatest pride in their arms, which are always kept as bright as it is possible to make them. Some bashi-bazonks were not so neat, but swaggered about with their belts full of cartridges, altogether not a very pleasant-looking crew. All the water has to be brought from wells in the river-bed, a very long way down, and strings of little boys and girls are constantly on the road frightfully overloaded with ghirbas, which, often surpassing in weight that of the carriers themselves, are borne on the back supported by a rope across the forehead. It always seemed to us downright cruelty, for the road was up-hill and in parts very steep; still they struggled on cheerfully and full of chaff and fun.

The tobacco grown on this plateau is cut in September, having been planted out from beds in June; now the leaves were being dried under long sheds. It is of fair quality, and owned by the Greeks, in whose hands the whole trade is. The shops and stores of groceries, wine, &c., here, as in other towns in Nubia and along the Red Sea, are nearly all kept by Greeks, who, commencing in a very small way, soon extend their business and amass a good deal of money. The Abyssinians, being Christians, have no religious scruples about the use of intoxicating liquors, nor do all Mohammedans always adhere strictly to water, as we saw illustrated by two of our camel boys, who one evening got very drunk and quarrelsome, drew their knives, and, but for the prompt interference of our dragoman, would have calmed each other's excitement by a little useful blood-letting. However, that operation not having been allowed, the next best remedy seemed to be the prison, so we had the culprits

marched off there with the idea that a little counter-irritation on the soles of their feet next morning might prove of benefit. During an interview with the military magistrate in the hut of justice this therefore was soon arranged, and the prisoners produced and questioned. They were, of course, full of excuses. One even pointed to his fiery eyes, saying that the redness was due to a blow from the dragoman, but justice whispered "araki," and decreed the bastinado. After coffee and cigarettes had been handed to us the criminals were, without more ado, each in his turn placed upon his back, their feet put into loops attached to a pole held by a man at each end, while a third meted out the punishment upon the soles of the raised feet with a courbatch, until we cried "Enough." We then finished our coffee, thanked the judge, and so justice was satisfied. The soles of an Arab's feet are very hard and horny, and the punishment, which to a European would be a terrible one, is in moderation not much thought of by an Eastern.

The pasha here is a great soldier and a very hard-working man. The troops are constantly employed in strengthening the fort or in making roads—the latter with great success, as we found on our march from here through the magnificent mountain-gorge of Eshideera. He personally superintends his working parties, and is then always attended by his body-guard clothed in bright scarlet tunics; he frequently had field-days, while his staff was busy making most excellent maps, or employed in teaching the men signalling and intrenching. The ration beef, part of which the soldiers were only too glad to sell us, was very good indeed; the garrison butcher receives as pay the hide and head of every animal he kills. Several mules were brought to us for sale, but in consequence of the ridiculous prices asked only one was bought. This was a "real" mule, who, when he suddenly took it into his head, could kick higher and buck harder than would have seemed possible for any animal to accomplish. Sometimes when walking along in apparently the most amiable of moods, this interesting creature would, for no other reason apparently than that of pure mischief, suddenly commence kicking and bucking in so determined and accomplished a manner, his head disappearing altogether between his forelegs, that presently, after a struggle

or two, his rider had to exchange the saddle for the hard ground; but not satisfied with that feat, Mr. Mule would in a few more kicks disembarass himself of his saddle also by slipping it over his head, without undoing the girths, and then quietly walk to a bush as if looking for applause, and commence feeding. "Pride of Keren" was a most accomplished mule, and would have been a valuable addition to a circus while in his kicking mood. In good temper he did his work well, would eat anything, but when his liver was out of order, or something else had gone wrong, he had a will of his own, to which his rider had to bow even down to the very ground.

One day we received an invitation to an Abyssinian wedding, so in the evening, about nine, we followed our conductors to the Christian Keren, where the marriage festivities were then taking place. Soon after leaving our mansion the marriage bells, or rather tom-toms, became audible, and as we drew nearer other musical, if not melodious, sounds began to mingle with them. Entering a large sereeba and passing one or two huts, now dark and deserted, we soon found ourselves in the centre of, apparently, a very happy, certainly a very noisy crowd. In front of a very large hut, or "dass" closed all round, the abode of the bride, were the musicians seated on the ground, and around these, standing or walking about, a large number of guests assembled to do honour to the bride and sing the praises of the bridegroom. Outside the hut all belonged to the male sex, but inside the bride sat in state, surrounded by an admiring circle of female friends only. The scene certainly was most picturesque. The musicians formed the inner circle, sitting round an oblong space kept clear of the crowd, upon which only two or three boys were allowed, whose duty it was to tend the few oil lamps which only partially lit up the dark faces and the white garments of the men around. The musicians, all old men, certainly worked hard, as if their lives depended upon making as much noise as possible. Some of them plied tom-toms without intermission, while others beat time on a larger drum suspended from the neck by a cord; a few, again, made "music" on a long wooden flute-like instrument with a reed mouthpiece and a bell mouth, the resulting humming sounds mingling in delightful "harmony" with others produced by a string instrument like a guitar played

with the fingers. A monotonous chant, joined in by everybody, accompanied these instruments, and was answered from within the bower by the bride and her attendants. This singing seemed at first very pretty, but being without any variety or intermission, soon became very monotonous. Every now and then a man, musician or not, stepped into the ring and danced a *pas-de-seul*, singing the praises of the bridegroom the while; this also would be prettily answered from within. Occasionally one of the fair ones ran out from the "dass" as if to escape the crowd, but in vain, for she was soon captured by the amorous swains. The lady had then to join these *nolens volens*, generally the latter apparently, in a very unique slow dance, in which all the men crowded round her so closely that the damsel had scarcely any room to breathe, and certainly none to execute herself any of the simple steps of the very simple measure.

The men as Abyssinians all wore the national "quarry," a large white cotton toga, having at one end a deep crimson broad stripe. This end is thrown over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm free, and gives the dress a very picturesque appearance. The red stripe is worn, I believe, in memory of the wound inflicted by the lance in the side of our Saviour. All wear a blue cord round the neck to show that they are Christians.

We were introduced to the bridegroom, and, of course, wished him everything which could possibly add to his happiness. He was a very fine-looking man indeed, with beautifully frizzled, curled and buttered hair, heavy silver bracelets, beads round his neck, and the usual cross-handled sword over the shoulder. Expressing his regrets that he had no European drinks to offer us, he sent for some native beer, "marisi," made by the aid of fermentation from a mixture of bread, flour, and water. The thick, greyish liquid was presented to us in a cow's horn, but to my mind had a very disagreeably nauseous taste. Nevertheless, we drank his health, wished him many children, and said "Goodbye." The singing and dancing in front of the bride's hut was continued until morning, similar festivities going on at the same time near the bridegroom's home. The actual wedding was fixed for the next day, so in the morning the bridegroom started for the father-in-law's house, mounted upon a horse and accompanied by all his friends, who danced



frantically about in front, behind, and all around him, shouting, rattling their spears against their shields, firing off guns, pistols, &c., &c. After the final ceremony, which I did not see, at her father's hut, the bride was taken to her husband's home enveloped in a sack carried like a bale in the arms of one of her husband's friends, who was every now and then relieved by another. This procession also is accompanied by musicians, men with guns, &c., and attended by a great deal of shouting and dancing and jumping about.

But we had other visitors besides our Egyptian friends—visitors which we could not get rid of, do what we would; we turned them out ignominiously I don't know how many times; we kicked them, stamped upon them, poured water on them, threw ashes on them, hot and cold, took them up bodily on a spade and threw them out of the door; we made ourselves as disagreeable to them as we possibly could, but no, nothing would prevent their return; so eventually they ended by turning us out. These were white ants, who, having found out that the generally empty room was once more occupied, arrived in millions. Before attacking our property they built for themselves a house of little masses of clay, brought up by legions of workers from below the floor; they then ran up in an incredibly short time, another, and then another, connecting all by covered passages, steadily pushing on their outworks towards any object on or near the floor, capable of being devoured or destroyed—anything, in fact, but metal. The conical houses all had an opening at the top leading down to the base, an air-hole, the interior of which felt quite hot to the finger. As all our offensive and defensive tactics failed, and our enemies steadily and rapidly increased the area of their operations, the room soon became too small for us all; we had to retire before them, and were only triumphant so far that we saved our baggage from destruction, and deprived the ants of their expected feast.

## VII

### SKETCHES IN THE SOUDAN (*continued*)

#### IV.—A DAY IN THE JUNGLE

**G.** AND I were already mounted, with our express rifles slung over the shoulder and water-bottle hanging on the saddle, waiting until it should please our hunters to start. It was always hard work, and required a good deal of strong language, freely translated by our dragoman into equally forcible Arabic, to get these lazy men to move, men of whom we had expected so much and who so soon proved to be such utter failures. At last they are on their horses, and each having been joined by a tracker on foot, come after us, one set going with G., the other accompanying me, and carrying our heavy rifles across the saddles in front of them. Soon after leaving the camp our parties divide, each going in a different direction so as not to interfere with one another's sport. These "sword-hunters," on their good-looking, well-fed horses, certainly look like work, but unfortunately their looks belie them. When, some time ago, we engaged them after a great deal of difficulty from their very plausible sheikh, to take us into an entirely new country—new, at all events, to Europeans—we, remembering the feats performed by those brilliant sportsmen, the sword hunters of Sir Samuel Baker, feats so graphically described by him; and when the agreement, offering them so much for every elephant, buffalo, lion, giraffe, and ostrich we should kill, was drawn up, and looked so well on paper, then, indeed, we had great expectations of most splendid sport—expectations in which, alas! we were doomed to disappointment. Not only did the men turn out almost worse than useless, but the game had been driven from the promised land by native hunters, agents of the Cassala

collector of wild animals. The tracker, who leads the way, is a tall, powerful man; his immense mass of curly hair is well greased, and has the long wooden hairpin stuck through it; he is naked except round the loins, which are scantily covered with the folds of his cotton garment; a pair of sandals, a charm or two above the elbow, and the usual spear, complete his outfit. On he strides in front of his mounted comrade, who looks very business-like on his glossy-coated horse, and who ought to be able to show us good sport. His only garment also, is a loin-cloth, his weapon a broad cross-handled sword, which, in its wooden scabbard, is carried underneath the left thigh, between it and the saddle flap, its sling being attached to the high pommel in front. This weapon, with which Baker's famous "aggageers" did such wonderful work in single combat with all the most formidable animals of the jungle, I never saw used, it might just as well have been left behind; not even could I get our wretched men to show their prowess with it when a badly wounded elephant gave an excellent opportunity. Fastened to the saddle behind, and lying upon the horse's back, is carried a large ghirba, full of water, and both G. and I constantly remarked the enormous quantities of water which these men consumed. We had long since accustomed ourselves never to touch our bottles before noon, having found that early drinking only increased thirst to an almost unbearable extent. We often returned with our bottles half full of cold tea—the beverage taken—having hardly felt the want of anything at all, though out in the hot sun all day. How enjoyable, then, was the first good drink after arrival in camp! Thus, in single file, we three rode and walked over an immense plateau, extending as far as the high Abyssinian mountains in the far distance, covered chiefly with low, thorny mimosa shrub, overlooked here and there by higher bushes, with a few giant baobab-trees towering over all. The ground generally was bare, but in some parts thickly covered with dry golden-yellow grass, from which we put up many a quail, guinea-fowl, and sand-grouse; gazelle and antelope also were plentiful, sometimes allowing us to approach quite close, as if well aware that we should not molest them for fear of disturbing the bigger game, which we had hopes of finding. Tracks there were many of antelope, gazelle, ostrich, and giraffe, also of elephants, though these were old, dating

probably from the last rainy season. Finding a particularly fresh spoor of a giraffe, the impressions of whose large hoofs are always so clearly cut, we followed it, as I had never yet seen these animals in their wild state. On we went, frequently having to make a detour, thanks to some particularly disagreeable kittar bush, but nothing was to be seen anywhere; so we made for a baobab-tree, in the hope that from the upper branches the hunter might see something of our game. The gigantic trunks, altogether out of proportion with their height, often over 80 feet in circumference, are very soft and spongy, frequently hollow, and occasionally the habitat of bees and therefore an object of interest to the native. The trunk gives off few, but gigantic, branches, on which no leaves now remained, but here and there a fruit was still hanging by its long stem. This fruit consists of an almost pear-shaped, greyish-green hard envelope, in which are contained, packed away like sweets in a bonbon box, between layers of fibre, a great number of seeds, each of which is thickly covered with a white substance, which soon crumbles into powder, but is sweet and very pleasantly acidulated and therefore very refreshing, either when allowed to dissolve in the mouth or as a drink mixed with water.

The tracker had now climbed up to the top branches, whence, no doubt, a very extensive view could be obtained, and to our anxious inquiries he at last made signs that some giraffes were within sight. We rode to a hillock, where the stalk was to commence; arrived there, we took a peep over the brow of it, and about five hundred yards off, feeding on some bushes, stood two giraffes—enormous they looked even at that distance. Unfortunately there was hardly any cover, nothing but low mimosa shrub, above which they towered like lighthouses. The chance of being able to approach them within reasonable distance was very faint; still, I started off on hands and knees, a most uncomfortable, painful, and disagreeable stalk; for not only were the low bushes covered with thorns, but the ground also, only to be just in time to see the game trot off beyond range. In this low cover it is almost impossible to get near these wary animals; their enormous height renders their area of vision most extensive; at the slightest sign of danger they start off with their peculiar trot, and do not stop again until far away.

Disappointed, we rode on, passing the old site of an ostrich's nest, marked now only by broken egg-shells, and saw nothing more until the tracker, who was in front, suddenly pointed in a very excited manner to the right, where six ostriches, startled by seeing us, were half running, half flying, going away at a great pace, and, unfortunately, a long way off. Two rapid shots had, apparently, no result; it was a very pretty sight, though, to see these enormous birds skimming over the ground; they were soon lost to view, and the only ones I ever met with.

About noon we saw, through a narrow belt of dome-palms, the sandy bed of the river below us, and walking along it, cropping here and there a bit of grass or some herb which grew in the moist soil, nellut, and ariel, and dorcas gazelles. After watching them for a short time, delighted with the, to a sportsman's eye, most attractive picture, we rode down the steep bank, and soon discovered a reason for the presence of so much game. The water here was evidently quite close to the surface—in fact, in one part the soil was swampy and covered with grass, on the fresh shoots of which the gazelles had been feeding. Here and there were shallow excavations in the sand made by various animals, filled partially with water; a little further on, at the foot of some rocks, a large pool sparkled in the sun, and yet another higher up, with innumerable tracks of every kind of gazelle and antelope, of hyenas and jackals, leading up to and from them. But a mightier animal than any of these had been in the habit of quenching its nightly thirst at these shallow reservoirs, for winding along the river-bed was the deep, hard-trodden path of elephants, which in stately single file had up to lately marched along here in quest of the now rare and precious draughts. However, a few days ago there had been a sudden stop to these visits; the elephants had come once too often, for, taking advantage of their nightly habit, a native hunter had ensconced himself one evening on a rock above the pool, successfully hiding behind some dome-palm leaves, and waited patiently with his smooth-bore until one of the thirsty herd gave him the chance of a successful shot at close quarters. The victim, mortally wounded, only went a few yards further; there lay its skeleton near the bank, and despoiled of teeth, hide and flesh, the carcass was now guarded by some hungry vultures and buzzards. The country around

had been, and was, one of the favourite hunting-grounds of native hunters, who, agents of collectors of wild animals for the different zoological gardens, spend their lives in these jungles, pursuing patiently the game, and awaiting their opportunity until perhaps some night a mother brought its young to the water-hole, when even the clumsy gun, loaded with coarse powder and angular ball, aimed at a distance of a few yards only, would slay the mother and leave the youngster at the hunter's mercy. A successful night would thus pay him well for many weeks' waiting, and cause great rejoicing among his followers, for he never hunts alone. The ivory, although small in this part of the country, would fetch a certain price among the travelling traders; the hide would cut up into many squares to be afterwards made into shields, while the flesh, sliced into strips and hung up in festoons on the bushes round the camp to dry, provides food for many a long day. The fat is carefully collected and stored away, afterwards to adorn the heads of many a native, while the young elephant, if delivered safe and sound at Cassala, the agent's place of abode, will, I was told, fetch one hundred dollars. We afterwards met the slayer of this particular elephant, a Bedaween from Arabia, a dirtier man than it has ever been my fate to see, with filthy matted hair, wrapped in a long garment discoloured by age and dirt, and continually smoking a short chibouque. It was difficult to understand how any animal could approach him without being long before warned of his presence by the aromatic atmosphere surrounding him; but either the sense of smell of the game must be blunted at night, or the hunter had some means when lying out of condensing and storing the odours, which certainly were always particularly powerful in the morning. His train consisted of four or five men, two donkeys, which carried water, dhurra-bags, and other necessaries, and a pony with a terribly sore back which he himself bestrode. Thus they travelled through the country, making long or short halts, according to the amount of game about, living by the rifle, a very antiquated weapon, and taking to their employer anything likely to command a profit in the European market, unless previously robbed of it and everything they possess on the road.

This part of the river had evidently been the favourite resort of large numbers of elephants. The green muddy bed of a

small tributary which entered close by was trampled over its whole extent, the deep impressions of the ponderous feet were everywhere; but since one of their number had been killed, all hope of meeting the noble game in this vicinity was, of course, gone; once disturbed, the herd will travel for days and days, and seek a haven of rest far, far away.

The sun was very hot, so we decided on resting for a short time in the shade; the horses were watered and then allowed to graze on the coarse grass growing upon the banks. The men at once set to work collecting the nuts of the dome-palm, a great favourite with them, and now ripe. This palm, which everywhere here fringes the river bank, is at this season of the year a constant source of food supply to the Arabs, who knock off the fruit hanging down in bunches from the leafy crown with their sticks. This fruit, about the size of a large apple, has a hard, shiny, brownish-red covering, which, when cut off with a knife or the sharp edge of a spear, discloses a softer though very dry fibrous substance, tasting somewhat like gingerbread which has lain in the sun for a considerable time. Inside this eatable part again is a very hard kernel, enclosing an ivory-like seed, which, after being soaked in water, is eaten by man and cattle. The slender stem of the dome-palm divides at a certain height into two branches, and these again, perhaps, into two others, always forming a Y. The crown is a dense mass of fan-shaped leaves, from which the fruit hangs in clusters of often as many as a hundred nuts. When young the trunk is clothed in dead hanging leaves, which gradually drop off, leaving it perfectly bare. While the men were busily employed collecting and eating the fruit, I had sought the shelter of some overhanging rocks close to one of the pools, curious to know what thirsty creatures would pay it a visit. Of course, the antelopes and gazelles had long since disappeared, and it being past noon others could hardly be expected. Still, I soon began to wish that I was better versed in ornithology, and knew the names and characteristics of the great variety of feathered denizens of the jungle, which, at first startled at my approach, soon returned from all around in swarms, of all sizes and of every hue, some displaying the most gorgeous plumage. From their perch on the adjacent trees and rocks they would dash down to the pool, hesitate for a moment, and then walk to the edge of the water, chattering all the while,

dip their beaks in, raise their heads to let the refreshing draught run down their thirsty throats with an appearance of intense enjoyment almost ludicrous. Then something would frighten the whole swarm of small birds at the water, and all with one accord would suddenly fly to the shelter of the rock with a great rush, many passing within easy reach of me, until courage had returned and danger disappeared, when down again they flew and noisily jostled each other at the water once more. I noticed more particularly a lovely little bird, with creamy claret-coloured head and body and a red beak, and another, a larger one, lustrous black, with yellow and bright red collar and head, having a very long tail, apparently far too heavy to carry. There were doves of every size; green parakeets, with mauve collar and long tail; others with no tail at all; blackbirds, with light blue wings, shining in the sun—in fact, as lovely an assembly as ever one could wish to see. Then there was a rustle above, and down came a long-tailed, white-whiskered monkey, the pioneer of several others, or a brilliant lizard would rush over the glowing rocks to seek the shelter of a cool crevice. Two large vultures were busy picking at the skeleton of the elephant higher up, while two others sat looking on half-asleep from a rock above. Presently one of them majestically stalked towards the water, very slowly, halting every now and then to reconnoitre, evidently well aware that there was somebody about who had no business to be there. He was a splendid fellow, with a rich chocolate-coloured body, wings, and tail, and lighter coloured ruff, bluish-grey neck, and light yellow bare head. My slightest movement caused him to retire, but he soon returned stealthily and slowly, as before peering towards me, stopping as if undecided after every few steps, until at last thirst overcame fear, and, plucking up courage, he eventually entered the shallow basin, to the great disgust of the smaller fry, and apparently enjoyed the draught thoroughly. At a smaller water-hole some guinea-fowl were assembled, and at almost every little excavation in the sand either bird or butterfly was at work. In some of these small holes, where the water has become exhausted, birds and other animals scratch away until it again appears, or dig their beaks in as deeply as they can, to reach the water, hidden only by a thin layer of sand perhaps. All animals display wonderful sagacity in finding the place where it



is to be obtained, and generally visit the same spot every day, unless disturbed, until the supply of water fails. These pools and small water-holes soon dry up, and animals have to seek some other source, the whereabouts of which is known probably only to themselves. Frequently, when passing the larger wells, often 12 to 20 feet deep, a swarm of birds would flutter up, startled from the depths below, where, seated on the lowest twig of the branches supporting the walls, they had been drinking. In the vicinity of villages, where the mud tanks near the wells are daily used for watering the flocks, enough water remains in them for all comers; florican and guinea-fowl drink there at daybreak before the flocks, small birds with them whenever an opportunity offers, sand-grouse after them at dusk; and then come the prowlers of the night, jackal, hyena, and lion. It is a comical and common sight to watch, during the mid-day heat, a number of thirsty crows, with their beaks wide open, sitting round these tanks, anxiously awaiting their chance of a drink. When the village shifts, however, these soon become dry, the wells sand up, and then it seems to man a puzzle where the various animals find the necessary water. When making a long march up the sandy bed of a river some little time before, we followed the recent deeply-trodden path of an elephant for two or three days. He had always visited the wells along the road, and tried to reach the water with his trunk, sometimes kneeling, sometimes standing up, at some of the shallower wells no doubt successfully; but at others the side of the well had given way under the enormous weight, and Mr. Elephant, after a fall, had been obliged to continue his tramp, thirsty, and no doubt in a bad temper.

But time was up, and a longish piece of road between us and the camp, and antelope or gazelle had to be procured for food, so the word was given to get the horses ready, and shortly afterwards we were once more riding in single file through the thorny mimosa bush, following at first a well-used gazelle path leading towards the water. Giraffe tracks again were plentiful, but nothing was to be seen of those wary animals. Some of the larger mimosa bushes told a tale of elephants having passed through here, probably during the late rains; branches torn off, some left hanging by a few fibres, others scattered about on the ground, all dead. Crystal-like, almost transparent, masses of

gum arabic were very plentiful on the injured acacias; the exuded sap, hardened by exposure to the air, had formed itself into sparkling masses, varying in size from that of a cherry-stone to that of a small apple. The men were busily employed all the way home in sucking pieces of this gum, and although almost tasteless, they seemed to appreciate it greatly. In the absence of bigger game, we now kept a sharp look-out for something for the pot. A large herd of ariel, very wild and shy, gave no chance; but soon after I espied two dorcas gazelles feeding on the young leaves of a mimosa bush. This, to my idea most beautiful of the gazelle tribe, the very perfection of symmetry in shape and of elegance in all its movements, with its dark horizontal stripe along the lower part of its ribs, is never found, like the ariel, in large herds, but generally in small parties of two to three or four among low bushes, the young leaves of which supply it with its favourite food.

However, there was no time now for admiration; a successful stalk and well-placed bullet, supplemented by a cut across the throat "in the name of Allah!" soon provided us with the needful for to-night's dinner. The method of cutting up a gazelle and rendering it more portable, without such injury to the skin as would make it useless afterwards as a ghirba (water-skin), is very ingenious, and well worth watching carefully. The Arab makes a cut along the inside of each hind leg, from near the foot to the top of the thigh; the skin is then stripped off as far as the toes, the bones separated at the hocks and taken out. Then the upper ends of these cuts are joined together by a transverse one, and the whole skin pulled off over the body as far as the neck. The fore-legs are treated in the same manner as the hind, and now the head is severed at the neck. The flesh is then divided and put into the bag formed by the skin, the hole in the neck having previously been filled up by the head pushed into it from within. Lastly, the strips of skins from the legs are tied together on each side, and the whole, slung over the shoulder, is thus easily carried. To prepare the skin for use as a ghirba, it is buried in the ground, after which the hairs can readily be removed; then follows its immersion during several days in water, to which a large quantity of the bark of a mimosa or nabbuk-tree has been added. These barks contain a large percentage of tannin, so that the skin, after thorough

soaking and daily rubbing and scrubbing with hands and stones, soon becomes thoroughly tanned and fit for use. All that now remains to be done is to sew up the cuts in the legs and between the thighs, leaving the hole in the neck, however, which is closed by means of a leathern thong. The lower bones of the legs, when taken out, are immediately broken between stones, and the raw marrow greedily devoured; this is considered a great delicacy.

While the gazelle is being dissected, numerous birds of prey—crows, buzzards, and vultures—arrive from all points of the compass, settling down on the ground or some trees around, anxiously waiting for the moment when we shall retire, and they be left in sole possession of the ground and of anything that may remain thereon. When lazily lying in some shady spot while the men are busy cutting up the game, it has always been most interesting to me to watch the arrival of these birds of prey, and to decide to my own satisfaction whether they are led to the carcase by sight or by smell, a frequently disputed point. From constant observation in several different ways, I have become most thoroughly convinced that Sir Samuel Baker\* is right, and that it is sight and not smell which brings these large assemblies together almost immediately after an animal has been killed, and that his theory about the different strata in which birds of prey fly is also correct. When an animal is struck down in the open, has bled freely there, and is then cut up so as to expose plenty of red flesh, vultures and their kindred will collect almost immediately; where not a single bird was visible at one moment, the next scores and hundreds will be seen circling overhead like specks at first in the clear air, but rapidly increasing in size as they swiftly descend in fast-diminishing circles, until one after another approaches the carcass. One more round with half-turned head, and brilliant eye fixed upon, and closely examining the inviting sight below, and then, well satisfied, down come the legs, and bird after bird takes up his position in full view of the expected repast. On the other hand, kill an animal in thick high grass, or under the dense roof of overhanging trees, where it is hidden, it will be left undisturbed, at all events by birds. Cut up the game in the open, but be sure to leave no trace of blood, and hide it under a tree, leaves

\* "Nile Tributaries," by Sir Samuel Baker.

or grass afterwards, it will not be touched, but only on one condition—that no crow or buzzard has previously caught a glimpse of it. I have covered the intestines of a grolloched antelope or gazelle with a thin layer of sand well out in the open, and watched in vain for birds; none came when it was thoroughly hidden, and no keen eyes had been there to look on uninvited. Birds flew over, but took no notice of it whatever, and yet only a small part left exposed, they would have at once collected in crowds. Now these birds always arrive in regular succession, crows first, then buzzards, followed by various vultures, the smaller ones first, the larger after, and lastly by the marabou stork, as stated by Sir Samuel Baker. He thereon grounds his theory that “every species keeps to its own particular elevation, and that the atmosphere contains regular strata of birds of prey”; who, “soaring in circles,” are “watching with telescopic sight the world beneath”; “and, although they are invisible from the earth, there can be no doubt that they are perpetually hunting in circles within sight of each other. Thus, should one bird discover some object upon the surface of the earth below, his sudden pounce would be at once observed and imitated by every vulture in succession. Should the vulture nearest the earth perceive a body, or even should he notice buzzards collecting at a given point, he would at once become aware of prey; his rush towards the spot would act like a telegraphic signal to the others, that would be rapidly communicated to every vulture at successive airy stations.” This, no doubt, is the true explanation of the interesting phenomenon of the marvellously rapid assembly of birds of prey at a carcass; nobody who has not witnessed the rapidity of their arrival after an animal has been killed would believe it possible. The black-and-white crow is nearly always, being nearest the earth, as Sir Samuel Baker remarks, the first arrival. Should that species not be in the vicinity, the buzzards will be the first; but then, I have noticed, more time has elapsed. Immediately after the departure of man an attack takes place upon the offal, attended by a good deal of fighting, pushing, and quarrelling; the smaller have to wait until their bigger brethren have gorged themselves, when often those who were the means of bringing the latter to the feast find but little left as their reward.

On we go once more, taking a straight line towards camp, I

walking and the tracker, with the gazelle slung over his shoulder, leading my horse. The heat of the day past, guinea-fowl had left the shelter of their noonday retreat and were feeding in flocks here and there; we put up many sand-grouse, so very difficult to see on the bare ground which they exactly resemble in colour, and startled quail and florican out of the long, dry, yellow grass; but as we never carried a gun on these trips, fowl were safe from us. Coming suddenly from behind a thick bush upon a small dry river-bed with steep banks, I saw the head of a nellut, surmounted by a splendid pair of horns, looking up startled at the noise of our approach; but only for a moment, for, seeing us, round he flew and rushed up the opposite bank, never reaching the top, however, for a bullet in the shoulder stopped him half-way. He was a very old gentleman indeed, to the hunter's disgust without the promise of a particle of fat, and covered with scars, for these bulls with their powerful and sharply pointed horns are very quarrelsome, and fight terribly among themselves. This is supposed to be one of the reasons why so few bulls are seen in comparison with the number of cows met with. The nellut\* is probably the handsomest of the antelope family, standing about thirteen hands high, of mouse-grey colour with a long white stripe along the spine from head to root of tail, from which stripe two or three others descend on each side over the chest and flanks. The massive spiral horns are very beautiful; this pair measured 50 inches round the outside horn, 37 inches from head to tip straight, and 33 from point to point, and was the largest I had the luck to bag. The cows have no horns. We cut off the head and tied it on to my horse, the remainder being left "till called for." Thus heavily laden we soon afterwards arrived at our camp, after a very enjoyable day in the jungle.

\* Koodoo.

## VIII

### SKETCHES IN THE SOUDAN (*continued*)

#### V.—A TRIP INTO "TERRA INCOGNITA"

**S**ORELy against the wishes of our cowardly hunters we had now arrived on the threshold of "the unknown," at least what was marked "terra incognita" on the maps, and on an open piece of ground close to the river immediately below its bifurcation we had made our camp. A dense fringe of high reeds, now dry and yellow, separated us from the sandy river-bed, while a high, steep bank closed in the ground on the other side. Shrubs of many kinds, mimosa and acacia bushes, dome-palms, and baobab-trees grew luxuriantly everywhere, and altogether it was a very snug and comfortable camp, although the want of space somewhat crowded us together, for we numbered 14 men, 8 camels (2 hired), 9 horses, *the* mule, and 8 goats. The latter had followed our fortunes everywhere, and never failed to supply us morning and evening with most excellent milk.

Everything the six hunters and trackers could do or say to prevent our going to this Dembela frontier they had done and said, but when their prophecies that we should have our camp robbed, and all be murdered or both, by the savage tribes, that our horses would die from the stings of some fly, which existed only in their imagination, were disregarded and laughed at, and they saw that we were determined, rather than lose their pay the men at last put their trust in fate and came on, but most unwillingly. When finally we had got to our destination they absolutely refused to cross the frontier, constantly assuring us that there was certainly nothing to shoot, that they knew of a glorious country further back, that there was no water here for animals to drink at, &c., &c., &c.

Unfortunately for them, however, we had been told of the existence of some running water a little across the frontier ; so, soon after the camp was established, G. and I had our horses re-saddled and rode up one of the branches of the river to explore. Sure enough, hardly had we gone half a mile when the reeds on the river banks became green, tufts of grass and herbs grew out of the sand which rapidly became moist and moister until presently we came upon a stream slowly winding its way between great granite boulders and high banks, every patch of moist sand showing the fresh spoor of almost every animal from the elephant down. It was a refreshing sight this clear, cool water, and a most gratifying one, for here was the promise of the best of sport. Very much disgusted the hunters were to hear on our return that we had found the water, the existence of which the scoundrels had denied although well aware that we were close to it, for they knew now that we would remain at least some days in a spot they so much dreaded.

G. was very anxious to have a look at these Dembelas inhabiting the "terra incognita," and to judge of the sport likely to be had in what, although marked a swamp in the maps, was in reality a high mountainous country. This wish was quietly communicated to an Abyssinian boy, Wasa, who had followed us from Keren ; he took another man from the same place into his confidence, a man who had formerly been a prisoner in the Dembela country, who was supposed therefore to know the road, but of whom our Arabs had become more and more suspicious as we approached the frontier, calling him a traitor and bringing forward all kinds of excuses to get him out of the camp. The promised backsheesh soon smoothed all difficulties and the start was fixed for the next day.

The plan was kept very secret, G. giving out that he was merely going out shooting as usual, though a little across the frontier, knowing well that the hunters would in that case refuse to accompany him, and nothing was thought of it at the time. He left provided with a few presents, an Arabic dictionary, tobacco, and the best wishes, I remaining behind to look after the camp, where trouble commenced directly the men discovered G.'s real errand. Instead of about one at the most he was away over four days, and his prolonged absence made me very anxious, for stories of the savage Dembelas, the certainty of his having

been made prisoner, and the more than certainty of an attack on our camp, were dinned into my ears daily. During the first two days I went out shooting as usual, was disappointed in big game but got some antelope, but after that I was afraid long to stay away from the camp, for fear of finding it deserted on my return. Any suggestion of mine to follow G. in a body fell more than flat; the hunters even refused to accompany me except in the direction we had come, so, in order to annoy them a little, I stopped their meat supply, and altogether our relations, to say the least of it, became severely strained, as the following extracts from my diary will show:—

“*Feb. 1st.*—The men have found out about G.’s ride, and say that the Dembelas will come down and war be the result; that they must leave the camp and sleep in the river-bed, as here they could not possibly protect (!) me. I asked them if it was with a view to protecting us that now the saddles were never taken off their horses, it being known and almost avowed by them that they meant bolting at the shortest notice, and told them in pretty strong language—I hope translated by the interpreter into equally choice Arabic—that they might sleep in the river or anywhere else they pleased, but that their saddles and kits must be left with me; that no camel or anything belonging to them should leave the camp, and that if they made any sign of running away my rifles would do their best to stop them. I must keep the men here, for if they go it is more than probable that I shall be left altogether alone in my glory and the sole companionship of our boxes.

“It now turns out that our chief hunter has killed five Dembelas, and that some of the others are probably also blood-guilty, which accounts for their terror. This cruel border treachery was of common occurrence until lately, but now it seems that the Dembelas have acquired a great many guns and hence are our men afraid, perhaps not unnaturally. They certainly seem greatly terrified, and never leave their seat without spear and shield.

“Another man with ‘snake in the stomach.’ We’ll see what six ‘Cockles’ will do.

“*Feb. 2nd.*—Shot some antelope, but no meat do the hunters get, which annoys them greatly. The men have come again to me with the usual tale, excusing themselves by saying that it would not do for them to go into another man’s country to shoot—



which is nonsense ; that if attacked here in the hollow we should have no chance—which is true ; that we ought to move a little higher up the river, &c., &c. By a lucky stroke of fortune, a man came in to-day from the sheikh, a man who has often been into the Dembela country, the same individual who afterwards was taken out of our camp by a lion. He also says that the village is only six hours off. Have arranged with him to follow G. at once, to bring him back if possible ; if that be impracticable, to find out quickly what has become of him and how we can help him. I am getting very anxious. The hunters have succeeded in frightening all the others, and the interpreter is also keen for a move ; still I intend to wait another day here. Had a hunt after some elephants, but they got a long way ahead into an unrideable country. I fully expect the men to bolt to-night, but keep a sharp look-out on their horses, of which only two at a time are allowed to go to the well. It is a most disagreeable state of things altogether, especially as G. and I are tied to time.

*"Feb. 3rd.*—No G. I almost fear that the hunters are right, and that he is a prisoner ; if the village is only half a day's march off, he ought to have been back long ago. Posted a look-out on the top of the bank, for this is a grand place for a surprise. The envoy having gone, I finally made up my mind—as probably best for all—to shift the camp three miles down the river, and to await events there. We march at 10 to-night.

*"Feb. 4th.*—Never had the camels been so quickly loaded, nor had I seen the men in better spirits than they were last night during our short march. It was very delightful in the moonlight, which made everything almost as bright as day. No G. or messenger again this morning. Shot two ariel, and gave the men some meat, which they don't deserve ; and got some sand-grouse at a well close by.

*"Feb. 5th.*—This morning, while eating my usual breakfast of dhurra-porridge, to my great delight G. arrived with the two men. The hunters jumped on to their horses and rushed towards him, brandishing their spears, and altogether there was joy in camp."

He had had a very hard time ; had lost his way, the road being extremely difficult and the village a long distance off, instead of close by, as we had been assured. The "shoum," head-man

of the village, who had hospitably entertained G., and four others, had come down with him, but not wishing to meet our men, had to be left at our old camp. There they now were, waiting for G. to return with food, &c. ; and presently he started to join them, accompanied by our interpreter, the Abyssinian boy, Wassa, and our minstrel camel-man—none of the others daring to go. I went out to kill the fatted calf, or rather buck, to celebrate G.'s arrival, and found him on my return on the point of starting for the second time to meet his Dembela friends, provided with various presents, tobacco, handkerchiefs, knives, scissors, whisky, &c. G. had been asked to bring a Bible, as the "shoum" (Abyssinian Christian) was desirous to swear on it that we were his friends, and that he would guarantee our safety in his territory for one fortnight, but not for longer, as a famous bandit chief, now a long way off, over whom he had no control, would probably return to this part of the frontier after that time had elapsed. Now, I fear, a Bible had not been included in our kit, so the shoum being very anxious about the matter, to which he seemed to attach great importance, some other book had to answer the purpose. I think it was the second volume of "The Channings" which was selected, and carefully wrapped in a red handkerchief to show its value and the care we took of it, to be afterward unfolded in the presence of the shoum with all due ceremony.

To pay a visit to the strangers I joined G., and on the way he gave me an account of his adventures on the road. This is about what he told me :—

"After leaving you I rode up the river-bed, past the water, where I saw many tétel and other antelope, and then we struck across a flat, stony plain, which eventually ended at the foot of some broken hills. While crossing this plain one of the men suddenly exclaimed, 'fil' (elephant), pointing to a grey mass about fifty yards away, which certainly also seemed to me exceedingly like one of those ponderous animals. For a moment or two I thought I could even distinguish the head and his big ears ; but, on creeping up to a bush half-way, discovered to my disgust that what we had taken for an elephant was a curiously shaped grey-coloured rock. Having been thus taken in, we continued our way among low, rocky hills, my guide twisting and turning in a somewhat remarkable manner, until at 1 p.m.

we came upon a water-hole in the dry bed of a mountain stream. This was evidently a favourite drinking-place for koodoo and tétel, of which latter antelope we had at different times seen three splendid bulls; although offering tempting shots, I had refrained from firing, being very anxious to avoid delay. On one bank of the pool was a hunter's tiny reed hut, where, the guide told me, the Dembela sportsmen waited at night for anything which might come to drink. Here we rested about twenty minutes, had our luncheon and a good drink, and then crossed an undulating table-land, covered with a short, dry grass, and utterly devoid of any track. The route taken by the guide gradually became worse and worse; riding was quite out of the question—indeed, already during the last two hours I had walked and led the pony, as much more comfortable for both. About 4 p.m. it became evident to me that the guide had quite lost his way, or that he was, perhaps, misleading me purposely; for we had made the complete circuit of a sugar-loaf hill, whereby we must have wasted at least two hours.

“We next climbed up a steep, stony slope for about two miles, and then followed a long descent down the dry bed of a mountain stream, we stumbling about among huge boulders and great rocks worn smooth and slippery by the foaming torrent which grinds them together as it rushes down between them during the rains, until we came to a narrow gorge leading into the higher mountain ranges. Here was found the skeleton of a lately killed elephant. After crossing the gorge we struck another dry river-bed, which we followed until it apparently ended at the foot of a precipitous rock, some 50 feet high. By this time the sun had set, and it was only with the very greatest difficulty that my Abyssinian pony, sure-footed as a cat though he was, could struggle up the bank on one side of this rock. Long ere this it had become very apparent to me that all chance of reaching the Dembela village that night had gone, and there seemed every probability of our having to make what the American buffalo-hunters call a ‘dry camp.’ At 7 p.m., however, whether by pure luck, or from previous knowledge of the ground, our guide brought us to a pool, about 100 yards long, in the dry bed of another stream, which he called the ‘Mareb,’ but which, no doubt, was only a tributary of that river. Utterly tired out by a most fatiguing march, we drank heartily of the anything but

pure liquid, and then, supperless, laid our wearied bodies down upon an uncomfortable bed of rough, sharp stones. On account of the possibly hostile Dembelas we did not dare to light a fire.

“Hardly had I dozed off when a sharp tug at the pony’s picketing rope, the end of which I held in my hand, awoke me. Wasa, who was keeping guard on a rock overlooking the water, exclaimed ‘Lion! lion!’ so, hastily snatching up my rifle, I made for Wasa’s rock. Just too late, however. A magnificent lion had walked from the other side down to the sandy beach of the pool to take his evening drink, but hearing me crawling up the rock, off he had gone before there was the possibility of a shot. Had I only been in Wasa’s place the lion would have given me a splendid chance as he stood on the sand quietly drinking—fully exposed in the bright light of the beautiful moon. We watched for him eagerly for some time, but in vain—nothing came, and the remainder of the night was undisturbed. On again next morning at 6, after a luxurious breakfast on cold water fully impregnated with rotting vegetable matter, and for six hours we followed the course of a dry, winding river-bed, up a rapidly ascending valley, overlooked on both sides by picturesque high mountains; we were now well within the huge mountain ranges which extend through Abyssinia to the Red Sea. At noon we reached a small pool in a rocky basin, full of small fish resembling minnows; but beyond this all advance seemed to be barred by the most precipitous mountain-sides. Feeling tired out and exhausted, for there had been nothing to see for twenty-four hours, and we had had a very trying march, I ordered the guide to ascend the nearest peak and try if he could discover the Dembela village anywhere. After an hour’s absence he returned delighted; from the top he had seen the village we were in search of, adding the gratifying intelligence that it was not very far off. Without food, and the country almost impracticable, I had made up my mind, should there be no habitations visible, to return to our last night’s halting-ground, and the following day to make for the standing camp; but now, of course, on we went at once. We ascended a very steep crag, and from there my guide showed me on the skyline of another mountain what looked to me like rocks, but which he assured me were the Dembela houses. Two hours or more were occupied

in crossing some very steep sugar-loaf hills, covered with dhurra stubble; then we met some Dembela girls, staggering under their heavy water-skins, a welcome sign of the proximity of the village, which, after turning a sharp corner, at last lay before us weary travellers. On meeting the ladies, Wasa, to show that we were friends with the best intentions, had at once commenced singing Abyssinian love-songs at the top of his voice, to the no small astonishment of the fair ones, who evidently seemed greatly puzzled at our sudden appearance. In a few minutes we reached the houses, somewhat doubtful as to the kind of reception which awaited us.

“A collection of about twelve substantially built low stone houses lay before us, very different from the gipsy-like mat habitations of the Beni-Amer Arabs. Wasa immediately entered into conversation with some of the villagers who flocked out on our approach, and who seemed exceedingly surprised at the—to them—novel sight of a white man; they could not make out where we had come from, and stared at us as if we had dropped from the skies. We were told to go on to another village where the shoum-in-chief lived, and one of the natives was given us as a guide. We toiled on for about a mile over a very stony path, and seeing a village a little way before us, I asked if that was our destination; the guide said no, that the shoum lived much farther off. As, however, we were both tired and hungry, I insisted on being conducted to the nearest village. Arrived there we were told to wait and to sit down under a big tree just outside the little cluster of houses, until some one could be found willing to receive me into his house. After a few minutes' delay I was taken into the house of an old woman who was busy spinning, and who, by way of welcome, gave me a bowl of delicious sour milk. Soon afterwards the chief man of the village appeared, and conducted me and my horse into the one room of his house, and quickly a basket full of freshly-made black cakes of Abyssinian bread was put before me, to be washed down with more sour milk, while a good feed of corn was not forgotten for the pony. The house was a roomy one, and reclining upon a mud platform covered with cowhide, I held during the remainder of the day a continual *levée*, all the inhabitants of the place coming to see the strange being, male as well as female, for Abyssinian

women do not run away or hide their faces at the sight of a strange man, as is customary among Arabs. They examined my clothes and boots, my arms and saddlery, my helmet and belts, but their astonishment was indeed great when I pulled up my sleeve and showed them the white skin of my arm with the blue veins upon it, for never before had they seen a white man. The children as well as the grown-up people were exceedingly dirty. They were most inquisitive about everything on and about me, and when I began to smoke, wanted to follow my example; being totally unused to tobacco, the cigarettes I rolled for them only made them cough violently, at which, however, they seemed highly pleased. At sunset a dinner was set before me of pieces of white bread soaked in highly-peppered melted butter, and, of course, there was more 'tef.' About 8 p.m., when completely tired out I had the best intention to go to sleep, in came a party of shoums from the big village to which the guide had wished to take me. The chief brought me a present of bread and some jars of 'marisi,' or native beer, which my visitors quickly emptied. This beverage is made of fermented bread and flour in water, and is usually drunk out of a cowhorn. The shoums had various firearms, but the others carried only the usual Abyssinian shield and spear. They quite filled the house, and seemed never to be going, or to get tired of asking Wasa questions about me. Near midnight, to my intense relief, they at last departed, and I lay down to sleep on the cowhide in close proximity to my host, and surrounded by a dozen or so of his calves, my pony, and some sheep. Owing to the altitude the night was very chilly, and as the eaves of the roof did not meet the wall on opposite sides of the room, but allowed a free current of air to pass, it was not easy to keep warm without blankets. At three the next morning some women came into the house to grind corn for the day's consumption, but I got up only just before sunrise, and on going outside was surprised at the magnificence and extent of the view from Adufani, for so the place was called. The village was built on the highest point of the lofty mountain chain, and overlooked several smaller ranges, it being in its turn overlooked by many a lofty peak extending far away towards the mighty mountains of Abyssinia proper. The hill-sides were more or less bare, and I saw at once that this was

no game country; there were too many villages, and too many cultivated fields, so I decided to leave again on the return journey as soon as my host would allow.

“But here came the difficulty; in spite of all Wasa could say, the shoums had the fixed idea that I was an Egyptian spy, and that therefore I ought to be forwarded on to Lula, the Abyssinian king's commander-in-chief on the frontier, who, they said, was then but two days away. The prospect of this was, to say the least, annoying. Several consultations were held between the shoums, who had spent the night in the village, as to what was to be done with me, but to my great relief Wasa's eloquence in defence of my harmlessness at last prevailed, and about nine we were allowed to leave, accompanied by my host and four other villagers as an escort, and to see me safe across the frontier. We parted the best of friends, and the head shoum presented me with a very handsome shield as a farewell gift. The natives are Abyssinians in dress, manners, and customs; all wear the national 'kuarrie,' and appear well-to-do; they grow a good deal of corn, oats, barley, and dhurra, and possess large herds of goats and cows.

“We left the village by quite a different route to that by which my former guide had brought me, and for some hours followed a very rough path along the saddle of a mountain chain; then came a very long descent down to the bottom of a narrow valley, where under a big tree we rested, and quenched our thirst from a water-hole no bigger than an ordinary soup-plate. Soon after we came to more level ground, and made rapid progress all through the afternoon, the track always descending. Thanks to my escort being well acquainted with the road, the homeward march was very different to that of the two previous days. Once we struck the trail of a solitary man, which considerably puzzled my escort; however, from the print of the sandal my companions judged that the lonely wanderer belonged to a friendly tribe. At sunset our party entered the neck of the V-shaped plain I had previously traversed; here shortly afterwards my men wished to halt for the night, a little out of the track near a water-hole. As I was very anxious to reach the camp that night I persuaded them to go on, for

there seemed no reason why they should be so tired, when I also had walked the whole day and was able to proceed. Eventually, about 11 p.m., we reached the running water, and a weary tramp of over two miles through the deep, heavy sand brought us to camp. On approaching it my escort hung back, and refused to meet our Arabs. Wishing to surprise you and the camp, I alone crawled quietly through the belt of high rushes which separated it from the river-bed, but what was my astonishment to see no fire and the camping-ground entirely deserted! Thinking that you might perhaps have moved up a little higher, I fired some shots from my revolver, but, as no answer was returned, I knew that our wretched Arabs had forced you to retire to a greater distance from the dreaded frontier. It was very annoying, for where was the supper I had looked forward to all day? We had no matches, but with the help of gunpowder and tinder a fire was kindled; some flour, which we had luckily brought with us, was worked into a paste with water, and then a round stone previously heated in the fire enclosed in a very thick layer of the dough, and the whole baked in the hot ashes. We made our supper off this more or less digestible heavy black bread, quenching our thirst with some honey-water, of which these men are very fond. It is simply the rough honey as taken from a tree mixed with water, and strained—if the means are at hand—through muslin, or some part of a cotton garment. After this frugal repast we laid ourselves down close to the fire, and soon forgot our troubles in sleep, one or more of the Dembelas, who seemed anything but happy, keeping watch all night. This morning early I started with Wasa down the river in search of the camp, leaving my guide to keep the others company, to whom I promised to return as soon as possible with presents and food; hardly had we got half a mile away when he came running after us, afraid to trust himself alone among the Dembelas. After an hour's rapid march I beheld, to my great delight, your camp, and how I there enjoyed my well-earned breakfast you know almost as well as I do."

The traveller's tale ended we approached our old camp, and presently saw one of the Dembelas watching us from behind a bush, who, when satisfied as to our identity, shouted to



his friends to come forth, for they had hidden themselves when our party first came in sight. After the usual shaking of hands all round, repeated more than once, we squatted down in a circle, and handed over our presents, which they at first refused, but afterwards took, begging everything else they saw besides. The men were of the general Abyssinian type, clothed in short, tight canvas trousers, with "quarrie" (national toga with red stripe), or canvas tunic; two were armed with rifles, the others with shield and spear. We now heard that our minstrel camel-boy, who with the interpreter had been left with the Dembelas since morning, had very nearly met with an untimely end. The stupid boy, having foolishly twitted the Dembelas about their religion—which is Christian in name—the insult had so roused them that they had insisted on his being shot then and there. After putting forward every kind of excuse and apology, the interpreter had only with the very greatest difficulty prevented this summary execution being carried out, getting it commuted to a sound thrashing with a courbatch. The unfortunate culprit had just been unlashd from the whipping-post—the trunk of a dome-palm—and looked very piano, as if he never would sing again those love-songs with which he was wont to wile away many a long, weary mile. A glass of whisky all round to cement our friendship, and then the shoum asked for *the* book, and holding it in his hand swore that he would answer for our safety on the frontier for one fortnight, after which we also swore something, but what it was neither G. nor I could ever make out. The chief warned us not to go to his village again without first letting him know, as without an escort of his own men it would be very dangerous to do so, and then we parted and left in opposite directions for our several homes. Next morning our camp was once more moved down to the frontier, in the vicinity of which we hunted with only moderate success for about ten days.

The messenger whom I had sent after G. returned two days later, having missed him on the road. Three weeks afterwards this man was taken out of our camp by a lion, his injuries, however, being fully avenged by the death of the king of beasts, as later told in *Baily*. It was getting too late in the season; the big game, owing to the scarcity of water, all the rivers being

dry to the north, had moved further south into the Bazé country towards the flowing Mareb and Settit. Buffalo and elephants had visited the piece of running water near our camp, and refreshed themselves at it on their way south, and no doubt a month before our visit the sport there would have been very good, but now most of the herds had passed on, and the ground had been greatly disturbed by native hunters, who had taken advantage of it at the proper time, as the remains of rude shelters and huts at the most likely places showed. We only saw elephants twice, of which one was bagged, but never buffalo, although we followed their spoor for many a long mile.

On the parched plains to the north we found nothing but giraffe, various kinds of antelope, and a few ostriches. The latter are sought after by native hunters who follow their employment singly, living for long periods of time alone in some part of the desert known to be frequented by those wary birds. Once I came upon one of these men, and found him sitting in a natural hut formed by a thickly overhanging bush, busily employed in making his ostrich traps. These consist of a ring, 9 inches or so in diameter, twisted from the split leaf stem of the dome-palm, through which all round, like the spokes of a wheel, a number of pointed spikes of the same material are passed, the tips almost meeting in the centre of the ring. These traps are laid on the ground and lightly covered with sand in places where ostriches are wont to congregate. Should a bird step upon such a trap, his heavy foot in the loose sand slips through the ring, the points closing again firmly upon the leg, which, thus encumbered by the whole trap, makes the ostrich a comparatively easy victim. Whether many are caught by this somewhat primitive contrivance I could not ascertain; the hunter, a bald old man, was a curious specimen of his kind; his only clothing a narrow strip of leather round the loins, and a few beads encircling his neck; his sole companion a donkey, who fetched his weekly supply of water from the far-off water-hole; his only food some dry dhurra, his only arms a knife, spear, and shield.

Another picture of jungle life and I have done.

One day, while stalking a koodoo with a remarkably fine pair of horns, I heard, on reaching the crest of a low hill, frequently repeated plaintive cries approaching me rapidly. Wondering

what this could mean, I stood still, and presently saw one of those lovely little dik-dik antelopes galloping towards me for dear life closely pursued by a large buzzard. In a moment the poor little thing, no bigger than a large hare, had reached me, uttering unceasingly the most piercing cries of anguish, when to my astonishment it cowered down within a yard of my feet. The bird, too intent upon the chase to notice me, was about to pounce down upon his victim, when at last suddenly he discovered me, and, startled, sharply wheeled and disappeared. The little dik-dik, evidently in the last extremity of terror, quickly followed his example, but in the opposite direction, and was soon out of sight among the nearest bushes, the only gainer by the *rencontre*, for he had saved his life, while the bird had lost his dinner, and I the coveted koodoo horns.

## IX

### A LION STORY

1882

TO shoot a lion had been all along my great ambition, but week after week passed in fruitless search after the king of beasts. Leave was fast running to a close, but no shot had I fired at the noblest of game; no, I had not even seen a lion. It certainly was very disappointing; there they were, I heard them every night growling round our camp, but never could I see them. I followed their tracks every morning, but never could I find them, and visits innumerable I paid to the "lions' village," a dense tangled jungle of dome-palms and most disagreeably thorny brushwood, but the tawny monarch was never at home. Natives assured me that he had lately been seen in his "home," but he was always out when I called, and the most diligent search even proved fruitless. The native tracker, as a trump card, would climb up a tree in the immediate neighbourhood of his supposed lair, and imitate, in the most perfect manner and the most persuasive tone, the low growls of a lion in love—growls which, in lion language, doubtless meant protestations of the most sincere and undying affection. But no, not even that brought forth the jealous lover or the lovesick lady. The native, disgusted and out of patience, would then suddenly change his love-song to abuse, and heap curses on the whole lion family. That also was unsuccessful. G. had seen three and wounded two, though without bagging, but I had been particularly unfortunate; no lion came to the water to drink when I was watching at night, although I sometimes provided food in the shape of a goat for his majesty. Of the camel which had been killed over night, nothing remained but bones when I

got there, the feasters probably being miles away. The ladies and children of the villages were always abstracted when I was out of reach, and those lions which paid nightly visits to the camp, and which were sometimes seen, were always just not visible when I had tumbled out of bed, roused by the whisper of "asad" (lion) in my ear.

My turn was to come, however, and in a way which was not desired by any of us, for it proved most disastrous to one of the party. Still it ended in the well-deserved death of a magnificent old lion.

After a long, tiring march along the dry, sandy bed of the Barka, we had made our camp close to where a small streamlet, now also dry, joins the main river in a dense dome-palm jungle. We had already been encamped near the spot about two months before, when the mat-village of the Bakhih tribe, a division of the pastoral Beni-Amer, was established in the immediate vicinity, which, on account of the numerous flocks, proved a powerful attraction to the genus "Leo." Lions then came to look at us nightly, but, though the camp fires made us visible to them, they were invisible to us. It is an uncomfortable ghostly sound, this stifled roar, or rather cat-like growl, round the camp at night, close to one's bed! We had no tents. The knowledge of the immediate proximity of the animal makes one grasp one's rifle, and peer into the darkness, with a strong inward desire to jump out of bed, and get as near the fire as possible. The men disliked it particularly, were all awake in a moment, and noisily added fresh logs to the fire. It is difficult to understand why some lions roar at night. Is it a challenge, or an invitation to their lady friends, for it would hardly help them to secure their supper? What object, though, could they have in roaring when haunting our camp? If it was in sport, to frighten the men, they succeeded. That all lions do not make themselves noisily heard when intent upon appeasing their appetite this story shows, for my future victim walked right through the camp, examining every one carefully before he finally made up his mind as to the most appetising morsel. Tastes differ; but of this all in good time. The camp looked very pretty that night, established among lofty dome-palms, at the edge of the sandy river-bed; the fires were burning brightly, and as I watched it from my bed, was as picturesque as any

traveller or hunter could desire. The branchless, pillar-like trunks of the palms, enveloped in a mantle by the drooping giant dead leaves about to be shed, whose monotonous brown was here and there relieved by a bright winding creeper seeking the sunlight above, and the green crown of leaves overhead, interlacing with those of the neighbouring palms into a lovely arched roof, so thick that only here and there a star could look through—this lit up by the reddish light of the brightly burning camp fire had an almost theatrical effect, seen from the comparative darkness in which, at a little distance, G.'s hammock was slung and my bed was placed. Round the larger fire lay the camels, slowly chewing the cud, gravely meditating the flames. Close to them slept the men on their only bed and mattress—a sheep or antelope skin—while the goats and horses were tied up close at hand. Between the main fire and our beds was the kitchen, where the cook had curled himself up in his blanket. Everything out of the immediate range of the light was pitch dark, but the white sandy bed of the little stream a few yards off was just visible. It was a gloomy camping-place by day, but when lighted up by the ruddy glare of the fire it was cheerful to look upon, especially from the comfortable folds of more than one blanket, for it was cold and chilly at night, and we were just beyond the warming influence of the burning logs. While listening to the monotonous song of one of the men, whose duty it was to remain awake and attend to the fire, and while watching the light as it flickered among the leafy palm tops, sleep overcame us at last, which even a restless mule, who would munch and rattle among the dry leaves, could not prevent.

We had been asleep probably about two hours when a horrible shriek suddenly aroused us from our slumbers, and made us wide awake in a moment. There were cries of "Lion! lion!" and everything was commotion in the darkness, for sleep had overcome the minstrel watchman and the fires were all but out. Naturally thinking—if there was time for thought at all—that a lion had carried off one of the horses or goats, I, suddenly started up into a sitting position in bed, had hardly taken hold of my heavy rifle, which, loaded, always lay alongside me at night, when G. said, "There he goes, in the bed of the river!" And there sure enough, just visible against the white

sand of the river-bed, was the shadowy form of a lion walking away from the camp. It was too dark to see the barrels, much less the sights of the rifle, but I took two rapid shots in the direction of our departing visitor, the second of which was answered by an angry roar. The whole was the affair of a moment; and having reloaded and disentangled ourselves from the blankets, G. and I went to see what mischief the lion had done, who, it now appeared, had not carried away horse or goat, but one of our men. Seized by the feet when asleep round the fire, he had been dragged about four yards down to the river-bed and there dropped by the lion, frightened probably by the man's own shrieks and the shouts of the others, and thanks to the plucky and determined manner in which his neighbour had held on to the brute's chosen morsel. All was confusion: the men had seized their spears and shields and were rushing about here and there, though not leaving the safe vicinity of the fire, rekindled now into an enormous blaze. One man in his excitement set fire to the dead leaves of a dome-palm, which burning up quickly into a column of flame threatened a general conflagration. The unfortunate man who had been so rudely awakened from his sleep had both his feet badly injured by the lion's teeth, the greater part of the sole of each having been torn away, but leaving the bones, luckily, intact. Serious though no doubt his injuries were, the man had had a very lucky escape, for a more horrible death than that which would have awaited him, if carried to the lion's den, is difficult to imagine. He was an obstinate old man too, and had little or no faith in European methods of treatment, such as thorough cleansing of the wounds and cold water; no, nothing but wood ashes and placing his feet as near the fire as he could bear would do. Once we had nearly succeeded in cleaning the wounds from sand and earth, but, to our disgust a short time after, the feet thickly covered with dirty ashes were once more roasting before the blazing fire. The man who ought to have remained awake and kept the fires up was taken severely to task about his neglect of duty, but the usual excuse was: "Fate—it was written, and nothing would have prevented it." We did not then tell him that it was also written that he should get a licking on the spot, or no meat for some days—a worse punishment—an Arab's stomach being

more sensitive than his hide, nor did we act according to our interpretation of the law. The injury was done, and, frightened as all the men were, we might, fate or no fate, depend upon their not forgetting the fire in future. Not much sleep did they get that night, the popular and firm belief being that the lion, having once tasted human blood, would be certain to return. However, their fears proved groundless, and the remaining hours till dawn were passed in peace. That I had in the darkness hit the lion had never entered my head, so my delight was great when, soon after daybreak, one of the men discovered blood near the river bank and more at the edge of the jungle opposite. However, breakfast first and search after the wounded lion afterwards was the programme agreed upon. While waiting for our morning meal we examined the course taken by the lion in his peregrinations through the camp, and our astonishment was great when we discovered the prints of two enormous forepaws exactly one foot and a half from the edge of my bed; he must have had his head right over me, and examined me closely, or rather the blankets, for, suffering from a slight cold, I had enveloped myself from head to foot in a sack blanket. This probably was my salvation, the lion not caring to investigate the interior of a mysterious sack; at all events he left me disgusted, and transferred his attentions to G., who was reposing peacefully in a hammock, dreaming, no doubt, of all kinds of sweet things at home, and little enough of the noble animal so intently looking at him with a view to ultimate digestion. A sudden awakening for him or me when the lion's nose was within a few inches of, or perhaps even nearer, to our own nasal organs, would certainly been very startling, and probably fatal. However, G. was not to the taste of this fastidious monarch, or the network of the hammock puzzled and seemed uncanny to him; at all events the lion continued his studies of a hunter's camp by examining the kitchen, where his dainty appetite was not, luckily for us, tempted by the cook or any other savoury morsel, but where royal progress was inconsiderately barred towards the main camp fire by some heavy boxes. Thence, therefore, he walked back into the river-bed, closely passing a horse on his way, re-entering our camp opposite to where the men slept, and taking no notice of two other horses who were tied to a palm, which horses



he must almost have brushed with his mane. It seems an extraordinary thing that the animals did not break away; they must either have been very fast asleep or palsied by fright. Arrived near the camp fire, which had burned very low, and where everything was hushed in sleep, this lion, so difficult to satisfy, at last found something to his taste—whether guided to it by sight or smell will never be known—the feet of an Arab—not perhaps exactly what everybody would have chosen, but there is no accounting for taste, certainly not for that of a lion! Having seized both feet, he dragged their owner down into the river-bed and only dropped him there when startled by the noise of the roused camp. It was his last foray, for, unfortunately for him, a lucky bullet wounded him in the foot, when, disappointed of his human supper, he walked into his native jungle, a wound which, bleeding well, led in a few hours to his death. The soft soil on which our camp stood made the peregrinations of the lion very plain to read.

Breakfast was ready and soon despatched, as we both were very keen to bring our friend to book; so with two trackers and our heavy rifles we took up the trail. Crossing the bed of the stream our party entered the dome-palm jungle beyond, and soon found a pool of blood and then another, the discovery of which considerably raised our hopes, showing, as it did, that probably the lion was seriously wounded. The bloody trail led us to the main river, across it, and into the jungle beyond. The pugs were very large, promising a noble lion; the print of the left forefoot being much less distinct than those of the others, pointed at once to the seat of the wound. The jungle which we had now entered was very thick below, composed of young dome-palms with their broad, feathery leaves, high grass, and shrubs covered the most vicious thorns, the whole being overlooked by the bare stems and leafy crowns of these useful palms which everywhere here fringe the river banks—altogether not exactly the place one would choose to visit a wounded lion. On we went, when suddenly a noise was heard in the grass ahead, and for a second we saw our friend of the night before disappearing through a bush. He evidently was full of life still, but the exertion made his wound bleed more profusely, and, coming soon after on barer ground, this was very apparent. Forcing our way through some most disagree-

ably thorny bushes, we after a time heard low, angry growls, which informed us that the game had become aware of our vicinity.

As I had been the first to wound the lion, he was mine by the unwritten rules of woodcraft. I therefore had the post of honour in front, and was the first to see him lying under some overhanging bushes. Only the hindquarters were, however, visible; so, hoping to cripple him, I fired at the hips. He was up at the flash, and charged with a terrible roar to within two or three yards of us, and then disappeared through a bush. My bullet not having had time to reach the spot aimed at, passed, as we afterwards found, through the fleshy part of his thigh, and G., who fired when the lion charged, missed altogether, the animal's change of direction having been so very sudden. Once more the search commenced, but did not last long this time. Soon we heard the low growling again, and, reconnoitring his new position, found that the roaring came from a dome-palm clump a little way ahead, with a piece of open ground in front, which, with such a savage enemy before us, we hesitated to cross. The growls were so frequent, and sounded so like those of an animal in his death agony, that G. and I, the trackers having retired to a safe distance, decided to smoke a cigarette at this extreme outpost and to wait a bit. The roaring, however, becoming much stronger, and our anxiety to bag greater, we threw our cigarettes away and climbed up a high ant-hill close by, from which elevated and safe position we hoped to see the wounded lion. Nor were we disappointed; G., first on the top, at once discovered the brute's head under a young dome-palm bush, but not before the lion had become aware of our new tactics—tactics of which he disapproved by loud angry roars. His minutes were, however, numbered, for, finally resting the rifle, I sent a bullet into his forehead. His head dropped at once, and, after a few convulsive movements, the noble animal breathed its last. Warned by the fate of other sportsmen, we left him alone for some time, and then by throwing stones at him made sure that no life remained before we went up to him and examined our prize. He was a splendid fellow, with a beautiful mane and sleek skin. The moment of standing over one's first lion is certainly worth a very great deal of roughing, hard work, and frequent disappointment, and

nothing can be compared with it—as the lion is the king of beasts, so is lion shooting the king of sports.

His measurements were : 9 feet from tip of nose to tip of tail, measured with his nose raised level with the back ; from top of withers to foot, 8 feet 11 inches ; 19 inches round upper, and 16 round forearm.

The first bullet had broken the bones of the foot and torn a large blood-vessel, thanks to which the tracking became so easy. My last bullet had entered the forehead, broken the lower jaw, and then passed on into the chest. A camel was sent for, and the skin and skull taken to camp. We could not find the wanting pieces from the Arab's feet in the stomach. The death of the lion, however, was a source of great satisfaction to the wounded man, and, I trust, accelerated his recovery.

We at once sent to his village to acquaint his people with the unfortunate accident, and in a day or two his wife and son arrived with an enormous ox, carrying a most uncomfortable looking sort of pad for the transport of the wounded man. On to this he was hoisted, and, provided with meat and other necessaries for the road, he started off comparatively happy, taking one more look at the skin of his would-be murderer. Though he did not carry his own skin away without a few extra holes, he no doubt shuddered when the fate which he had so happily escaped was recalled to his mind.

This was the only lion which I was destined to kill, or even to see. A month or more before the above adventure, when we first entered the country honoured by the king of beasts, lion shooting had seemed so simple to me, though, unluckily, but for one short night. G. and I were asleep, as was our habit, at a little distance from the camp fire, when I was awoken by one of our men whispering the magic word "asad" (lion) close to me. G., first aroused, was already out of bed, and, rifle in hand, followed the man at once. In less than a minute I heard two shots in rapid succession, succeeded by a great scrambling as of some heavy animal on the bank overlooking our camp. Now also wide awake, I was in the act of turning out, when G. returned saying, "Well, at all events there is one lion less in Africa." How simple lion shooting then seemed! But, alas! next morning we found that shooting did not necessarily also mean bagging. Of course at daybreak we were up, expecting to

see a magnificent lion dead on the bank ; but no, there was no lion, only blood ; some satisfaction at all events, for it gave hopes of ultimate success. The wounded animal had evidently made for some dome-palm jungle, with very dense underwood, and thick impassable clumps of dome shrub, which commenced only a few yards from the spot where he had been shot, extending thence as far as one could see on the river bank. The prospect of a meeting with the wounded lion in this cover, where one could see nothing whatever on the ground, was not very pleasant ; still we entered it with some of our men, who seemed very keen, thanks to the prospect of backsheesh. G., whose lion it was, led the way into the jungle by a narrow path, probably made and used by wild beasts, across which, a little distance in, the trunk of a dome-palm had fallen, and was lying a foot or more above the ground, resting upon bushes on either side. Upon this G. got, so as to obtain a good view, and over it the native trackers climbed. They were just beginning to examine the bushes on the other side when a loud roar from the immediate vicinity was heard, which made them run back in the greatest hurry, thinking, as everybody else did, that the lion was upon them. In their haste they, however, forgot the fallen tree, and one after another tumbled head over heels over it—a most comical sight, though probably nobody thought so at the time, nor felt very inclined to laugh just then at the involuntary header which everybody took. Instead of taking the offensive, the lion preferred seeking peace and quietness elsewhere. Though we found blood under a dome-palm bush, where he had been lying when suddenly disturbed by the attacking party, nothing more was seen of him. He had given us the slip, and, though we searched for him everywhere, we had eventually to return to camp disappointed and lionless ; also thoroughly convinced that one must not count one's lion until he is actually bagged.

## X.

### ROADSIDE SKETCHES IN GUATEMALA

1884

#### PART I.—THE "TIERRA CALIENTE," OR HOT ZONE

AT daybreak we awoke; the steamer's screw had stopped, and heavy surf was distinctly heard breaking upon the coast. Thus aroused, we were soon out of our berths to have a first look at St. José de Guatemala, our destination. There lay the two grandly beautiful volcanoes; the double-peaked "Fuego," clearly and distinctly defined against the morning sky, little puffs of smoke rising slowly from its ragged crater; "Agua," still hiding its lofty summit in a white nightcap of cloud, which vanished only at the bidding of the morning sun. There stood the giant mountains in their majestic beauty and solemn grandeur, worth coming very far to see. The lower mountain ranges were still wrapped in gloom and rising mists, and separated from the surf-beaten shore by a belt of dense tropical forest, at the edge of which, built upon the golden sand, are the few wooden houses occupied by those whose duty keeps them at this undesirable spot. The giant chain of the Cordilleras runs through Guatemala from S.E. to N.W., and from it the country gradually slopes down, on the one side to the Atlantic, on the other to the Pacific Ocean. It may thus be divided into three zones, the hot near the coast, merging into the temperate at an altitude of, say, 1,500 feet, while the cold commences at about 5,000 feet. As we entered the country from the coast, we will begin our wanderings in the first, and then gradually ascend to the top of one of the most beautiful of the many magnificent volcanoes which make this country so

picturesque, where, even with the aid of great-coats and fires, it is almost impossible to keep out the intense cold. The short railway from San José, the Pacific port of Guatemala, runs through a narrow lane cut in the thick jungle, a tangled mass of tropical vegetation, the underwood of which was covered for long distances with a most luxuriant creeper in full bloom, a large mauve convolvulus. Here and there we passed a few native huts of bamboo and thatched with plantain or palm leaves, in the centre of small clearings, the playground of naked children, pigs, and fowls; then the country became more open; we ran through a partly cleared cattle-ranch, passed fields of green sugar-cane, and at last came to a stop at the very neatly-kept station of Escuintla, the present terminus of the railway, which will shortly be open as far as Guatemala itself, the capital, forty-five miles distant. Here our six mules awaited us, which we had luckily telegraphed for from the last port in San Salvador; they were soon loaded with our baggage and *en route* to the capital, while we took up our quarters for the night at the hotel. The inn had two stories, unlike almost all the other houses in Guatemala, which, in consequence of frequent earthquakes, have only one. The rooms opened on to an inner verandah and balcony, running round the square courtyard, and were fairly clean, though very crowded. It was Sunday and a "festa," and therefore everything was *en fête*, and everybody *en grande tenue*. We did as others did, we went to church, attended a cock-fight, listened to the military band on the plaza, to the small cannon and large rockets let off on the cathedral steps at evening Mass, I suppose to wake up the powers above, ate "frijoles," but we did not gamble at cards afterwards, or indulge too largely in aguardiente. Very bright and pretty looked the market-place on which, under giant mat umbrellas, sat the Indian women sheltered from the sun, selling their black and white beans, melons, oranges, limes, plantains, &c. While the women were busy in the market or at their devotions in the somewhat dilapidated church, the husbands, attired in their best clothes, were occupied most of the day in winning or losing money at the ancient national amusement of cock-fighting. Attracted to the spot by the sounds of the marimba, we paid a small fee at the door, and found the arena established in the inner yard, and a large excited crowd assembled, busy with the

preliminary arrangements for the next match. The birds were certainly magnificent animals, in splendid condition and perfect plumage. There were cocks everywhere—some carried under the owner's arm, others standing about on the ground, their liberty restricted by a string attached to one leg; there were many more tied up all round the yard, and the surrounding sheds were full of them, each bird, however, confined in a cage or fastened to the wall to prevent his indulging his fighting propensities on his own account, and before the owner's money had gone on. A long time it always took to arrange a match; the cocks had to be compared as to size and weight, they had to be introduced to one another in order to judge by their demeanour whether they would be likely to fight or not. At last, however, the preliminaries are completed, and the bets satisfactorily arranged, the master of the ceremonies rings his bell and the arena is cleared of everybody except the owners of the two cocks about to fight, and the two individuals on whom the most important task of tying on the spurs devolves. Great skill is required for this, which but few can boast of. The spurs are most murderous weapons, and nearly three inches in length shaped like a scythe and sharp as a razor. They are kept in a red velvet case, and are, I believe, made at Birmingham. After examining several at last one is chosen and tied on to the left leg, over a leathern guard fitting over the pared-down natural spur. When this has been satisfactorily accomplished, and the blade guarded by a leathern sheath, the cock is placed in the arena and his blood thoroughly aroused by means of thrusts made at him by another bird held in the hand. At last everything is ready, the sheaths are removed and the cocks face each other. After a good deal of sparring and pretending to pick up grains of corn in a perfectly unconcerned manner, while all the time the birds edge towards each other, the attack is made, and in much less than a minute all is over; the weapons are so murderously sharp that one stab suffices, the cruelty, therefore, if indeed there be any at all, is vastly less than when in England, formerly, the birds, armed with a short spur only, had to inflict many wounds before death, generally from sheer exhaustion, at last put an end to the battle. During the intervals between the fights the musicians played on the marimba some very pretty airs, without, however, very much

variety. This instrument, in shape like an immense harmonicon, is peculiar to Guatemala, and dates from very long ago. It is used at all native festivities, varies in size, and is sometimes played by two men, sometimes, as in this case, by as many as five. The sweet, bell-like notes were very pretty, and, heard for the first time, took our fancy greatly. The instrument consisted of twenty-seven pieces of hard wood resting upon strings immediately over the mouths of twenty-seven square wooden organ-pipes, partially closed at the bottom. As the pieces of wood decreased in size, so did the pipes below, in area and length, the smaller when struck by the stick producing the higher, the larger the deeper notes. At the hotel we were introduced to the national dish, "frijoles," stewed black haricot beans, which, with the unleavened maize cakes—"tortillas," to be afterwards described—form the principal food of the natives. After dinner extract of coffee in bottles was handed round, from which everybody took a little into his cup, to be diluted with boiling water according to taste. Here, in a great coffee-producing country, one might naturally expect to drink the very best under the most favourable conditions; but no, the lazy natives, to save themselves trouble, boil it down in large quantities to a strong extract, bottle it, and, of course, most if not all the aroma has escaped long before the bottle is empty. This practice, excepting at some private houses belonging to foreigners, seemed universal. Another disagreeable custom is the washing of plates and glasses with soap, the objectionable smell of which always hangs about, and can be detected at once mingled with that of food and drink. Four o'clock next morning found us on the road to the capital, fifteen leagues away. Our muleteer before leaving with the baggage the day before had lent each of us one of his spurs, remarking, on our asking for one for the other heel also, "One is enough; if you make one half of the animal go the other is bound to follow." The road was terribly bad, but, thanks to the two hours' darkness before sunrise, we did not see, though we felt, the worst and most stony part of it. Early though it was, the women were already up and busy; we could see them as we rode along sitting beside the brightly burning fires grinding maize-corn and making "tortillas," preparing bread for the husband who still slumbered in the dark part of the hut. This is the task of the



women, and a very hard one it is. The corn, in order to soften the hard envelope, is put into water to which a little lime has been added; it is then boiled for a moment and allowed to soak in the same water for about twelve hours. It is now taken out to be ground up on a flat stone by means of another shaped like a rolling-pin, until the whole becomes a thick paste. A piece of this is then beaten between the two hands, and fashioned into a flat and round and thin cake, about the size of a large soup-plate. A few minutes' baking on a hot iron or earthenware plate, and the tortilla is ready to be eaten.

As we do not intend to leave at present the "tierra caliente," or to visit the capital of Guatemala and the higher regions, we will now change this road to another, which is about to bring us to the little town of Sta. Lucia, situated just above the low-lying jungles extending down to the Pacific shore. We have had a very dusty and hot ride, our baggage mules are tired, and mine is very lame besides. Poor brute! little pity does he get, at all events from the muleteer, who laughs derisively at every attempt I make to ease the animal. Cruelty to mules he does not recognise; if a mule goes lame he must take the consequences of it; he must be made to do his work all the same. The spur, or whip, or both, are the only recognised remedies, so the "arriero" argues, and hard words are the consequence, especially as one's own temper is just a little irritable, ruffled as it is by the heat, the dust, and fatigue, and by the frequent stumbling of the mule, while the absolute necessity for getting on, as one cannot remain in the road, is ever before one's eyes. They are wonderful animals, these mules, most patient, most enduring and hard-working beasts; they are the best abused, for no word is too bad for them in the vocabulary of the Spanish language; they are the most badly treated, and pity is never wasted upon them when they have the bad luck to be sick or hurt. They will do enormous distances over the worst roads, carrying heavy loads day after day, and yet their only food consists of dry maize stalks, dry grass, with occasionally a little corn. To everybody's delight we at last turned into the courtyard of the little inn at Sta. Lucia, which we found gaily decorated with flags, coloured paper and lamps, the remains of the festivities of the day before—a Sunday. After feeding the mules and ordering our dinners, we went to see the old toltec remains which are to be found in

the forest in the immediate vicinity of the town. Little enough did we find, however; nothing but a large carved stone figure of a woman with her arms crossed over her breast, lying upon the ground, and surrounded by heaps of paving-stones of the same material—grey granite, which had only lately been cut, I very much fear, from others of these interesting and valuable remains. If our surmises be true, the desecration is directly against lately passed and most stringent laws for the preservation of these ancient monuments; but, to say the least, it seemed suspicious to us. Dusk did not allow us to continue our search for other figures which are said to lie more or less hidden in the dense forest around; on the previous day we had, however, had the opportunity of admiring a number of gigantic busts cut in granite, at a large sugar estate on which they had been found. The calm repose of their stern features was most impressive, and looking at them thus, one's thoughts wandered to the terrible scenes of human sacrifice of which they no doubt were witnesses, when the high priest, with a face as pitiless and unmoved probably as these cut in stone, slaughtered his victims according to the bloody rites of the Aztec religion. On the way back we bought some green coconuts and regaled ourselves with the milk, most refreshing and agreeable to the taste. Our dinner consisted, as all dinners consist in all Guatemalan inns, of a stew with tomatoes, black beans and tortillas, and our room contained, as usual, several bedsteads, with sheets and pillows very doubtful in appearance, and suggestive of very small laundry bills. As we carried our own beds and bedding we were independent of those placed at our disposal, but I must say that those insects, creeping and jumping, so well known in most greatly more civilised countries, were noticeable only by their absence, and this we found, to our delight and surprise, to be the case wherever our zig-zag journeys took us, both in Guatemala and Mexico. But something almost more fatal to sleep disturbed us here, for hardly had we put out the light by throwing something at it, when the most unearthly snoring commenced. I may state, but only as a secret, that when the tortillas at dinner had been especially tough, the slumbers of my companion were not always as noiseless as they may have been during his infancy; so I at first thought that he was the culprit. But no, he presently began to move and utter some-

thing that did not sound like a blessing, and still the snoring went on even louder than before, and apparently in our room. Without difficulty we traced it to a man, or woman, on the other side of a very thin partition. This noise was not to be endured, so we tried everything, from loud coughing, upsetting all things within reach, including table and portmanteau, to hammering against the wall. Nothing had the desired effect, the snoring continued; it was truly wonderful! Tired out by our useless efforts we at last dozed off, heaping blessings on the snorer's head; but when, at 2.20 a.m., we prepared to start and the noise still continued, fresh experiments were made upon the individual's hearing powers, and, at last, our efforts were crowned by success. A man appeared at the door evidently entirely ignorant of his own and our performances, and instead of furious, as we hoped and expected, he, to our mortification, seemed delighted at being awake and thus enabled also to get an early start. A glorious ride followed, a ride by moonlight through the dense tropical forest wrapped in deep gloom below, but above lighted up by the silvery moonbeams, bright stars looking down through the branches of the giant trees. Although fireflies in thousands did their utmost to light us on our road, the track at first was difficult to see, but the mules found their way easily and surely, never making a mistake, whether going down or up hill, over stones and rocks, or through the many watercourses. Then came early dawn, a faint rosy haze at first over the east, rapidly deepening in colour to a golden crimson, against which the trees cresting the hill close by stood clearly defined, every branch, every leaf almost, distinctly marked; then the crimson changed to a yellower light, and presently the first rays of the rising sun struck the topmost branches of the highest trees, and steadily creeping down lighted up and displayed to our view all the beauties of a tropical forest, that wealth of vegetation which, in order to find room, covers even the trees themselves with a dense mantle of every shade of green, forming a background to enormous bouquets of the deep crimson catleyas and other gorgeous orchids. Not only had we all this to admire, but bright-coloured birds and insects darted about in all directions, gorgeous scarlet macaws and toucans and lovely humming-birds, butterflies and beetles of every shade and hue. Many beautiful glimpses we got when the sun had dispersed the mist of the

coast region far out to the ocean beyond. Although chilly in the early morning, owing mainly to the heavy dew, it soon became hot, and very glad we were, after six hours' riding, to halt for breakfast and to unload our mules at the "cabildo"—police hut—of a small village. What a view there was from here! Behind us the forest through which we had just passed, before us at least four magnificent volcanoes raising their lofty crests far above the grand Cordilleras, and green foliage everywhere as far as the eye could reach, beautifully shaded among the deeper valleys and passes of the mountains. The village butcher's wife prepared an excellent meal for us hungry travellers, to which we did ample justice, surrounded by various remains of a lately-slaughtered sheep, set off by garlands of doubtful-looking sausages. The house, like all others, was constructed of mud-bricks (adobe) and thatched with plantain leaves. In one corner the butcher was stirring with a large stick a stew simmering over the fire, and another was taken up by pictures of the Virgin and of several saints; a third contained the sleeping accommodation for the family, while in the fourth customers were attended to. There was no place here to have our usual noon-day rest, the hut was too uncomfortable, and no shelter to be got elsewhere; so when man and beast had been fed we made another start, but the sun was so hot that after eight miles we could do no more, and had already determined to camp out on the first suitable spot, when we discovered a solitary hut in the forest, occupied by some Indians, who promised us "saccate" for the mules and a place under a shed for our baggage. It was delightful in the shade of the glorious trees, and still more delightful in the cool, swiftly-running stream close by, most enjoyable after our hot and dusty ride. Then followed dinner in the hut, which was occupied by three families, each apparently accommodated in a separate corner. Two of the wives, evidently sisters, were very pretty, especially the younger one, who attended to our wants. They all wore the national dress, an orange and red very tightly fitting petticoat, a white loose chemise, strings of blue beads round the neck, and green ribbons plaited into the two long curls hanging down to the waist. The meal provided consisted of boiled eggs stuck into little lumps of tortilla paste, a basin of black beans, some cheese, and a small milk-jug full of black coffee, which the pretty lady stirred for us

with an iron skewer; of course, knives, forks, and spoons were things unknown. The three families took the greatest interest in our doings, laughing and chatting, and showing their white teeth all the time, a happy, contented party. There were several children about, the youngest swinging in a hammock. Five half-starved, hungry-looking dogs, and one cat, watched us wistfully during our repast, and I don't know how many fowls were roosting among the bamboo rafters overhead. How everybody stowed away in the hut seemed a puzzle, for nearly one-third of the space was taken up by the fireplace. We did not stay to see the problem solved, but took up our quarters under the shed, where sleep at last put an end to an unsuccessful battle with the mosquitoes. Our young hostess alone was up to give us coffee at three the next morning, the others being contained, I suppose, in the several bundles lying about in various corners of the hut. After this we made a long journey into the colder regions, but finally paid a visit to the lagoon country, a series of lakes surrounded by damp forests near the sea, and but little above its level. It was very hot here, though that was bearable; but the sandflies and mosquitoes were not, and they fairly drove us away on the second day of our stay. They were terrible, and never left us alone for one moment; but the former, the tiny, almost invisible pests, fully deserved the prize. At work all day long, they never ceased their attacks on all exposed places at the same time, while the mosquitoes commenced with a will only about sunset, when one could always retire for shelter under the curtain and thus more or less defy them. It is difficult to understand why these curses exist, and on what they live when no unfortunate biped is about to feed them with his blood. We took up our quarters under a large tree overlooking a lake, in the centre of which was an island inhabited by some Indians, whose occupation consisted in horse-breeding, and fish, duck, and turtle curing. They ferried themselves across to their island home in canoes hollowed out of the trunk of a tree, spearing fish, with which the lakes abounded, as they went, by means of long three-pronged spears. They were well-built, fine-looking men, splendid swimmers, and their dress was conspicuous only by its absence. Ducks they shot, tortoises they caught, dried, and smoked, afterwards to be sent to the nearest market. This lagoon country is a perfect paradise for

a collector of aquatic birds, equally so of mosquitoes, sandflies, and ants. Returning from one of our excursions in the evening we saw several scarlet macaws, those almost too gorgeously feathered birds, settle in a lofty tree not far distant. Desirous of possessing a couple of those brilliant skins, and having noticed that the birds always flew about dusk in a certain direction, I went on and asked my companion to go to the tree and start the game. These macaws always fly in pairs, male and female together, the most faithful and affectionate couples to be found, of which we were presently to have a most remarkable instance. Well, I posted myself and expected every moment to hear shouts of "macaw over; macaw to the left" or "macaw to the right," but everything was quiet until a shot from the amateur beater broke the silence. Disappointed by his treachery, I sat down and waited, and presently he appeared with a struggling macaw under his arm, but minus a large piece of skin of the nose, and plus a cut in the cheek, and with his hand tied up in a bloody handkerchief. I was avenged! It would not perhaps suit ears polite to tell the adventure in the language it was told to me then, so I will only say that on my friend firing at one of the macaws the bird fell down winged, but immediately scrambled up a young tree. The hunter's blood was up and he followed the quarry, when suddenly the tree broke and both came down on the ground together. Nothing daunted, although bleeding from the face, he rushed through a bush after the screeching bird, leaving part of his nose on the thorns, and eventually seized the macaw, who immediately, not to be behind-hand, buried his beak in his captor's finger. Thus attached to one another the chase was over, and presently master macaw was sitting in our camp tied to the stump of a tree. The other bird, frightened at the shot, had flown away, but so strong was the love for its mate, that next morning to our intense astonishment it suddenly appeared in a tree close to the prisoner, showing by its noisy demonstrations the distress and annoyance it felt at the apparent desertion of her husband. Our camp was a mile away from the scene of the battle; was it wonderful instinct or what that led it to discover the prisoner in the depths of the forest? The macaw did very well; for two days he travelled with us on a mule, with its wing in a bandage, and then seated upon a pole he was sent to the house of a friend,

whose verandah, however, he was never destined to adorn, for according to the Indian by whom he was carried, the bird died on the road. No doubt he did, for all that remained of the unfortunate macaw on his arrival at his destination were a few cooked pieces in the Indian's stewpot; but I fear that a foul murder, suggested probably by hunger, will for ever rest upon that Indian's soul.

#### PART II.—THE TEMPERATE ZONE.

The "tierra templada" may be said to lie at an altitude of between 1,500 and 5,000 feet on the Pacific slope of the Guatemalan Cordilleras. Its climate is delightful, its scenery beautiful, thanks to the deep green clothing everywhere the picturesque mountains and hills of which it is composed, which gradually rise higher and higher towards the grand central chain of the Sierras, in its turn overlooked by the still loftier volcanoes. These, although they have not lately destroyed either life or property, show by the smoke which here and there issues from some giant peak, and by the shocks of earthquake which now and then rattle doors and windows, that they do not sleep, but only slumber, and that the hidden power which has of late been satisfied with uncanny noises and mysterious tremblings of the soil and of all that thereon is, may yet once more break forth in all its fury, and enact over again those terrible scenes among which the old capital was laid in ruins. Hence are all the towns composed of one-storied houses, the rooms generally opening on to a verandah running round an inner court open to the sky. Owing to the present apparent security, houses of two stories have now been and are being built here and there in the larger towns, but these are few and far between; only the churches, with walls generally rent and cracked, rise above the sea of low flat roofs. This, and the regularity with which the streets are laid out in square blocks, form a very noticeable feature of a Guatemalan town. The present capital lies in an extensive valley at an altitude of about 5,000 feet. Mountains are all around; in a westerly direction stand the volcanoes of Pacaya, Agua, and Fuego, the first two dormant, the other active, raising their mighty

peaks between the capital and the Pacific. I do not intend to give a description of the city, which has already so often been described, but we will pay a visit to the market, a scene as pretty as it is interesting, giving at once an idea of the productions of the country, and of the national characteristics of the people. Like everything else in the capital, so also does the market open at a late hour; only at about noon is it really in full swing, the distances the vendors have to bring their wares being probably the reason. It is held in two squares, connected by a passage, but enclosed nearly all round by a series of shops constructed of stone. Articles of native clothing, generally cotton in the brightest colours, iron ware, gigantic Mexican spurs and cruel-looking bits; rope made of the fibres of the agave, mats of palm leaves, knives, from the small European pocket-knife to the gigantic machéte, &c., are exposed for sale in the shops; but the real interest lies not here, but in the Indians who with their wares crowd the inner squares. What a subject such a market scene would be for a painter! Everything is bright, full of colour and full of life. The native women in their picturesque and most becoming dress squat on the ground behind the mats or baskets wherein their goods are displayed to the best advantage. We will take a glimpse at the latter first, and study the ladies' dress afterwards. This woman here presides over several baskets, the centre one filled with bright green, that one with deep crimson chillies, another with white or black beans, while potatoes and onions lie in heaps around. That lady carrying a baby in a shawl upon her back while she smokes her cigarette in evident enjoyment is surrounded by huge piles of yellow limes and golden oranges, plantains, green anonas, one cut in half to display its white creamy flesh, and alligator pears. Here are baskets of Indian corn of which they all make their bread, of lentils, peas, and rice; golden yellow jocota berries; yams, green vegetables of various kinds. Then more heaps of fruits, and of fresh crisp salads, baskets full of eggs, and so on, the same everywhere. Turkeys and fowls are tied up in most uncomfortable positions in many places; there are stalls of meat and doubtful-looking sausages; little heaps of tobacco and cigarettes made with maize husk in neat bundles of twenty, price three cents. Sugar of various degrees of purity



is for sale here, coffee there. That lady whose long jet black hair is so industriously being hunted through by her friend, who, while busy with her fingers, holds the wooden comb between her teeth, has a sweetmeat stall, and is apparently doing a good business with her tempting-looking pink and yellow bonbons; she also provides thirsty people with various drinks, already prepared and displayed in tumblers by her side. These are harmless, consisting mainly of sugar and water to which a little flour or some fruit-juice has been added. Now we come to the pottery department, well supplied with earthenware vessels of every shape and size, some glazed and prettily ornamented. Most of these are made in the neighbouring village of Chinaltla, in the most primitive manner and entirely by hand. The larger jars are built up of clay piecemeal, very roughly at first, and then scraped down to the requisite thickness by means of a cup-shaped calabash; having been dried in the sun, the vessel is baked in a fire. Much of this pottery is not only handsome in shape, but also in design; thus some water-jugs intended for the table were tastefully ornamented with flowers, leaves, and fruit in relief. Some time before leaving England I had seen ladies embellishing jars in a similar manner by means of putty and paint; at home it was something new, in Chinaltla probably the Indian women had been thus employed hundreds of years ago. In the second square was established an open-air restaurant, the proprietor of which seemed readily to dispose of his soups, meat and vegetable dishes, supplied hot, direct from the fire. The small portions were cheap, but did not look sufficiently tempting to invite a trial. The life and colouring of this market are impossible to describe, they require to be witnessed, and to a painter's eye would be full of the greatest charm. Here we were particularly struck by the picturesque national dress of the Indian women, which in colour, manner of wearing, &c., differs with every village. Look at that woman from Chinaltla selling those pretty-shaped jugs; she wears her village tartan, a large check of orange and crimson; that girl coming in with a basket of plantains and oranges from the coast region is attired in a petticoat of blue and black, her neighbour in one striped blue and white, and so on. This petticoat ("enagua") is simply a square piece of cotton cloth wound tightly over the hips and

fastened there by one end being tucked in under the other; it reaches nearly to the ankles, and fits very tightly round the legs. The "huipeel," a very loose chemise, covers the upper part of the body. This is cut very low in the neck, has short sleeves, is made of cotton, and confined to the waist by the petticoat and by a narrow girdle ("cinturon") wound several times round the body. Some women wear either across the shoulders or over the head a long narrow shawl ("peraje") of various colours, fringed at the ends. Lastly, there is an apron, and the bright coloured ribbons which every woman wears plaited into the two long curls, which either hang down the back or are twisted like a coronet round the head. The hair itself, coarse, straight, and black, is parted in the centre and behind. Necklets of coloured beads often intermixed with silver coins, and rings for the fingers and ears complete the outfit. Women rarely wear sandals, men always; the ladies do not use handkerchiefs, the sterner sex does. Not only does the colouring of the petticoat vary in the different villages, but that of the girdle, chemise, and apron also. The girdle is stoutly woven of cotton and generally white, with red, black or blue longitudinal stripes; the chemise, made of coarse white cotton, is nearly always embroidered with variously coloured thread, in some cases to such an extent and with so much skill that it becomes a real work of art. The thread is imported, but worked on to the huipeel in most elaborate designs, often of flowers, of birds and other animals, by the women themselves in the villages, according to the particular fashion which has there been in vogue, it may be, for centuries. The most beautiful chemises which we saw were made with blue and red thread so thickly laid on that over the chest and back almost none of the white remained visible; others were less elaborately embroidered in red, blue, green or yellow, in a great variety of designs, floss silk being used further to set off the various patterns. Thus a well-dressed Indian woman is very picturesque, and lends great interest by her bright appearance to the market scene, already so full of colour, thanks to the endless variety of fruit and vegetables with which the ground is covered. The men are much more soberly clad in rough homespun cloth, which is woven in the villages on very primitive looms, and they nearly always carry over their shoulder a blanket of the same material—their only bed, mattress, and sheet.

The men during the day are generally absent from the villages, employed as labourers on the plantations, on the railways, conveying goods on mules, in country carts drawn by oxen, or staggering under heavy burdens to and from the towns. The goods, contained in a wooden framework covered with netting, are carried upon the back, suspended by a band from the forehead. The wives frequently accompany their lords with a load balanced upon the head, often a child slung in a shawl on the back, and walk barefoot. A great deal of drunkenness exists, and the loads once got rid of, various intoxicating drinks are indulged in, sadly interfering with the homeward journey. The Indians are very superstitious, of which the following are a few examples: When a child is ill the mother takes a drake, singes its tail feathers, and, muttering certain words, passes it over the patient. A woman feeds a parrot with a few pieces of tortilla, and gives the child the crumbs which fall from the beak, as they will make it talk! Colic is due to the evil eye; in order to get rid of the disturbing influence, the woman breaks four duck's eggs into a basin, and, having mixed them with rue, places the whole under the child's bed; if the compound be curdled in the morning the spirit has departed. The Church refreshes its hold on the Indians by means of innumerable "festas"—religious holidays; by terrifying their simple minds with the most ghastly figures representing the Virgin and various saints, placed in every conspicuous place in church; and further by carrying these same saints in procession through the streets, while tiny cannon are fired and rockets let off. These rockets play a great part in the religion of Guatemala and other countries around; they are let off on all possible occasions, and as almost every other day is a festa, the amount of powder burnt must be great indeed. As we approached the Indian village of Mixco, on the road from the present capital to Antigua, which, until it had been repeatedly destroyed by earthquakes, was the first city in the land, rockets hissed through the air in all directions, the pyrotechnic display being, however, marred by the bright daylight in which it took place. The village, of course, was *en fête*, the main street thickly covered with pine branches; triumphal arches of the same were erected, and adorned with coloured tissue paper, while tiny flags hung over every door.

We rode our mules through the gaily decorated streets; they stepped proudly over the green branches and under the triumphal arches; we passed an arena where a crowd of men was busy cock-fighting; we crossed the Plaza, with its curious old church and beautiful fountain, and presently met a procession attended almost solely by women, the men being better employed in testing the merits of their respective champions in the ring. We, of course, dismounted and made room. First came a noisy drum, then a figure in bright-coloured garments representing the Virgin, attended by others of very unhappy-looking saints, all borne upon the shoulders of men in black European clothes; a crowd of women followed, everybody else kneeling as the procession passed. On its arrival at the church door bunches of rockets were let off, and the saints felt, I trust, refreshed by their little airing. Some of the women wore the most beautifully embroidered chemises, and had we not been aware of the certainty of non-success an attempt at a deal would have been made, even at the risk of depriving the fair one of her only garment. A beautiful ride through forest scenery brought us to the late capital, now called Antigua, the old, a ruined city, lying in a lovely valley, and surrounded by coffee, orange, and flower gardens, at the foot of one of the grandest shaped mountains, the "Volcano de Agua," or water volcano, which rises in stately beauty from the immediate outskirts of the town. A little further off stands the destroyer of this once beautiful city, the double-peaked "Fuego," never at rest, always emitting smoke, and often flame. Both are giants, for neither falls far short of 14,000 feet. In this clear atmosphere, which so sharply defines their outline, they seem much closer than in reality they are; in fact, when standing on the Plaza, the volcano of Agua seems to tower almost immediately above Government House, formerly the palace of the Captain-General of Spain. This volcano, in 1541, destroyed the first capital of Guatemala by water, which, until then a lake, confined in the roomy crater, suddenly burst its banks, and in overwhelming quantity and with stupendous force swept the old city bodily away. Antigua, the next capital, was then built at a little distance from the site of its predecessor, but ruins alone now bear witness to its former magnificence, for the "Volcano de

Fuego" (fire volcano) this time, in 1773, wrecked it utterly. It was rebuilt, but after repeated misfortunes the seat of Government was finally removed to a safer distance, to where Guatemala "la Nueva" now stands (1776). Our visit to Antigua was a most interesting one. The town has now about 15,000 inhabitants living in houses built among and partly with the ruins of the old city. Once away from the fearful pavement it is very charming walking among the many gardens, where coffee, oranges, roses and flowers innumerable flourish, and in the long avenues of amate-trees, where beautifully carved capitals of ancient pillars are placed as seats; to wander among the old monasteries and churches now in ruins, half overgrown with trees and brushwood; to climb to the top of one of the cracked walls and gaze upon the utter desolation of what was once a magnificent city with over fifty churches. What a terrible force it must be which shattered these stout walls, so solidly constructed of thin bricks and unstinted mortar, and which hurled far away those enormous masses of solid masonry as if they had weighed pounds instead of tons! People soon came back after the catastrophe and built fresh houses with the *débris* of the old, and now once more Antigua is a flourishing city; but the destroyer "Fuego" smokes on, growls now and then and makes the earth tremble, to remind the inhabitants of his terrible power, as if they who live surrounded by ruins were ever likely to forget it. The houses which formed part of the old capital were two-storied, those of the present city for greater safety have but one, low, flat-roofed buildings collected in square blocks. The gardens around are fenced in with stone walls, by rows of eucalyptus-trees or hedges of the prickly chichicasta; everything looks green and fresh. Here and there from among the coffee or rose bushes rise the white walls of a ruined church in striking contrast to the rich colouring of all around. Very beautiful the ruins are even in their utter desolation, rent and torn by many an earthquake. In style, these monuments of the foreign dominion resemble each other greatly, judging from some photographs in my possession; it is said to be corrupt Italian renaissance with bits of Moorish architecture brought from Spain, such as pointed horseshoe arches; most graceful "corkscrew" pillars are very

frequent also. Very striking are the arches still standing in the ruined monastery of San Francisco, and the vaulted passages, through which the monks walked long years ago to the refectory, now a heap of ruins thickly overgrown with bush. The stucco, which covers the solid walls, is embellished in relief with delicate lace-work patterns, so also are the granite blocks chiselled, which once formed door and window frames, but which now are frequently seen built into the walls of modern houses, and even form part of the trottoirs in the streets. Some of the churches are painted in curious trefoil patterns, dull red upon the white ground. A most delightful and lovely place is Antigua, which well deserves to be visited much more than it is at present. Though some coffee is grown in the vicinity of Antigua, and, indeed, almost in the very streets, the coffee district—*par excellence*—lies at a lower altitude, between 2,000 and 4,000 feet, covering with a deep green the rolling hills amid most beautiful mountain scenery. An excellent road, upon which parties of Indians were still at work, took us down from the higher country, at first through maize fields, divided by bank fences, upon which grew gigantic agaves, many in full blossom, humming-birds hovering round the bright yellow flowers. Then we entered the tropical forest, a dense mass of vegetation on each side of the road, the branches and trunks of the trees adorned here and there with enormous mauve-crimson bouquets of the *Cattleya Skinneri*; and so on to the plantations, or "fincas," as they are here called. The coffee-trees stretch away in rows over hill and dale as far as the eye can reach, with the utmost regularity. Now and then we pass the houses of a proprietor or overseer, with drying terraces, machinery buildings, and labourers' dwellings attached. The deep green foliage of the trees show off to great advantage the masses of white flowers with which the branches are covered, a fair promise of a rich crop. Although late in the season, Indians, men, women, and children, were still busy in places picking the bluish-black berries, mounted upon steps or armed with a hooked stick. Lines of orange-trees laden with golden fruit formed the only fences for long distances together. Now and then we passed outlying huts and sheds used by the Indians working on the estates. On some of the larger fincas from 600 to 700 families are sometimes employed during the picking season—September to November; most of

these engage themselves for the time only, but a certain number remain on the estate more or less permanently. I have already explained in Part I. the difficulty there is in obtaining sufficient labour, and the means employed in keeping it when obtained. The berries by various processes, as soaking in water, churning, drying in the sun, and rolling afterwards, are deprived of their outer and inner coverings; afterwards they are passed through large sieves worked by machinery, thereby separating the small from the larger berries, and finally packed in sacks for export. The husk is made use of for firing, the pulp and skin for manure. The proprietor of a coffee estate is the absolute master of the labourers employed upon it. They are in his debt, and as long as that is not discharged, his property; he dispenses justice, looks after them when ill, and finds wives for any one matrimonially inclined. A man desirous of entering the holy bonds finds a lady to his liking and applies to her nearest relative, who fixes a certain sum as her price. This, of course, the amorous swain cannot pay; he therefore goes to the owner of the finca and states his case. The relative of the girl is sent for, the price at once reduced as exorbitant, which it generally is, and finally, after some bargaining, the master pays over the sum decided upon, and the wedding soon takes place amid much dancing, drinking, and marimba music. The proprietor is minus so much money, which is added to the debt of the Indian who has gained a wife, but lost his liberty more than ever—it may be in more ways than one.

### PART III.—THE COLD ZONE.

At lunch in the verandah of a village school of Toliman. We are both very hungry after our hot morning's march of fifteen miles, and lucky it is that we are, and that hunger is the best sauce, for otherwise the curious stew procured from a neighbouring hut, and the *entrées* of eggs and chillies swimming in hog's fat, would have been most uninviting. One of the mule trunks is our table, our chair the other; behind us a score or so of boys are noisily spelling through some simple sentences, all at the same time, like so many parrots. The village pedagogue every now and then leaves his charges to smoke a cigarette with

the alguazils at the police-hut opposite, when first one boy, soon followed by several others, comes to the door to peep at the strangers feeding, the less courageous disciples remaining behind, but doubling the noise in order to shield their inquisitive brethren. Tied to the posts of the verandah are our mules munching their dry maize stalks, before us lies the beautiful mountain-lake of Atitlan (5,800 feet above the sea), blue and calm, a true mirror to the high mountains, which, almost completely encircling it, leave but a narrow approach to the lake, that now immediately in front of us. We have a long march to do this afternoon, and our arriero allows us and our mules but little time for rest: however gladly we would stay and enjoy a siesta, the order is presently given to saddle and load, and on once more we go in the hot sun, the heat of which makes us even forget our late unwholesome, greasy meal. Straight up the mountain-side climbs the horribly dusty and stony road, up which we scramble I don't know how many hundred feet. The wonderful endurance of the heavily laden mules is truly astonishing, urged on as they are mercilessly by whip and spur, and by the choice but apparently effective language of Señor Felipe Gomez. His flow of words was wonderful; he had some particular term of endearment for each of his animals, but when one of them wandered off the road and into the bushes his anger would become terrific, and his tongue rattle out wonderful words, such as are not likely to be found in any dictionary. It is very annoying, when toiling along in a hot sun and on a dusty, stony, steep road, to have to hunt up in the bush, and to drive back into the road, a perverse brute from which in charity one has dismounted in order to ease it a little, and which thus returns kindness by causing trouble and direct annoyance. Kindness to mules is wasted, that we soon found out; the only treatment possible is that to which they are accustomed—a severe one. After a hot, tiring ride we at last reached the crest of a mountain, and were well rewarded for our exertions by the magnificent scenery all around us. No less than six volcanoes were visible, rising above the sea of mountains. Below us lay the lake, a beautiful sheet of water in a mountain basin, the somewhat bare hills rising direct out of it, with villages here and there close to the water's edge. After a long march up and down hill over the slope of the mountains towards the lake, we passed through the Indian



village of St. Antonio, a collection of mud huts upon a bare white soil, very trying to the eyes. A miserable place, very hot, nothing green anywhere, swarming with lean pigs and naked children. We always found that the poorer a village the more numerous were the pigs, gaunt, more than half-starved-looking swine, which rush about everywhere in the attempt temporarily to put off starvation. The people live mainly by fishing, partly carried on in dug-out canoes, partly in traps made of stakes and branches near the shore. They also shoot ducks, which are very plentiful on the lake and apparently also very tame; these are cleaned, dried in the sun, and then sent to market. On the other side rise the volcano of Atitlan, 11,850 feet high, and the Cerro de Oro, immediately from the water, many mountains lying on their flanks. The lake of Atitlan, probably the crater of an extinct volcano, is supposed to be without bottom; rivers enter but apparently do not leave it, though in reality they do, through underground channels, appearing afterwards as swiftly rushing streams making their way towards the ocean through the tropical forest. A few more miles and then we descended into a narrow but most fertile valley, which owes its fertility to a broad river here entering the lake. After our ride over the bare, scorched hills the beautifully fresh verdure of this spot was very pleasing. It seemed a garden; every hut stood in its little enclosure, surrounded by various trees, by plantains and green vegetables of many kinds. Water conducted from the river ran in numerous channels all over the land; thanks to the perfect system of irrigation the little town of Palajachél owns the market-gardens which supply the surrounding country. We were glad to rest here for a day after the hard marching of the last two days, especially as the posada was well kept, actually possessing, and producing for our benefit, a clean tablecloth. We most thoroughly enjoyed bathing in the clear waters of the lake, the lazy strolls among the gardens and up the valley towards a small sugar finca; watching the market people assembled in the Plaza was also full of interest. The women wore a chocolate-brown chemise embroidered or striped with crimson, a dark blue petticoat, blue and crimson belt, crimson ribbons in the hair, and many red beads and rings. The men covered their nakedness by means of a black and white striped garment round the loins, a white shirt, homespun jacket, red

kerchief round the head, surmounted again by a broad-brimmed straw hat. On arrival in the early morning they deposited their heavy burdens in the Plaza, and then, aided by their wives, made a fire; upon it was put the earthenware cooking pot, containing water, chillies, a small piece of meat perhaps, a fish, or some fat only; a few tortillas which they brought with them are warmed up, and a plantain is roasted, and thus they make their simple meal. The loads which these men carry upon their backs supported by a band from the forehead are heavy indeed; the flat, square box is full of various goods, and attached to it outside hangs the mat whereon they sleep, various cooking pots, calabashes of different shapes, perhaps a bunch of onions, &c. After the morning meal the wares are displayed for sale; earthenware goods, raw wool, clothing, large quantities of onions, bananas, &c. Having disposed of what was brought, various purchases are made, generally of fruit or vegetables, the chief productions of this fertile valley, and presently men and women toil back to their villages, struggling under the heavy loads, up and down the steep and stony roads. Dried ducks, and fish and small crabs from the lake, skewered upon sticks, are also exported from here, as they are considered delicacies further inland. Next morning, during our short march, nearly always up-hill, to Solala, the capital of a district, we passed crowds of these men and women laden with goods for the market there. Nearly all were wrapped up in a rough jacket, for, owing to the altitude—about 7,000 feet—and a very piercing wind, it was extremely cold; we passed others carrying enormous earthenware pots and jars upon their backs, bound from the Altos to the lower country. The important market in the Plaza was well attended and very interesting. The usual things were being sold; one side was set aside for the sale of raw wool, and rough clothing made of it, black or white, the colours of the highland sheep. An immense variety of wares was displayed for sale, but a good deal of bartering went on also, eggs, tortillas, &c., being exchanged for other things. We noticed some very pretty pale blue huipels embroidered in crimson, some chocolate and blue shawls, and a boy carrying about in a box a small image of the Virgin embowered in gaudy flowers, which he offered to the market women to kiss or only to touch, they in return presenting him with some small gift from their store. Being so high we enjoyed

a beautiful view from Solala on to the lake below, the volcanoes opposite, and the lofty mountains and peaks which lay all around, a panorama as extensive as it was beautiful. The town itself was well kept and very neat; a flourishing flower garden embellished the Plaza, running water supplied the fountains, and working parties were busy improving the roads. The alguazils (policemen) attracted our attention by their smartness; they wore white shirts with sleeves striped with red, short white breeches, a grey homespun jacket, and black hats over a red handkerchief. Both our camp beds and blankets were very necessary in the wretched, dirty, and draughty hotel, which had no recommendation whatever—hardly that of affording sufficient shelter. It was terribly cold at night, and heavy clouds were collecting among the higher peaks of the Sierras, which was not at all inviting for our proposed expedition into that lofty region; so while we shivered in the hotel, where neither doors nor windows would shut, it was determined unanimously to strike out of our programme the visit to Quiché. The two days' journey thither leads over a bleak, wild, and very cold plateau; the ruins of the once royal palace and fortress of Quiché, according to the books of our travelling library, are hardly to be recognised, and the hardships of the trip not likely to be repaid. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* Before the Conquest the race of Quiché Indians was the proudest in Guatemala, and held out a long time against the Spaniards. At last the country fell into the conquerors' hands, and now but little remains to mark the spot where once the royal palace stood in all its splendour. So we read once more the account of Quiché in Stephens's most interesting work on Central America, and left next morning just before daybreak for Totonicapan, a town of about 25,000 inhabitants. A continuous ascent over a stony track brought us to a high plateau where even fir-trees grew but sparingly, and a very keen wind told us unmistakably that we were among the Altos—a bleak, wild, desolate region. Some maize patches lay here and there near the huts, which were few and far between; some black or white sheep wandered about feeding upon the wheat and barley stubble which still remained on the stony fields. We passed an enclosure where corn laid upon the hard floor was being trampled out in the most primitive manner by horses driven over it. We could see I don't know how many volcanoes from

here; also the Pacific far away in the distance. At last, on turning the corner, we suddenly beheld our goal many hundred feet below us, a large town of tiled houses, with a very white church, lying in an extensive plain, now bare and yellow, for the corn had long since been cut and nothing but the yellow stumps remained. It would be impossible to ride down a steeper road than that which took us zig-zag down the mountain-side; the slightest mistake of a mule would have precipitated him and his load many hundred feet down into the valley. The loose stones and slippery ground made the trip somewhat trying, especially when one's gallant charger was afflicted with lameness in the forefeet; but nothing happened, and presently we rode through the gate of the Hotel de la Concordia. The inn looked peaceable enough then, but how laughable its name seemed to us next morning! The courtyard was prettily decorated with flowers, the food fair, our room looked comfortable, and we looked forward to a good night's rest, but we were sadly disappointed.

The town is very regularly laid out in square blocks of low houses; it has the usual Plaza and church fitted up with the usual ghastly figures, a cabildo, fountains with running water everywhere, and a well-to-do appearance altogether. Several male and female friends were apparently staying with the landlady of our hotel, and until evening they all wandered about in the garden seemingly the best of friends. After dinner, driven in by the cold, we retired to roost, but not to sleep; for hardly had we settled ourselves among the blankets, when sounds of the marimba began to be heard in the next room. It was a pleasure to listen to it, so beautifully was it played, so pretty were the airs, so varied the repertory. But when it had continued without intermission for more than an hour, we thought it time for all good people to be in bed; not so, however, the performers and their immediate audience; the playing went on and on with ever increasing energy, often accompanied by loud laughter, and our hosts were evidently bent on making a night of it. A guitar had next to do duty, to give the marimba a well-earned rest, but then, refreshed, the players set to work again. The fun waxed fast and furious, and sleep was totally out of the question; strong drink was doing its work, yet the marimba played on, and the Marseillaise was sung *con espressione*. We were disgusted, tired yet sleepless,

neither caring to join the ladino revellers in their orgie, nor to suggest an adjournment for fear of falling into a hornet's nest. Sounds of a general *mêlée* made us open our door at daybreak, when the yard of Hotel Concordia presented a curious sight. A kind of triangular duel with finger-nails was going on between some of the fair ones, who, more or less *en deshabillé*, were terribly dishevelled and evidently the worse for drink, while the spectators also had emptied many a cup, all showing the most evident signs of having passed a very hard night. The duel ended in scratches and tears; brandy was administered to the wounded, who tied up their heads, bathed each other's eyes, and at last disappeared arm-in-arm, forgiving and forgiven, beyond the doors of the revel chamber; and so it all ended in "Concordia." An early ride in the morning air soon freshened us up, but we sincerely hoped that at Quezaltenango, our next stopping-place, the marimba might be silent and the Marsellaise unknown. Quezaltenango, the second largest city in the republic, lies at an altitude of about 5,000 feet, in the same plain as Totonicapan, which, enclosed on all sides by mountains, was now yellow and dried up, while, during the rains, it is a sheet of green covered with maize and wheat, a fertile plateau. Quezaltenango, a town similar in appearance to all the others, means the abode of the quezal, a bird first the emblem of the royal house of Quiché, now that of the republic of Guatemala. A right royal bird it is too, *Trogon resplendens*, probably the handsomest that lives, with its bright metallic green body, sparkling crest, and long, green tail feathers, the whole set off by a rich crimson breast. The town has a large and very good hotel, a roomy market-place, well attended, a governor who is doing everything he can to improve the town, and a large garrison. It lies at the foot of two volcanoes; the nearest, called after the city, has its crater completely shattered by an eruption, but still smokes on; the other, that of Santa Maria, 12,000 feet high, is a perfect cone. Several very handsome public buildings have lately been erected on the Plaza; the prison especially and the new police offices, constructed of sandstone from the quarries close by, do great credit to the architect and the Indians working under him. Any money required for the erection of public buildings is collected in the villages around, and probably the contributions are not always voluntary. The

soldiers looked smart in their white uniforms, with blue facings and collars and crimson kepi, and seemed to take great pride in keeping their arms clean. A flower garden has been laid out in the Plaza, in the centre of which is a bandstand, where a fair military band performs two or three times a week; new fountains and reservoirs for laundry work, well supplied with running water, have been built in the outskirts of the town, where the swampy ground, lately drained, is covered with vegetable gardens and the richest pasture. The best water also supplies the fountains and stone troughs in the town itself; the sides of the latter in some instances are worn by constant use as much as those in Pompeii. The Cathedral, with side chapel attached, which somewhat spoils its appearance, has the usual stuccoed façade with niches containing figures of saints. A very pleasant excursion from Quezaltenango is to the baths of Almolonga, situated in a most fertile valley on the other side of the nearest volcano. The water, which issues from the ground almost boiling hot, is conducted into a series of stone baths. For the use of these private baths a charge is made, but the large pool close by in the open air is generally crowded with Indians—men, women, and children altogether, who here soak in the hot water, a supposed remedy for many and varied ailments. Nor is Almolonga without its Russian bath—a somewhat primitive contrivance, however. The steam from the water, heated by volcanic fire, passes into long, narrow channels cut into the rock; into these the people creep to be almost broiled, in the firm belief that thereby they will leave all their rheumatic ailments behind them. Peculiar to Quezaltenango fashion is a long, loose, sack-like shirt which the women wear thrown over their head and shoulders, with an oval opening near the top, leaving the face alone uncovered. Though very frugal in what they eat, the Indians are not very careful as to what they drink, at all events as regards quantity. The vice of drunkenness is, I fear, very general. Chicha, the favourite beverage, and but slightly intoxicating in moderation, is consumed basin after basin, in enormous quantities, until men or women fall into a drunken sleep. It is ridiculously cheap and prepared by fermentation from the coarsest brown sugar—panels. Chicha, a dark brown liquid, is the least, aguadiente the most intoxicating drink. There are also many different kinds of

"frescas" prepared with sugar, flour, and some fruit juice. These are displayed for sale in most roadside shops and are very refreshing. So is also, and nourishing besides, a drink called *tiste*, found in the lower country, where the cacao-tree grows, made of parched maize flour, sugar, cinnamon, and cocoa mixed with water. This is very palatable at the end of a hot and dusty ride. The highest point we reached in Guatemala was the summit of the volcano of *Agua*, in the crater of which we slept at the respectable height of 13,570 feet or 14,000 feet, according to different measurements. The *Jefe Politico*, the governor of *Antigua*, to whom we had a letter, kindly sent a messenger to the Indian village of *St. Maria*, 2,000 feet above the town, situated on the slope of the mountain, with orders to provide carriers for us. These we found ready on our arrival, so nothing remained to be done but to settle the price, arrange the loads, and provide ourselves with water for the journey. While thus employed we were regaled with lemonade in the *cabildo*, where the *alcalde* was wont to dispense justice under a crimson canopy, emblazoned with the arms of Guatemala—a greyish white scroll, with the words "Libertad, September 15, 1824," surmounted by a *quezal* in proper colours; Remington rifles and swords crossed underneath the scroll and resting upon a double laurel wreath, the whole on a dark blue field. Our four sturdy Indian carriers were soon ready and laden with their own thick clothing, our blankets, great-coats, provisions and earthenware jars full of water, and the road being practicable, we rode our horses up the mountain-side until it became too steep. Then the climb commenced through the forest, where here and there the ground had been cleared and some potatoes planted. Beyond the forest the ascent became terribly steep and slippery on account of the long yellow grass, and the air being very rarefied, breathing was very difficult. One of the party, I won't say who, very nearly gave it up; it was awful work scrambling up on all-fours, and every moment out of breath, especially when it became dark, except for the millions of stars which sparkled in the heavens. At last, when almost completely exhausted, we stood upon the edge of the crater, and then descended into the wide, deep basin of what was once a lake, until it burst its banks to sweep away the first capital of Guatemala. We found a hut of logs and branches

here, which, in the absence of anything else to burn, had to provide us with the materials for a fire, which was soon in full blaze, we sitting as closely as possible round it, for it was terribly cold. The hot coffee, eggs, and potted meats warmed and refreshed the inner man, and then, having placed fresh logs upon the fire, we wrapped our blankets round us and lay down upon the ground, sheltered as much as possible from the annoying draughts which whistled through the skeleton walls of the hut. We were in an immense circular cauldron, its extent not to be judged in the dim light, but its rim distinctly defined by the brilliant stars above, among which a beautiful comet sparkled in the pure atmosphere. Gazing upon the glorious lights of heaven we at last went to sleep in our lofty lodging, but awoke just before dawn cold and shivering. A run to warm us, more hot coffee, and then a climb to the crater's edge. As the sun rose a marvellous panorama developed itself below us; cities, villages, mountains, fields, lakes, the whole country lay spread out like upon a map, at first dimly then clearly defined in every particular, as the sun's rays dispersed the mist which until then had lain like a white blanket upon the mountain slopes, in the valleys, over lakes and rivers. On one side the high plateau upon which stand Antigua and the new capital, on the other the dense tropical forest and the Pacific beyond; the volcanoes of San Salvador were clearly visible to the south, those of Atitlan and Quezaltenango to the north. We only now saw the full extent of the crater wherein we had passed the night, the breach in its side made centuries ago by the water on its way to deal death and destruction to *Guatemala vieja*, and the deep channels it had then cut down the mountain-side. Close by rose Fuego, with its ragged crater emitting little puffs of smoke every now and then—the destroyer of the city whence we had just come and to which we soon afterwards returned.



## XI

### A RIDE FROM THE PACIFIC TO MEXICO CITY

1885

**V**ERY early one morning in February last the ss. *Granada*, belonging to the Pacific Mail Company, cast anchor in the Bay of Acapulco, in Mexico. She had brought us, my companion and me, from Champerico, Guatemala, in fifty-nine hours, steaming slowly in order to enter the narrow harbour by daylight. We had consulted several people as to the best road from the Pacific coast to the capital of Mexico, and all the various routes from St. Blas, Manzanillo, and Mazatlan had their advocates. Partly to gain time, partly to save money—for the steamboat fares between the various ports, thanks to the monopoly which the Pacific Mail Company here enjoys, are outrageously high—we at last settled to make our start from Acapulco and had no reason to regret the choice. We were soon landed and installed at the Hotel Louisiana, where the hostess, a lady from New Orleans, and her daughters, did everything to make us comfortable. An agreeable surprise was in store for us here; our expectations were completely negatived. Instead of Acapulco being the dirty, unhealthy, fever-stricken spot which in our imagination it had been, we found it quite the reverse; it wore a very cheerful aspect, the streets were most carefully kept with no heaps of refuse left about, its white-washed houses were dazzling in their brightness, and the hotels, especially as to bedrooms and food, left nothing to be desired. Indeed, the contrast between the hotel Louisiana and the very many inns in Guatemala we had lately visited was very marked, and not at all in favour of the latter. And how prettily the little town is situated on the beautiful, almost land-locked harbour,

with its deep-blue water and golden sandy shore, watched over by the old castle, which is again overlooked by bold mountains closing in all round! It was burning hot outside, but cool within the airy rooms of the hotel, which, I fear, are not much frequented by visitors, as but few people ever land here, most travellers to the city of Mexico choosing another route, and there is almost no trade. Our wooden bed chamber, with glassless windows, was very airy; at night a strong wind blew from the mountains to the sea, taking our room *en route*, and, unless secured, the sheets, our only covering, would not have remained a covering very long. We were lucky enough soon after arrival to hear of a muleteer willing to take us and our belongings to the city, or rather to the terminus of a railway which extends a short distance from the capital, and which is intended eventually to complete the line connecting the Pacific with the Atlantic. It already calls itself the "Inter-oceanic" railway, but whether it will ever really deserve that name is extremely doubtful. At present its terminus, Yautepec, is distant 815 miles (by road) from the Pacific, and the intervening country appears utterly impracticable. The candidate for our patronage soon presented himself, and was vouched for by the United States Consul, who very kindly interested himself in our behalf; the man had just brought a Government official down from the city, and was the proud possessor of three horses. Augustin Lopez was soon engaged, on condition that he produced four serviceable beasts, mules or horses, two for us to ride, two for the baggage. He proved himself a hardworking, most willing and obliging arriero very proud of his profession and most anxious to deliver us at our destination on a certain day, so as not to compromise the proud name he had earned of always doing the journey as rapidly as possible. His repute remained untarnished; he kept us up to time, made us travel as he wished, and eventually delivered us safe and sound in Mexico at the hour fixed, but a good many pounds lighter than when we left Acapulco. His terms were soon agreed to; twenty-two Mexican dollars we were to give for each animal, he to feed them on the road and to supply saddles, &c.; to start in forty-eight hours. Not very dear, when the terrible state of the road over 815 miles of most mountainous country is

considered. On going next morning to inspect our steeds, we heard that one of the three had been stolen or lost during the preceding night, and found that the remaining two looked exceedingly sorry for themselves, and were apparently totally unfit to undertake so long a journey. They would seemingly have afforded valuable studies for veterinary students of nearly every ailment to which horseflesh is heir; but the owner negatived our fears and promised to find two more by the next day. This he did, a horse and an excellent grey mule who did its work nobly and untiringly.

At 2 p.m. on the 12th of February Augustin appeared with his animals at the hotel, and we decided to start at once. While the two portmanteaux were being sewn up in palm matting, we provided ourselves each with a hammock—an absolutely indispensable article of kit—knives, forks, spoons, and biscuits. The landlady supplied us with two bottles of extract of coffee, a bag of sugar, and some bread. At 4.45 p.m. we left Acapulco, the mule carrying the portmanteaux and our bedding, the most doubtful-looking horse the light baggage, while the two others, provided with Mexican saddles and bits, had the honour of being our mounts. The road, a mere track, very stony, dusty, and narrow, rose gradually as it left the coast, affording us every now and then pretty views of the town and harbour. Soon after dark we arrived at our halting-place for the night, La Venta, a small village composed of several low huts constructed of sticks and thatched with palm leaves, open in front, where, supported on poles, the roof projected to a considerable distance. Here numerous hammocks were already slung, but we found room for ours also. Presently the old Indian landlady, whose clothing was of the scantiest nature, provided us with sun-dried strips of beef, heated over the fire on wooden skewers, and terribly tough, frijoles (stewed black beans), eggs, and of course tortillas (flat maize cakes). Our horses were, with many others, feeding close by on dry maize stalks, their only food with the exception of a little Indian corn.

The hammocks were soon all occupied, but sleep was greatly interfered with by barking and snarling dogs, which kept up a perpetual and very noisy battle all night long, and by innumerable pigs on the prowl, attracted to the hut by the flesh of one

of their own kind lately killed, which was hanging in festoons from the rafters all round us. Soon after three next morning we left our airy beds, and persuaded the landlady, who appeared with but a petticoat, the waist part round her neck, to boil us some coffee. Thus regaled, we loaded the pack animals, bade adieu to our "fair" hostess, and rode for seven hours over a very bad road, up-hill, down-hill, crossing ridge after ridge. The trees and shrubs were all leafless, the mountains bare and yellow, long years ago deprived of the luxuriant timber which once had clothed their nakedness. In the narrow valleys the brushwood was still green, beautiful humming-birds hovered near the bright flowers searching for insects hidden in their honeyed depths; the blue jays were calling among the trees, noisily following us on the march, and a flock of parroquets rushed screeching across the valley. We passed a few small villages, where the men lay lazily swinging in hammocks, and naked children played about with pigs, dogs, and numberless fowls. We passed a caravan loaded with fresh cocoanuts, but there was but little life about the country—it seemed very bare, dried up, and unproductive—very different, indeed, from the well-watered, rich Guatemala, where everything is green, where the soil grows anything abundantly. At noon we arrived at Los Arroyos (I will append a table of distances, &c.), and were soon resting in our hammocks while the horses were fed and our own meal was preparing. In the afternoon we covered three hours more of road as far as Los Altos, where we stayed until 4 a.m. There was nothing to be got here but eggs and tortillas, which, with the addition of stewed beans and an occasional feast on dried, leathery beef, formed the never-changing menu of our two daily repasts. No wonder, then, that we hated the very sight of all these things at the end of our journey.

We soon got used to our hammocks. Always very tired, we minded not at what angle our wearied bodies lay; we slept soundly, in spite of draughts, pigs, fowls, tough tortillas, and tougher beef. Our ablutions were generally performed at some roadside stream, water being scarce at the halting-places and all our time taken up by eating and sleeping.

The travelling was very bad indeed during the entire journey; very rarely were we able to trot even for a short distance. The

track lay over the most terribly stony country, up steep hills, often merely bare and slippery rock, then down again, stumbling among loose boulders, or struggling up places where the unfortunate animals had to climb like cats. Though we enjoyed some magnificent views among this sea of mountains, which rises steadily from the coast in ever loftier chains until we approach the plateau, 8,000 feet high, whereon stands the capital, the beauty of the scenery generally was marred by the nakedness and apparent barrenness of the country. The villages looked poor and were few and far between. There was but little cultivated land besides the few patches of maize attached to every house.

We arrived at 11.30 at Tierra Colorado, a very neat village, the white-washed adobe houses of which are built round a large open square. Here some pork was put before us, which we could not face after our late studies on the life of the village pig; but there were also eggs and plantains. The people seemed very well to do. They were clad in the cleanest white jackets and loose trousers; but apparently cultivated nothing but maize. Our afternoon march to Dos Caminos was short, but more enjoyable than the others. The road was better, the scenery pretty in a deep valley where everything was green, and enlivened by birds, butterflies, and bronze-coloured lizards, which sparkled in the sun as they lay on the burning rocks. The plain was covered with mimosa-trees, umbrella-shaped, like those in the Soudan; on the hillsides grew giant cacti, in appearance like huge candelabra. Though our landlady killed one of her toughest hens for our repast, we would gladly have done without her own sweet company, for when not smoking her cigar swinging about in a hammock close to us, she was smoking her cigarette leaning over the table among our dishes, in still closer proximity. We sought our hammocks, slung outside, as soon as possible, and slept well in spite of the howling of dogs, the squealing pigs, the crowing cocks, the bleating goats, the lowing cows, and calling turkeys. What a farmyard the street was! Off at 4 a.m. again, we soon after crossed a ridge, and then an extensive valley, surrounded on every side by mountains; a few houses were to be seen here and there, with the usual maize fields.

The mist in the early morning was lying in dense masses

over the low country, which thus resembled a lake, out of which abruptly rose the mountains, while the tops of the smaller hills appeared like islands above the surface of the misty vapour. The men we met on the road were all clad in the white loose national dress, muffled up in a bright-coloured serape, with broad brimmed huge Mexican hat, and, of course, never without a machete. We always exchanged a friendly greeting with any travellers, and never did they molest us in the very least; on the contrary, they always seemed glad to see one, and did all they could to afford assistance in any way in their power. We had our first trot on this day over a comparatively level country, until once more the road took us among the mountains and into the most grandly beautiful scenery. A magnificent panorama lay before us when, after a laborious ascent, we reached the crest of the pass; nothing but mountains everywhere, peaks rising behind peaks in the most picturesque confusion as far as the eye could reach. The nearest mountains were clad in bright yellow grass, a golden background to the clusters of deep green pine-trees and their reddish-brown polished-looking trunks. The sierra beyond was covered with dense forest nearly to the top, where it was bare but for some brushwood which grew but sparsely. Here and there large masses of claret-coloured naked rock stood out boldly, contrasting sharply with the variegated green around. Mountains succeeded mountains, gradually as the distance increased becoming more and more blue; so did the valleys also, until their shading became deeper and more sombre at their lowest depths. The bright clear atmosphere, the cloudless sky, the sparkling dewdrops still hanging from the leaves, the bright-coloured flowers, the butterflies and birds which gave animation and lent colour to the scene, completed the charming picture, the beauty of which it would be impossible to describe fitly. At 10.30 a.m. we arrived at Acahuzotla, a village in a small but fertile valley, surrounded by high mountains and magnificent gorges. A cane-mill here was still driven in the primitive manner by eight horses. As twenty-four miles still remained to be done, we left again at 1.15, in spite of the terribly hot sun; the road was, as usual, very bad, the country bare, hardly covered with dry grass even. We arrived at the hotel of

Chilpancingo, the capital of the province of Guerrero, at 7.30 p.m., tired out completely. Gladly would we, however, have exchanged our inn for sufficient room in a village to swing our hammocks, for nothing could we get but wooden boards to sleep upon in a draughty passage—the few rooms were all engaged—and but little to eat, and nobody to make coffee for us in the morning before we left at four.

Disgusted, we marched among bare hills covered with palmetto and stunted palms and dense mimosa thickets over a terribly tiring road to Zumpango, a clean, well-kept, cheerful village, where a most civil landlady soon put excellent coffee, milk, and corn bread before us, to which we did justice with travellers' appetites. As here the horses had to be shod, we enjoyed a longer rest than usual, dozing in a hammock or watching the market women outside as they sold chillies, oranges, beans, melons, herba, soap, &c., all their wares neatly laid out in little heaps on a piece of matting in front of them.

At 10 a.m. we were off again, the road taking us through the most dreary scenery, along the sandy bed of a river meandering among mountains covered with leafless mimosa, arriving at Zopilote, a single lonely house, at 1 p.m. As it was impossible to reach the next place, thirty miles distant, before dark, and as no water or houses exist on the road, we had to remain here until 1 a.m., when we made a start for Mescala, just before reaching which we had to be ferried across a broad river bearing the same name. At 3 p.m. we arrived at Tonicapan, very tired after a hot, fatiguing journey of fifty-one miles.

After this we always left our hammocks at 1 a.m., lighted by the moon, which then was just past full, thereby completing the major part of the day's task before the sun had become very hot. Yet there always remained after the halt more to be done than we cared about, for the heat during the day was very great, as were the distances, while the pace was very slow.

Very nice people took care of us at Tonicapan, and under a roomy shed we slung our hammocks, and loth were we to leave them when the signal was given for the start at 1 a.m. We crossed a plateau of rolling hills covered with dry yellow grass, and then descended into a wide plain containing a large lake, and the native Indian village of Iguala, buried among trees, and so on to Platanilla on the opposite slope, where we recruited the

inner man at a roadside hut. Four hours' march in the afternoon brought us to Venta de la Nera, where we had to sling our hammocks almost in the street, with noisy muleteers all around us.

After several hours' march in the early morning of February 19th we just before dawn crested a hill, and saw below us an immense plain, still shrouded in darkness. Above the highlands beyond rose the giant volcanoes of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, their lofty peaks clearly defined against a crimson sky, so deep in colour as to seem almost supernatural. Below, in the dark plain an immense fire was burning, only partially dispersing in its immediate vicinity the misty darkness, while it deepened the gloom of all else around. A pleasant sight to us, for we almost saw the end of our journey; those two volcanoes stood between the railway terminus—our goal—and the city of Mexico.

At the bidding of the rising sun, the darkness resting upon the plain dispersed, and we saw extensive maize fields, now yellow and dry, with here and there bright green tracts of sugarcane, plantation buildings, and a few houses. A horrible road brought us to a river, which we forded, finding coffee and eggs in the village Amacusac, on the other side. Twenty minutes were allowed for breakfast, and then on again, trotting over a very good road to Puente de Ixtla, passing a large sugar hacienda and several villages, which had now become more frequent. After a very greasy luncheon at the inn of San Antonio, the animals were saddled once more to carry us to Blancaeca, where we arrived at 5.15 p.m., taking up our quarters there for the night. In a muleteer's corral we slung our hammocks under a shed, tenanted on our arrival by a drunken old woman, a malformed tiny pig, and an unhappy-looking hen, adorned with a feather passed through the nostrils. Straight-growing cacti are used here for enclosures, forming an impenetrable wall.

The ten leagues next morning took us through a very fertile, well-irrigated valley, occupied by several large sugar estates, and over a range of hills into another valley, where to our delight we at last saw the village of Yautepec, with the station buildings of the railway to Mexico city. Yautepec, a thriving little town, is surrounded by orange gardens and cane fields, and supplies the capital with many kinds of fruit and vegetables. Thus



when we dismounted at the door of Hoza Concordia our long ride was over. The horses had had more than enough but our friend Augustin was well satisfied.

We arrived at Yautepec one hundred and eighty-eight hours after leaving Acapulco; of these we had spent eighty-six and three-quarters actually in the saddle, journeying over one hundred and five leagues, or three hundred and fifteen miles, at the rate of three and two-third miles an hour. Next day, by the very slowest train it is possible to imagine, we arrived in Mexico city in the afternoon.

	Leagues.	Hours.
Feb. 12. From Acapulco to La Venta ... ..	5	8½
„ 13. From La Venta to Los Arroyos ... ..	8	7½
„ 13. From Los Arroyos to Los Altos ... ..	4	3
„ 14. From Los Altos to Tierra Colorada ... ..	8	7½
„ 14. From Tierra Colorada to Dos Caminos ... ..	4	2½
„ 15. From Dos Caminos to Acahuizotla ... ..	8	6½
„ 15. From Acahuizotla to Chilpancingo ... ..	8	5½
„ 16. From Chilpancingo to Zumpango... ..	8	3
„ 16. From Zumpango to Zopilote ... ..	4	3
„ 17. From Zopilote to Mescal ... ..	10	6½
„ 17. From Mescal to Tonalapa ... ..	7	6
„ 18. From Tonalapa to Platanilla ... ..	8½	8½
„ 18. From Platanilla to Venta de la Nera ... ..	4	3½
„ 19. From Venta de la Nera to Amacusac ... ..	6	6
„ 19. From Amacusac to Puente de Ixtla ... ..	2	1½
„ 19. From Puente de Ixtla to Blancaeca ... ..	6	3½
„ 20. From Blancaeca to Yautepec ... ..	10	10
	105	86½

## XII

### ANGLING FOR TIGERS

1888

HERE comes old "Cooch-né," \* says A. fretfully, as he sits lazily smoking in complete *toilette-de-lit* one early morning in our shooting camp in India. Old Cooch-né was one of our shikaries, and had well earned his sobriquet; being a man of few words, his early report about the tigers was always made in those two short, but to us most expressive, monosyllables; and this had now happened on twenty-one mornings out of twenty-three of jungle life. We were told that no tiger had taken our bullocks, and frequently also that there were no "margs," Sahib! Our patience had long since given way, and no wonder, for no kill meant not only no beat that day, but a lazy, more or less sleepy, and certainly most monotonous existence in our tents, with books which we had already read over and over again. No wonder, then, that we had long ago lost our tempers, and received the shikaries with derisive shouts as they made the usual report morning after morning. The much-praised Job may have been, and no doubt was, a very patient individual, but even he would under these circumstances have used strong language, when, leave running short, all hope of a tiger had again that day been dashed to the ground with this exasperating Cooch-né report on the sixteenth consecutive morning! It upset our livers and tempers, at all events it did mine, and we were angry with everything. The trip had promised so well, thanks to friends who had chosen the best country and engaged the best shikaries for our party. The knowledge that we had all these advantages made us doubly angry that those annoying

\* Nothing.

tigers, of which there were many about, would not kill the lovely plump young bullocks we provided so liberally for their breakfast. Our conduct could not have been more polite or considerate, for to save his royal majesty all possible trouble, we even fastened what we hoped might prove an acceptable *plât* to a tree, so that it could not run away, and near some shady spot where it might be enjoyed and digested in peace, with running water to wash it down close at hand. What could a tiger want more? But evidently there was something wrong, for many times had tigers closely examined our bullocks, and even offered to play with them—poor brutes!—and performed a *pas-de-seul* for their edification, to judge from, in shikari language, the “margs” around. What could be the reason of this behaviour, so fatal to our tempers? It was very puzzling, but at last we knew. A more or less fair damsel, clothed in most brilliantly gorgeous raiment of every colour, loaded with rings in nose and ears, on wrists and ankles, and learned in tiger lore, appeared one morning and divulged the secret. This parti-coloured brinjarri (gipsy) wood-nymph at once explained the to us apparently extraordinary behaviour of these tigers by calmly stating that their mouths had not been opened! How simple it was! Of course, no animal can eat with its mouth shut. “Poor tigers, how thin they must be!” was feelingly remarked. However, on further inquiry, we found that the latter need not greatly distress us, for the brinjarries, to save their herds, had closed the tigers’ mouths against cattle only; they were still at liberty to eat pork and venison, but beef was forbidden. We pleaded that the tigers might be allowed a more liberal and varied diet, and at last the damsel offered, for a present, to see what could be done. On the following day, after old Cooch-né had made his usual report, our growling and grumbling was suddenly echoed by a long wail, followed by other heartrending sounds from many throats, becoming gradually louder and more distinct as the voices slowly approached. Presently appeared a whole lot of brinjarrie women all clothed in the brightest dresses, apparently made from what I believe ladies would call remnants, and all be-ringed, keeping step to a most mournful air more suggestive of a funeral than the dance they presently commenced. “They doing poojah, to open tiger’s mouth,” explained our boy. “He certainly would shut his ears were he here to hear,” irreverently

said B. The dancers continued their gyrations until his majesty's jaws were said to be widely open, but whether this was so or not, at all events the ladies retired only after a little silver had changed hands. It is wondrous the power of money! That even the sadly depreciated rupee had so mighty an influence on the appetite of a tiger and on the mechanism of his jaws that it could force the royal beast to eat certain articles of food and leave others was truly wonderful! After this impressive ceremony we were bound to feel convinced that all the tigers in the jungles around were roaming about open-mouthed seeking what they could devour, which we sincerely hoped might be beef, and nothing else for some time to come. But as too sudden a change of diet is good for no one, and therefore presumably hurtful to a tiger's digestion also, a day or two had yet to elapse before a kill was at last reported.

At our first dinner in camp a cherry tart had supplied the means of taking a peep into the future, of foretelling the good or bad luck in store for us with the tigers; on religiously counting the stones in fours: burra bagh, chota bagh, cheeta, cooch-né,\* we curiously enough all finished with a burra bagh! Still more curious to relate we did get a big tiger next day, and our faith in cherries and their stones was rampant. Cherry tart was voted a standing dish without dissentient voice, but for some unknown reason after the first evening the stones seemed always multiples of four, and we soon got to hate the innocent fruit and the very sound of cooch-né echoed infallibly by the shikari next morning.

I very much doubt if the particular method of shooting tigers of necessity in vogue in this part of India (Deccan) truly deserves the name of sport. It reminds one too strongly of the Thames angler who patiently sits on his box and apparently spends his time in a somnolent condition with occasional lucid intervals in which he baits his hook, and on rare occasions pulls out a fish. He, at all events, has the advantage of watching the whole process from the bait entering the water to the fish leaving it struggling on the hook.

We tie our bullocks to a tree at night, leave them there and go in the early morning to see whether we have had a bite; if not, as is nearly always the case, we untie our bait and go home,

\* Large tiger, little tiger, leopard, nothing.

our occupation gone for the day. We see nothing of the tiger's nibble or the process by which the bait is seized and carried off. The interest lies solely in the visit to the bullocks in the early hours, and this very soon palls when day after day the bait is found untouched and lively. The shikaries very naturally object to disturbing the tiger jungle by going after other game, and during the hot weather stalking deer, &c., is out of the question, the ground being thickly covered with dry leaves, rendering silent walking totally impossible. Nothing remains but to stay in camp and spend the hours in sleep and reading, until, in the afternoon perhaps, you shoot a duck or two on the bank, or some snipe in the paddy-field, should either be near; or you accompany the shikaries and watch them bait their hooks, a proceeding generally objected to as unnecessarily disturbing the ground. I grant that when posted on a tree or rock, if the former be not too shaky, or the latter too hot, it is a magnificent sight to see a tiger break cover and a glorious satisfaction to see him roll over to one's shot, but the method of arriving at this desirable end is too mechanical, and nearly devoid of all that which constitutes real sport. When after many days' weary waiting, perhaps running into weeks even, at last a kill is reported, you are marched off to the jungle and climb up into a tree where you are perfectly safe from the reach of a tiger. The animal, sleepy and lazy after its heavy meal, is then beaten towards you and, if lucky, you kill it. Here is none of the excitement of tracking and that of following a wild beast into its own jungles, of pitting your endurance and knowledge of woodcraft against the sagacity and cunning of the animal on its own ground, with the certain element of danger when it comes to the final scene. This which makes real sport so fascinating is totally absent. The only danger which we encountered was to my mind not so much from the wounded tiger which we had to follow on foot to kill, but from the shikaries, who, with the muzzles of the spare rifles at full cock in most uncomfortable proximity to one's spine, would follow immediately behind us, not to mention the chance of tumbling out of the tree.

However, as bad luck cannot last for ever, so before long we got a bite and our bait was carried off. Even the shikari's generally immobile features wore a smile and everybody was

delighted. The chance of bagging a tiger woke us all out of our normal lethargic condition.

After some difficulty about sixty beaters were collected; those who had come without tom-toms or other means of making hideous noises, were provided with policemen's rattles to add variety to the music with which the sleeping tiger was to be awakened, all received a gunwad, to be afterwards exchanged for pay. The shikaries took a supply of fireworks made of the hollow rind of the bael fruit filled with powder; gunboys shouldered rifles, the luncheon basket and other necessaries were not forgotten, and at last the procession started, led by the village shikari in whose district we were. This official's outfit consisted of a dirty pugree, a similar loin-cloth, a long matchlock bound with brass and further adorned with rows of jackal teeth surrounding the pan; a gazelle horn and a cocoanut covered with cheetah-skin contained powder, a leather bag bullets; in his hand he carried a piece of smouldering cowdung wherewith to light the match and fire his piece.

Met by our shikaries after a long tramp, we were told that the tiger had not as usual lain up near his kill, but was taking his siesta near the foot of a small hill to which he had been tracked. So on we went once more, cheered, however, by the large "margs" deeply graven on the soft soil. At last we leave our horses, and, after drawing lots with bits of grass for places, go on alone with the shikaries, and a few men carrying a ladder, spare rifles, &c. Three trees are chosen some distance apart, and facing the hill about to be beaten, and, if not already tenanted by red ants, are occupied according to lot by the three would-be tiger-slayers. Helped up by a ladder, we make ourselves as comfortable as the cramped, unsteady, and more or less dangerous position will admit of. It being noon and the hot weather, one has every opportunity to perspire freely during the two hours or more which are usually passed on these lofty perches. A long time elapses before the beaters get into position behind the rocky hill, the base of which is hidden from view by brushwood and low trees, the tiger's present sleeping-place we hope, so there is ample time to study the surroundings. Everything as yet is still and sweltering in the heat. A few lungoors sit in the shady nooks on the face of the hill, lizards

glide noiselessly over the burning rocks close by, and perhaps a honey-sucker, sparkling like a gem, pays you a visit in your tree. The only sound which breaks the present almost painful silence is the monotonous "took, took" of the little copper-smith calling from some adjacent tree-top, until suddenly a most fiendish noise startles the ear, and a long line of beaters appears on the crest of the hill. Rattles, tom-toms, yells, and fireworks, a most powerful quartette, sufficient almost to waken the dead. But at first it only disturbs the meditations of a numerous family of lungoors, the members of which come bustling down helter-skelter, the babies clinging to the mother's belly. A peacock or two, gloriously splendid in the bright sun, flies past, and then apparently the jungle is emptied of all animal life. The beaters, however, work harder than ever; bundles of burning grass are thrown down the face of the hill, fireworks pop off in all directions, and tom-toms and rattles have apparently gone mad, but nothing further comes out. When almost all hope has vanished, a large tiger suddenly leaves the covert at a smart run, and making for some bare rocks passes within forty yards of C. Then rapidly three emotions pass in succession through C.'s mind, each one most vividly and acutely felt. Admiration of the beauty of the royal beast as it rushes past; anxiety as to hitting it, and intense satisfaction if successful, or intense mortification and misery if the shot be a miss. The latter is to my mind the sharpest and the most lasting; a miss under those circumstances is simply—no word is bad enough. In this particular case a lucky bullet broke the tiger's spine, and he fell at once and remained on the spot; but it sometimes happens that a tiger has been shot at by some one else before it is bowled over by the next gun. Then follow some trying moments, before it is finally settled who first hit the animal, and whose tiger it therefore is. This is a delicate arbitration, not always arranged to everybody's satisfaction. The dead tiger brought in on an elephant always has a great reception from the villagers; he is accompanied to the camp by young and old, all beating tom-toms and shouting. As soon as the tiger is on the ground the ladies touch the animal and their foreheads, and make their children, however small, do the same, thereby offering a prayer to the god of tigers to spare them and their kind.

The beaters are paid, the shikaries receive their sheep and brandy, there is feasting in camp, and every one is happy, but none so greatly as he who, dinner over, pays another visit to the tiger, perhaps his first, a trophy of which he may well be proud. If it depended more on one's own exertion, and if one's qualities as a shikari were tested more, and brought into play to arrive at his happy consummation, the enjoyment would be vastly enhanced, but unfortunately in the part of India spoken of this is impossible.



### XIII

## THE SHOOTING-BOOT'S LAMENT

1890

**O**H! the base ingratitude of man! His utter disregard for the feelings of old friends when these are no longer of use to him! After years of faithful service, and service rendered to my master's complete satisfaction, I am now, when old, and when well-deserved rest should be mine, literally kicked off and thrown to some servant, to know with him no peace until the last thread which holds the sole to my body shall have parted. Even then no decent burial will be mine, but piecemeal shall I be thrown aside, probably on some dung-heap, parted for ever from my faithful friend who has been at my side all through life. He and I were called into existence together, and, constant companions during life, we shared all hard knocks and carried the same burden through all the rough vicissitudes prepared for us by fate. The base ingratitude of man to us, his faithful friends—a pair of shooting-boots! Why should we—I speak in the royal plural—not be rewarded after a life of toil with a place of well-deserved rest in our old days in the warm gun-room where all the old guns are kept, treasured up and carefully tended—guns many of which we have carried uncomplainingly all day long, in all weathers, and over all varieties of ground?

May our successors, who, innocent of what is before them, are even now treading in our footsteps, avenge us by finding out those tender spots in their master's feet, which we, grateful for the good treatment we received when still in the vigour and beauty of our youth, took such pride in avoiding and carefully guarding with our very bodies.

Our life certainly has been a hard one. But for the long rest during half the year even we, with our tough constitutions, could not have stood it so long. Out for long, long days, my faithful companion and I, ministering to our master's pleasure in wet and snow, chilled and soaked through and through, our skin knocked off by sharp stones, or torn by those horrid prickly shrubs, we, on return home, the tight lacing being at once undone, were taken off and placed in a nice warm place, our bent and sinking frames supported by wooden trees, and we were fed with fat which soaked into our very nature and gave us new life and made us sleek and fair to look upon. Sometimes, though rarely, the man who took us in charge when we had as usual done our duty, suffering probably from bad temper or neglected education, would almost roast us at the fire, or give us bad and evil-smelling food. Then in revenge for such ill-deserved treatment we would harden our nature and shrink into ourselves, and afterwards give pain to our master, in order that he might visit his anger upon the careless servant. This never failed, and it delighted us to listen to the lecture read, although the language used was none of the best. After a time we would recover our temper and smooth out the wrinkles of our displeasure, and everything would be forgiven and forgotten. The more excuses were made about our condition the richer would become master's language, and we must say that he was a proficient in the art. When anything went wrong, if he shot badly and some one else killed the birds he had missed, he would stamp his foot and shake our very soles, and perhaps bruise our toes by vigorously kicking some unoffending stone or anything that came in the way. We never could make out why he should vent his rage on us, for never was it our fault. What we hated most, however—and then we really had a hard time and suffered agonies—was when after a long day in rough country and little to shoot, we were constantly knocked against every inequality of ground and tumbled into every hole, instead of being taken lightly over every obstacle, as had been the case in the morning. It was agony, and bruised us terribly. From past experience we would then long for a bird to get up, for a successful shot made master step carefully once more, thereby saving us many a hard knock and severe sprain. I remember during one of my frequent journeys I was wrapped up in paper,

embellished with a large illustrated advertisement—about cocoa, I think. It was the picture of a barrister in wig and gown drinking from a cup, and entitled "A Refresher." I told my companion of it afterwards while we were warming ourselves and drying near the fire, and now we long for a refresher in the shape of a bird when master gets tired, and regardless of our feelings stumbles about and against every mound and stone. In spite of our little troubles, we have always been fond of our owner; have, I say—until now, when, worn out in his service, we can stand no longer straight, when our nails have dropped out and our heels are worn down, he has thrown us aside to be worked to rags, day after day, and smeared with some foul compound, the very nature of which is revolting. He used to take such pride in us. Many a time has he praised us, looked at us with pleasure, and we have been photographed with him on several occasions. We suited him admirably, and never hurt him if we could help it. Dangers we have shared many, some terrible ones, and many a time have we jumped with fear, particularly when many rabbits were about, and a neighbour's gun pointed directly at us, instead of at the wretched, frightened animal which came so near us. Master generally wore white gaiters, to show his neighbours where we were, which gaiters, though often our safeguard, we, however, greatly disliked, for they shut out our view, and sometimes even pinched us. We always had a spite against them, so one day when they got peppered by a sweeping shot up a ride down which we were slowly walking, and we escaped, we danced for joy, but master apparently took their part, for he shouted aloud and used very bad language—only audible to us, however. Never shall we forget the fright we got one morning, for our very lives were in imminent peril. We had been shooting partridges when an old gentleman, whom we afterwards heard called a long-winded bore, singled out our master to tell him a story which apparently had to be told at close quarters. The others of the party stood around. The old gentleman had his gun under his arm, the muzzles only a yard from and pointed straight at us, when to our horror we saw that the fearful things were at full cock. A cold shiver ran through us and we edged away; but the man, now thoroughly engrossed with his story, could only tell it when directly facing master. Those horrid muzzles again

looked us full in the face ; again my companion edged away. I followed, they still pursued us ; the movements of flight and pursuit became quicker until we began rapidly to revolve in circles. The old creature, unconscious of the terrible danger threatening us, went on with his tiresome story ; it was tempting providence, and at last we ran away to look for some imaginary covey which was supposed to have settled in an adjoining field. The others of the party seemed to enjoy it, but we are not likely ever to forget those awful moments. We have never seen that old man since.

Master had another pair of shooting-boots, but during the busy seasons we hardly ever met. We were out one day and they were kept at home to recover from their fatigues, and *vice versa*. But when the shooting was over, we stood alongside each other and had many a talk together, while other boots and shoes, thin wretched looking things, made apparently for show only, and not for hard work, were ranged around and listened. The other shooting-boots were younger than we ; it was their first season, and everything was new to them, so they enjoyed listening to us who had seen so much of the world.

Now, alas ! all is over ; life and its pleasures have ceased for us ; we have fought a good fight, have carried off many a wound in the service of our master ; our only reward, crippled as now we are, unceasing toil and suffering, until the menial whose feet we at present cover shall cast us off and fling our shattered bodies to some unhallowed spot as even to him of no further use.

## XIV

### HER MAJESTY'S MISSION TO MATABELELAND

1890

**I**T having been decided to send a letter from Her Majesty the Queen to Lobengula, King of the Matabeles, on behalf of the British South Africa Company, to which a Royal charter had just been granted, the choice of messengers fell upon two officers, one warrant officer, and one trooper of the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards. In order the more to impress his sable Majesty with the importance of the mission, the letter was to be delivered by these delegates in full levée dress, with cuirasses in addition. The letter advised Lobengula to put his trust in the agents of the British South Africa Company, in which Her Majesty had the greatest confidence. Having made full inquiries into the proposed scheme of the Company, and about the men intended to carry it out, the Queen had seen fit to grant to it her Royal charter. The officials appointed would relieve Lobengula of all trouble likely to arise between the white people and the natives. The Rev. J. G. Moffat, who had already proved himself a friend to Lobengula and to his people, would remain in Matabeleland as the British representative, and communicate to the King from time to time the Queen's words. A pleasant voyage to the Cape in that most comfortable ship the *Hawarden Castle*, five hours in Cape Town, and thirty-two in the mail train brought us on December 14th to the diamond city, Kimberley, where, as everywhere else, we were most hospitably received. Two days later a four-wheeled coach, specially set apart for the mission, and drawn by eight mules, stood ready at our host's door, gorgeously painted in red and yellow, and honoured by the

royal "V.R." and crown in gold. It was somewhat overloaded with baggage, which had been arranged round the sides, on the roof, and behind, while a canteen dangled underneath, in happy ignorance of all the stumps and stones waiting to make impressions upon it on the road. We started on our long journey to Bulawayo, the Matabele capital, 850 miles away, with the good wishes of our new friends, who all hoped that we would soon shake down. This process commenced at once and continued for many days. It was very pleasant travelling, and the climate most beautiful. A cool breeze tempered the heat of the day, while the nights were delightful, making sleep in the open most enjoyable. Our road lay over the regular post-cart route to Palapye, Khama's Mangwato capital, 650 miles from Kimberley. During the first part of the journey we stopped for meals at the regular halting-places, generally traders' stores, afterwards in the veldt, where we prepared our own food and enjoyed it doubly, while the mules had a roll and a feed on the then luxuriant grass. The post-cart takes, according to the time-table, six and a half days' travelling with relays day and night, and did really do so at that time under the excellent management of Mr. Burnett. However, afterwards our experience was very different. We passed through Vryburg, capital of British Bechuanaland, the seat of the Administrator, Sir Sidney Shippard, K.C.M.G., a wretched town of a few scattered houses, but possessing a gold mine in the hotel bar. After some delay we reached Mafeking, in the Protectorate, six miles from the Transvaal border. Small at present—it was only created during Sir Samuel Warren's time—this town is certain to have a great future before it as a forwarding centre on the road north to the countries about to be opened out, Matabele and Mashonaland. It will be a station on the new railway now being constructed from Kimberley towards the Zambezi, of which the first section is about to be opened. Already large godowns are springing up, and the Standard Bank of South Africa has lately opened a branch office; in fact, everybody is preparing for a very busy time. An excellently supplied market is held every morning, everything, however, being sent in from the adjacent Transvaal. There is an extraordinary want of enterprise, it seemed to us, among the Europeans in Bechuanaland. Nowhere do they

attempt to grow vegetables even for their own use; no, they prefer almost to go without, as is the case at Vryburg. It is true that water is scarce in the whole of the country; rivers, although swollen after rain, are soon dry again, and rain is never abundant. Yet water can always be obtained by digging; there is plenty at a reasonable depth—windmills would pump it up, dams would prevent the rain-water from being wasted, and be of the utmost value to the gardener and settler. The water scarcity has been a great bar to agricultural settlements. Yet the country is not drier than Australia, where, thanks to wells and dams, large sheep farms flourish.

The whole country is covered with grass and bush, and would be—with water—a magnificent field for the farmer. At present the veldt is only able to support the cattle, sheep, and goats of the native tribes, and to grow barely sufficient corn for their use. Instead of being forced to import maize and corn, a little enterprise would soon reverse the case. The native cattle do very well; they are used for food and waggon teams, while their hides are sold to European traders. A heavy import duty of £3 was imposed on every head of cattle brought into the Transvaal, but during the late famine this prohibitive tax was removed, with the result that cattle bought for £2 in Bechuanaland were sold at Johannesburg for £8. About seven miles from Mafeking are the gold mines of Malmani. Although not at present worked to any great extent, some of the mines are rich in gold, and the country around, being well supplied with water, is very fertile—as, indeed, is all the northern part of the country of the Boers. Leaving the native reserve of the Baralong chief, Montsoia, near Mafeking, we in succession pass through the capitals of three other native chiefs all living in security under the protectorate of England—Batween, of the Bankwaketse at Kanya; Sechele, chief of the Backwena at Molopolole; and Linchwe, of the Backatla at Mochudi. Living with each is a missionary, to whom to turn for advice, spiritual and temporal, and a European trader, who from his store supplies the people with all they may require—except drink, which the chiefs themselves in their wisdom asked to have excluded when they came under the protectorate. The rocky hills upon which these capitals are built guaranteed them security against their restless neighbours in former times—a

measure now, of course, no longer necessary. Churches have been built, mainly with money subscribed by the chiefs; they are regularly attended by them and by more of their subjects than they are able to accommodate. Batween even, in his religious zeal, allows no Sunday travelling, the forfeit of part of the ox team being the penalty for disobeying this law. Trade is very limited, chiefly in hides exchanged for cloth, knives, and other articles of clothing and of food. Poor Sechele, now over sixty years of age, is suffering from dropsy of long standing. We found him lying in the verandah of his house bemoaning his helpless state. Linchwe was ploughing among his people in the mealie fields. Rain was very much wanted in this part of the country, and, this being the season, was anxiously looked for. In some districts no grain could be sown in the parched and baked soil, a most serious matter, for the country had suffered most severely from drought only the year before, when almost the entire crops had failed. What would not dams and wells with a little extra energy do here! The few windmills and ploughs are all American, as also the hoes and spades; they are cheaper, I suppose, than English ones, but what a pity that British articles should be driven from the markets of our own colonies. Although gold is supposed to exist in various parts of British Bechuanaland, and although concessions have been granted and companies floated, we were informed that but little had up to the present been found. It is probably not a rich country, except perhaps for farming and cattle under different circumstances.

At last, on January 6th, we reached Palapye, the Mangwato capital, the headquarters of the Bechuanaland Exploration Company. This body holds a concession for trading and the working of any gold its agents may find in the territories ruled over by the chief Khama. About eight months ago the capital was at Shoshong, thirty miles away. There the people were crowded together, but, in an almost impregnable position, were safe from the attacks of the dreaded Matabele. Since the extension of the protectorate over Khama's country, and the formation of a police camp near at hand—at Elebe, sixty miles distant—the people have begun to feel more safe, so a general move was ordered to their present most carefully chosen quarters. While water was very scarce at Shoshong, it is in



plenty here in wells and running streams; the arid tree and grassless country round the old capital has been exchanged for a lofty plateau covered with trees, and overlooking an immense plain stretching away as far as the eye can see. The huts here are not crowded together; every one has space around for a small garden wherein to grow a little corn. It is indeed a change for the better, which must be appreciated by every one. Khama is the father of his people, a most thorough gentleman in every way. So much has been written in his honour that I can add nothing, except to say that no one has exaggerated in singing his praises. His right-hand man is his faithful friend and adviser the Rev. Mr. Hepburn, and to him in an indirect manner are due many of the benefits the chief extends to his people. A thorough Christian, he observes the Sunday strictly in his capital; himself a teetotaler, he allows no spirituous liquor of any description into his country—not even native beer is allowed to be brewed or drunk. He has done away with witchcraft, formerly very rife, and with various heathenish rites and ceremonies. All nationalities are safe in Khama's country; he is their father, as he is that of his own people. Almost all subjects of the chief are living on the Palapye plateau, only mealie fields and cattle stations being in the plains below; but as the feeling of security from Matabele raids becomes more assured the people, no doubt, will spread out more, and villages spring up where now only temporary stations under bushmen exist.

The trade with the natives consists mainly in hides and the skins of leopards, jackals, deer, wild cats, &c., to be afterwards made by them into karosses (rugs) for the markets in the Transvaal and Cape Colony. The railway as it is gradually pushed into these countries will doubtless be the means of developing their resources, and the natives will soon appreciate the benefits to be derived from trade with Europeans, the result being that the breeding of cattle will rapidly increase, as also the production of grain.

After a fortnight's detention at Palapye, in consequence of the non-arrival of some important despatch, the mission to Lobengula was at last able to commence the remaining stage of its journey, the last 200 miles to Bulawayo. The road ran through m'pani bush and high grass; everything was green, and looked

its best under the influence of rain and sunshine. But as the rain had beautified the country, it had made the roads worse than ever, washed them out, leaving great boulders which severely tried the centre of gravity of our coach ; it had filled the great mud-holes in the low-lying fields, into which our wheels sank deeply, often necessitating the use of spade and the unloading of all the baggage. Further, the trees on either side had not been sufficiently cut away, and several times our boxes were swept off by some strong projecting branch, to the great danger of their contents. And yet, against all expectation, the coach bravely stood up and never upset, a wonderful performance. After crossing the Shashi River, running with beautifully clear water, we entered the disputed territory, lying between that river and the Matloutsi, both tributaries of the Limpopo (crocodile). This track of fertile country, probably very rich in minerals also, is claimed both by Lobengula and Khama, though virtually the latter is left in undisturbed possession, his cattle stations being scattered all over it. Belonging as it no doubt does to Khama, its mineral rights are part of the Bechuanaland Exploration Company's concession, but for some political reasons and to prevent complications they have not up to the present been worked. This disputed territory and its concession were the cause of the late disagreement among the directors of the Exploration Company, followed as it was by the resignation of those at the Cape. As a temporary measure a Port Elizabeth firm undertook to carry on the work, but before leaving the Cape we were told that Khama had cancelled the concession—probably only the trading part of it.

Tati, just across the Matabele border, came next, lying in a hollow between two plateaux, and therefore very unhealthy. Here are the headquarters of the Tati Exploration and Gold Mining Company. The settlement is surrounded by rich gold-fields, none richer than the "Monarch." Very little work has been or is being done up to the present, but measures are now being taken to open up the last-named mine and to thoroughly work the others. The concession was granted many years ago by Lobengula, whose soldiers have many a time threatened the settlement and interfered with the diggers—jealous probably of the presence of the white man in their country. Two envoys of the King were here awaiting our arrival, sent by Lobengula,

to conduct the mission safely to the capital. We arrived there after a rough journey through very pretty hilly and fertile country on January 27th, and put up in the "Royal Charter" enclosure.

The King was staying at Enganine, seven miles to the south, in one of the military kraals. His Majesty having fixed the next day for our reception, we, arrayed in full uniform, were driven over early in the morning. Lobengula was sitting in a large perambulator—he suffers from gout—in an extensive cattle kraal containing many oxen, and we were duly presented to him. A curious scene in South Central Africa! We in our magnificent uniform, the King clothed in nothing but a Royal Navy cap with a blue ostrich feather, and a small strip of monkey skin in front! He is enormously fat, has a cruel, sensual expression, small eyes, very large lips, and altogether we were not at all impressed by his ostensibly regal presence. Presents having been given, and Her Majesty's letter read and translated, a large wooden dish containing cooked beef was brought. After the King had seized a large piece of fat the dish passed round, and soon everybody was busy devouring the excellent meat with the aid of fingers and teeth. Presently a slave girl brought an immense tin vessel full of native beer. After she had drank thereof—to lessen the chance of its containing poison—it passed from mouth to mouth until we could do no more. This beer, made from Kaffir corn, if not kept too long, is very palatable. Of a thick, white consistence, it is most nourishing, hence the weight of all who drink of it largely. The King has his own pot and special beer girl of large dimensions, who shares with him the contents. During the interview men were continually coming and going, all approaching in a stooping attitude shouting the King's praises—the royal title, Kumalo, Son of the Sun, Eater of Men, King of Kings, &c., &c. The proceeding was the same at all our seven or eight interviews with Matabele Majesty, each of which lasted four or five hours. He took great interest in the uniforms, and had everything explained to him. On our departure Lobengula was presented with a complete suit of uniform—which, by the way, he will have to let out considerably. Afterwards the Bamangwato chief, Khama, received a similar present, and thus both were enrolled among the members of the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards. We had arrived at a most fortunate moment, for in a few days the annual Matabele great war-dance was to

commence, a sight which far exceeded our expectations in its magnitude and savage picturesqueness.

The country is divided into four great divisions, all containing a certain number of military kraals; in each is a regiment which gives its name to the location. The King is absolute head of this military depotism; the different indunas, who are his lieutenants, are answerable to him to the smallest detail. He is the rainmaker; witchcraft and its agents rule the country and are almost entirely answerable for the dreadful horrors which are perpetrated every year, wholesale slaughter of entire kraals and horrid murders of individuals and their families. Talk to people who had lived for many years in the country, read the books and writings of men who from personal knowledge of actual facts can be believed, and no one will doubt that these bloody massacres are of very frequent occurrence. The Mashonas, industrious agriculturists and workers in iron, have almost been exterminated by the many Matabele raids, as also is the case with the original inhabitants of the southern part of the country—the Makalakas. Few remain; those who do are hidden away in rocky hills. It is quite time, from a humanitarian point of view, that this cruel military despotism inflamed by witchcraft was broken. Such destruction would be an unmixed blessing to thousands of aborigines of the soil usurped and ravaged by Lobengula's father and by himself. The British South Africa Company, under its Royal charter, has now taken over the concessions granted by Lobengula to individuals, and is about to make a road into Mashonaland to work the gold which is known to exist there in the greatest abundance. The King has given his permission, and it is to be hoped that the somewhat unruly young soldier party will not put obstacles in the way. Mashonaland lies 5,000 feet above the sea; its climate is very well suited to Europeans, it is abundantly supplied with running water, and is very fertile, growing rice, corn, and plenty of timber, while cattle thrive everywhere. All authorities, such as Baines, Selous, Taylor, Mandy, &c., are agreed about the healthiness, the richness in gold and iron of the country now devastated by Lobengula's brutal soldiery. Matabeleland itself is traversed by reefs of gold-bearing quartz, but no one has dared to break the King's law by meddling with it. The crops of mealies and Kaffir corn looked magnificent as we passed through, and large

herds of cattle and goats roamed among the luxuriant herbage. Lobengula has a great regard for Europeans and trusts them, and no one has ever been permitted to harm one of them. Whether all the indunas and young soldiers are of the same mind with their King in the step he has now taken in permitting the Englishman to enter the country to exploit the gold, &c., remains to be seen. The question will soon be solved.

Her Majesty's letter having been delivered, we began to look forward to the annual Matabele war-dance, said to be one of *the* two great sights in Africa, the other being the Victoria Falls on the Zambezi. The little dance precedes the big one, and had already taken place. The latter commences immediately after full moon, when the first fruits of the fields are ripe—generally vegetable marrow—a feast of thanksgiving really for the harvest. Still several days passed, but at last the rumour was abroad that the King would arrive at his capital on the morrow, and early on that day the soldiers of the Bulawayo Regiment, arrayed in their war-dress, went over to Enganine to fetch him. About noon strings of queens—Lobengula has 82—slaves, and beer girls, appeared in the distance, shortly followed by warriors in their waving black ostrich plumes, shouting the King's praises and marching all round the wagon, which was drawn by twelve black oxen; in it His Majesty reposed. The sable plumes, the black teams, and slow pace of the procession recalled nothing so much as a funeral. Advanced parties of all the regiments destined to take part in the war-dance had already arrived, and were busily engaged in constructing temporary huts of sticks and grass in separate camps for their different corps. The King being desirous that as many men as could be collected should take part in the show, in order to make as great an impression as possible, the plain surrounding the ridge upon which Bulawayo stands soon became dotted with the various regimental camps. Unfortunately, during all this time we had the full benefit of the rainy season, and the soldiers must have had a most disagreeable sojourn in their leaky huts.

During the next four days the regiments poured into their camps, bringing a number of slave girls and a few head of cattle with them, and we in the Royal charter enclosure had no peace. All day long it was crowded with queens and soldiers, all intent on presents, which were freely given, so that we soon became very

friendly. The queens coveted sweets and beads, the soldiers knives, cloth, food, and tinder-boxes. In the morning the regiments went through their drill, keeping up all the time a monotonous song, with the following meaning probably—"Give us food, O King, and beer, for our stomachs are empty." I had better at once describe the Matabele war-dress, which is very handsome and most picturesque; it makes the men look very broad and tall. A hood and cape of black ostrich feathers covers head and shoulder; on the former waves a long blue crane feather, while from the point of the latter hangs a white feather. A heavy kilt is worn in many folds, made sometimes of blue monkey, sometimes of leopard-skin, the loins being adorned with rolls of blue cotton cloth and coils of beads. A stiff white frill made from the ends of oxen's tails is fastened above the elbows and knees, while metal anklets encircle the legs and ring when the wearers dance. In his left hand the soldier carries an ox-hide shield, 5 to 6 feet in height, and two assegais, in his right a heavy stick or the dreaded knobkerry. A Matabele warrior is very striking in his savage picturesqueness! The shields vary in colour in the different divisions of the army, some being black, others black and white, white, or brown and white. The royal shield is black with a small spot of white. At the King's invitation we witnessed one of his father's old regiments dance before him, the Mahlahlenlele (Pioneers), and on another occasion he called out his bodyguard, the dreaded Imbizu regiment. This is the crack corps; the men are all well-born of the old Zulu stock. It has a very bad name for bloodthirsty cruelty, and is always sent where dirty work is to be done. The regiment takes the post of honour in the body of the army when drawn up for battle in the Zulu half-moon formation. At these entertainments the King sat in his perambulator in the primitive costume already mentioned, his head being sheltered from the sun by an umbrella gorgeous with every colour of the rainbow. We in our thick uniforms had to roast in the sun, often a very trying time. But now all the regiments had arrived, as also the dance, witch and rain doctors, the most important people in the kingdom during the week of the war-dance. The opening ceremony is the corn-dance, which took place during the afternoon. Attached to every shield, and running through loops at the back of it, is a stick carrying at its upper end a jackal's tail. These

sticks, detached from the shields, were borne aloft by every man as the regiments filed one after another into the King's presence, and were moved in the air to resemble waving ears of corn to the accompaniment of a monotonous song and slow dance—a thanksgiving for the harvest and request to the King for plenty of corn and food.

About nine o'clock on the following morning a messenger arrived from Lobengula requesting the presence of the mission at the big dance. Arrival in full uniform, we rode straight to the King's house, a three-roomed shanty built of mud bricks. His Majesty had not yet risen, but asked us in; he was lying on some skin rugs on the ground, a dirty pillow on a guncase supporting his head; a dirty blanket his only garment and covering. Close by stood a large picture of our Queen, while schoolroom coloured prints of lion, giraffe, rhinoceros adorned the walls. Around lay sacks of grain, cases of tobacco, guns and rifles, while a pet goat scrambled over all. His Majesty was in very good spirits, and attempted to count up his queens, but had forgotten all beyond the sixty-first.

The whole European community having assembled, we were regaled with beef and beer as usual, and thus fortified, walked into the big enclosure where the dance was to take place, after the King had been wheeled, dressed or undressed as before, into the sacred cow kraal. Here, attended by the witch doctors, he carried out the rites of witchcraft, and when he appeared afterwards his body was smeared over with some evil compound prepared from crocodiles' livers and other ingredients. The men were now rapidly collecting; regiment after regiment marched into the vast enclosure in full war dress, sometimes preceded, sometimes followed by a number of lads, soldiers that were to be, in undress uniform, with only shield and stick, but attended always by a crowd of young women. These ladies had followed the corps from home—baggage animals of the army. Gradually and quietly the regiments were got into their places until at last the army was drawn up in an enormous half-moon, very deep in the body and gradually tapering off in the horns. It was a most impressive sight—this Matabele army in its picturesque dress, 11,000 to 12,000 men standing so close together that their shields overlapped. We had taken up our position near the cow kraal, where the King was still busy preparing witchcraft

medicine, when a rush, sudden and unexpected, was made by the whole army towards where Lobengula was known to be. Not thinking it desirable to run away, we stood our ground, and were at once enveloped by the right wing, surrounded many deep by warriors waving their sticks and shouting to the King for corn. The behaviour of the men was greatly to their credit—indeed, an example to many a supposed civilised nation. The men did their utmost to prevent our being too much pressed upon; they did not annoy us in any way, and when we joined in their cry for corn seemed greatly amused. I cannot help wondering what would have happened to two Matabele warriors in full uniform in the rush of a London mob, and greatly fear that but few of their feathers would have remained on their backs, and that they would not have escaped, as we did, almost untouched. The rush over, the men took up their former positions, singing the monotonous but melodious song, beating time with their feet and striking their shields with the sticks. A procession of queens now appeared, led by Toakay, head queen of the capital. Got up in all their finery in every colour of the rainbow, gorgeous bead aprons, coils of beads as anklets, bracelets, necklets, and hanging round the waist, which was further adorned with coloured cloth, with orange kerchief (the royal colour) over the shoulder, and dozens of blue jay's feathers stuck singly into the hair, these royal ladies danced into the enclosure to a most grotesque measure, two and two, smiling at first, presently puffing and blowing—the most ridiculously comical spectacle it is possible to imagine. The poor ladies danced up to the troops and in front of the ranks, like a flight of brilliant butterflies fluttering from flower to flower. The chief indunas every now and then advanced towards the King, who now was sitting in front of the cow kraal, shouting his praises. A very heavy thunderstorm in the middle of the day somewhat spoiled the performance, for the drenched and dripping warriors had lost some of their ardour; still they went on singing until late into the afternoon. The King, unfortunately, did not don his uniform, nor did he throw the assegai wherewith in former years he notified the direction in which the armies were to march in search of rapine, conquest, and plunder.

During the following morning His Majesty was busily engaged choosing the cattle to be slaughtered, and these were presently



killed by assegai to the number of from 400 to 500. The flesh, cut up, was heaped up in several huts and left there in order that during the night the spirits of the Matabele fathers should take what they wanted. The King himself was rubbed over with gall, while his sons and daughters had to wear armlets of intestines until night. On the next day the meat is cooked in 300 to 400 enormous earthenware pots, and divided among the regiments, who devour it during the following night and day, quenching their thirst with large quantities of beer, brought in calabashes from every kraal in the country by strings of girl slaves.

All the meat eaten and beer consumed, the regiments take their departure, first setting fire to their huts. Owing to the almost constant rain these would not burn satisfactorily, but smouldered on for days.

Thus ended the big Matabele war-dance of nearly 12,000 men; a brave show and wondrous sight, a powerful engine, and in a sudden rush a dangerous foe. As the assegai was not thrown this year it is to be hoped that the army will rest in peace, and allow the people around to remain in peace also. With the influx of the white men into the country even the unruly war party may gradually settle down to rest, and as its power gradually decreases, and with it witchcraft and its attendant horrors, the now down-trodden remains of what was once an industrious agricultural people will rise once more. Their lives and property assured, they will gladly work for wages under the white man, till the ground once more, and derive great advantages from trade in cattle and corn in a market almost at their door. If the British South Africa Company accomplishes this it will indeed have proved a blessing, and its reward should and will be great.

## XV

### A ROUGH JOURNEY

1891

**T**HE following is a sketch of a journey of about 900 miles from Bulawayo, Lobengula's capital in Matabeleland, to Kimberley, made early in February, in the above year. It was during the wet season, and although the country looked its best, the roads were very bad, the rivers treacherous, and, above all, the terrible horse-sickness at its worst. We left Bulawayo with our wagon drawn by six mules, all that remained, while my companion and I rode horses, though not for long. Both died on the first day, but we borrowed another from a friend at the capital and bestrode him in turns. Nothing particular happened to the wagon except that the mules bolted twice with the fore carriage leaving the body ignominiously in the road, the jerk sending the drivers into the mud to where by right the centre mules should have been. The first time we straightened the bent pin by means of fire and hammering with stones; the second time it broke and nothing remained to be done except to send back to Bulawayo for another. Then we struggled on again in the black mud, and on the third day were fortunate enough to save a native's life by filling him with goat's flesh, bartered shortly before for beads. This man, unable to accompany his former companions to Johannesburg on account of an injured leg, was nearly dead from starvation, and began to devour the goat's head, hair and all, immediately after the animal had been killed. At the Tati gold-fields (100 miles) we only stayed a night, and left next morning for the Shashi River, near which we met Khama's son Sekomo with wagons, horses, hunters, &c., ready to take us for a shooting trip into the bush bordering on

the Kalahari. We only saw and bagged a few eland, being obliged very soon to give it up on account of the great loss in horse flesh. Horse after horse died of the dread disease, which in that year was most prevalent and deadly. A terrible thing it is to see a horse afflicted; if loose he generally trots into camp as if to ask for help; he looks frightened, the eyes are swollen, his flanks move with hurried breathing. He is restless, stamps on the ground, snorts as if to clear his nose. As the disease advances thick white foam comes from the nostrils increasing rapidly in quantity, the horse is in an agony of suffocative terror, throws himself on the ground, as rapidly to bound up again, and paralysis of the lungs closes the painful scene. That it is malaria there can be no doubt, but no method of cure has as yet been proved. A very few get over it and are then "salted"; these have always a dull, lifeless appearance, but even they are not absolutely safe from another attack.

The country looked very fresh and green, the maize fields were laden with golden fruit, and grass, many feet high and in bloom, clothed hill and dale, relieved here and there by patches of shiny m'opani bush and giraffe mimosas with fragrant flower. The rain had turned the country into a garden but made the roads very heavy indeed; the low-lying swampy meadows retarded progress greatly, and mud-holes were abundant, into which the wheels sank deeply, necessitating a great deal of hard work and unloading often to get the wagon through.

At last we arrived at Palatswie, the capital of Khama, that most charming man and kind ruler of his people, the Bamangwato. Here were the headquarters of the Bechuanaland Exploration Company, who run a mail coach down to Kimberley—650 to 700 miles—according to paper, in six days six hours, travelling night and day. I believe it is done easily now, but our memorable journey was made during the rains and altogether at a most unfavourable time, when horses and mules were dying all along the road and the coach management was changing hands.

The two-wheeled cart had a canvas roof and side curtains, and contained three benches, one behind the other, each intended for three persons. Thus, counting the two drivers, the cart carries nine people, and when full, which luckily it was not in our case, there is absolutely no room to move, every one is tightly

jammed in, the shins being in painful contact with the sharp edge of the bench in front. Add the constant jolting over terrible roads, over stones and boulders, up and down hill, the floundering through mud and rivers, and it is easy to understand that the journey is a thing to dread. It is no doubt trying enough when the cart arrives at Kimberley in the time named in the paper, but greatly worse was our case, when, owing to roads rendered deeper than ever by almost incessant rain, and the loss from horse-sickness of more than half the road teams, we had to struggle on for eight nights and eight days with horses and mules badly fed and worn to a shadow. The loss of horseflesh had not been made good—the Company had just passed into different management, and the wretched animals had to be flogged on when hardly able to move.

All the mules being dead at Palatswie, we left that town at 6.30 a.m. with a team of six trotting oxen, frequently changed for another, until we got mules at the Crocodile River (36 hours). The stations were about two hours apart, given good roads, but, of course, we took much longer before we got a fresh team, or at least what should have been one, for scarcity of horses and mules sadly interfered with all arrangements, and obliged the drivers frequently to take on the same team after but a short rest; or if not the entire team at all events several units of it! This happened all the way down to Kimberley; some horses had to do three stages and were only outspanned then to take the return coach back. It was truly a terrible time for horses.

During these halts—halts just long enough to stretch our sore and stiffened limbs—we had our meals, at first hastily prepared in the veld, afterwards ready for us in traders' houses or roadside hotels, and very grateful these refreshing pauses were. After a time we became more resigned to the cramped position and perpetual jolting, we learnt to save our shins from the sharp edge of the seat in front by interposing a rug, and to make a pillow by winding a coat round the iron support of the roof; by holding on we dozed off every now and then, until sharply awoke by a blow on the head, which important part had probably got into some curiously abnormal position and thereby into smart contact with either another head or with one of the many sharp angles of the cart. It rained almost

continuously on the next day, and the roads became, if possible, worse than ever, and our canvas roof and curtains proved anything but waterproof. The rain beat in everywhere and ran in little streams down our backs, but all attempts to dodge them proved futile. Towards night it became more unpleasant still, one of the horses broke down, making his fellow useless; it was pitch dark and impossible to see or find the way through the bush. We therefore pulled up near a tree and remained there for hours while it thundered and lightened, and rained in torrents. How miserable everything looked when momentarily lit up by the frequent flashes of lightning revealing the inky puddles and dripping grass, the shiny trees and miserable, shivering team! A scene of desolation everywhere. There was no getting away, so we also shivered and smoked and slumbered.

At daybreak another start was made, all of us very glad to get away, and about noon we outspanned at Molopolole, the capital of Sechele, chief of the Backwena. The rain continued, but cheered and refreshed by a good meal we drove on without loss of time and presently came to a river, which, owing to the heavy storm, had become a torrent, carrying with it trees and bush as it rushed madly along. As these rivers go down almost as quickly as they rise we waited patiently on the bank, watching the rapid fall of the water, until disturbed in our meditations by the proposal of the driver to attempt the passage. With grave misgivings as to the result, in we drove and got as far as the middle of the river, when, without a moment's notice, the leading mules were carried off their legs, then dragged the centre pair with them and turned the wheelers down-stream. Luckily, the latter kept their feet, and with the cart now offered less resistance to the rushing water; but for this the whole outfit would probably have been lost. We jumped out behind, and although hardly able to stand in the torrent, went to the assistance of the rapidly drowning mules which were hopelessly entangled in the harness. After some hard work everything was fished out, but landed, unfortunately, on the bank from which we had started. Taught by this damp lesson to be more patient and careful in the future, we made a big fire and some tea and dried ourselves and all our belongings. The poor mules were in a bad state, brimful of water, but they all

recovered except one, who, too exhausted, could not get rid of the deluge inside. He had to be left and once more we only had two pairs to drag the heavy cart along. The odd mule runs alongside one of the other pairs, but does no work. After dark we got safely to the other side, and luckily found at the next station a new team awaiting us.

Crossing the Kanya hills and the white, glistening quartz reefs showing plainly everywhere, we breakfasted luxuriously soon after at Mr. Williams' hospitable store in Batween's capital, and then left, much refreshed, for Mafeking, where we arrived next morning. All slept soundly at Mr. Isaac's hotel, so soundly that no noise would rouse them. Determined, however, not to lose the rare chance of lying down for two or three hours, we at length discovered a partly open window. Pushing it up we crept through without more delay, risking bravely the possible disagreeable chances of being taken for burglars. We found ourselves in the dining-room and slept soundly, stretched out on the long tables, until awoke by a startled maid not many hours later. Breakfast followed and much talk with the many officers of the new British South Africa Company's Police, who were about to start for Mashonaland, when about nine o'clock our conveyance appeared at the door. It was a newer and slightly larger cart than the last, but crammed full and one extra passenger, ten in all counting the drivers. My friend and I who had already made the long journey from the north, and were the only two going on, had choice of seats, and, of course, took the back corners, and well were we kept there, almost immovably, by a very stout gentleman, who wedged himself in between us and acted alternately as a battering ram and a buffer. Each bench carried three, and the extra passenger reposed on a sack of corn among the drivers' legs in front. Outside and behind were lashed the heavy mail bags and any little baggage there might be; inside we were so tightly packed that it seemed impossible that even an upset could dislodge us, about this, however, we afterwards changed our opinion.

No improvement took place in the teams; we always had six horses, but many of them had to do double stages, and all were in a wretchedly poor condition. Here, again, no steps had been taken to fill up the many vacancies caused by the sickness and by overwork, and the food of these that were left was not

by any means what it should have been. However, we struggled on and arrived at Vryburg (the seat of the Administrator of British Bechuanaland) for breakfast next morning. A wretched place of scattered houses and shanties and muddy streets; it has a well-built gaol and a bar, which must be a gold mine to the proprietor. As soon as the mails had been rearranged, we once again took our places, and after dining at the Taungs Hotel, came in for some heavy rain, which made the country a sea of mud and the rivers very dangerous. In the night, which was very dark, we were stopped by one of these suddenly rising torrents, the roaring of which had been audible for some time. It was just light enough to see the rushing water, while a flash of lightning lit up every now and then the slush and mud around. The mail cart came to a stop; to cross was too dangerous a venture in the darkness, and as it rained harder than ever, we took the horses out, and, dozing, waited patiently for dawn. We were all very damp, but probably not as wet as an attempt to cross the river would have made us, and slumber, although in an upright and cramped position, was thoroughly enjoyed, however much it rained. At length the downpour ceased, the river went down, and at break of day we inspanned the dripping horses and got safely across. A house, building as a store, near the then future line of railway, supplied us with hot coffee, never so much appreciated as after a damp, uncomfortable night. Thus refreshed we jolted on, changing teams whenever possible, and towards evening reached a stretch of particularly bad road, thickly covered, as it was, with stones and great granite boulders. Running full tilt against one of these latter, the two drivers were jerked out and fell on to their faces on the ground, but, beyond a few bruises, got up unhurt. The jolting of the cart was most uncomfortable over the loose stones, and savage growls and strong language became very audible, especially when somebody's head had come in contact more forcibly than usual with one of the many sharp corners in the cart. Presently, without the least warning, over went the whole machine with a tremendous crash on to its side, and confusion reigned supreme as we ten struggled in the dark for an outlet, one on top of the other. One after another we gradually crawled out, all fortunately unhurt excepting a few cuts and

bruises, but hard work it was to right the cart. The wheels, luckily, were sound, the rents and dents mattered little, and, as we hoped to reach Kimberley early next morning, no time was lost in again getting under weigh; but there was no improvement in the road, and the heavy mails having been shifted by the upset the weight behind was all on one side. This made the drive very unpleasant, for it was "even betting" whether we turned over whenever a wheel passed over a stone, and being utterly tired out, every one had become highly nervous and very "jumpy." It was indeed not to be wondered at considering all the dangers by flood and field we had passed through; the want of proper sleep, the terrible aching all over and general sense of weariness after 180 hours of almost continual jolting and bumping, that our nervous systems had become unstrung and sadly in want of rest and repair. After one particularly narrow escape from another upset, the moon being at the time obscured by clouds, a deep sigh issued from the dark interior of the coach followed by a despairing cry, "And now the — moon has gone out too!" The wail was so intensely quaint and so expressive in its sense of utter hope- and helplessness as to make us all burst out into roars of laughter. Too nervous to stay in the cart any longer, we all got out, preferring to walk to the next stage—Barkly West—then not more than a mile distant. From there, with good teams and a level road, it did not take long to finish the journey—the last 28 miles to Kimberley—where we arrived at 8 a.m.



## XVI

### IN THE KOWIE BUSH

1891—1892

**T**HE Kowie bush extends from immediately below Grahams-town in a direct line of about thirty miles to Port Alfred, on the south coast of Cape Colony, the Kowie River winding through it, and running its tortuous course to the sea in lovely scenery, among mountains covered with the densest bush of most infinitely variegated green. Here and there the bush opening encircles narrow valleys and patches of high, luxuriant grass, or small Kaffir fields of maize and melon; it closes thickly down to and overhangs the narrow river, whose waters glide along in deepest shadow, silently sometimes, but more often murmuring, swirling, and splashing, as they angrily force their way between rocks which attempt to bar the way. Here the river spreads out into a reed-girt pool, the home of wild duck and kingfisher; there it runs past a high wall of rock, on whose face small bushes and giant candelabra-like euphorbias find a most precarious foothold. From the summit of one of the higher mountains the Kowie bush is seen stretching away like a broad green riband to the south as it follows the course of the river, the more open grazing lands of various farms meeting it on either side. There the bush grows only in patches set in a golden frame of ripening grass, patches mainly of bright green mimosa scrub, covered at the time of our visit with little golden balls of fragrant flower.

The greater part of this bush belongs to Government, who preserve the one or two herds of buffalo whose home it is. Once the noble *Bos caffer* roamed over the whole of South

Africa ; now, besides those in the Kowie, a few still exist in the Addo bush, but all others have long since been exterminated or driven, like most other game indeed, to the far north, to the Zambezi and beyond.

In an old book on the "Present State of the Cape of Good Hope," translated from the German of Peter Kolben by Mr. Medley, London, 1781, is an article on the "Buffle," which is worth transcribing :—

"The Cape buffalo is enraged at the sight of red cloth and at the discharge of a gun near him. On those occasions he roars and stamps and tears up the ground, and runs with such fury at the offending party, that he beats down all opposition that is weaker than walls, and will run through fire and water to get at him.

"A large body of Europeans at the Cape once chased the buffalo, and, having driven him to the Water Place, as 'tis called near the Cape Harbour, the beast turned about and ran with all his fury at one of his pursuers who was in a red waistcoat. The fellow, giving him nimbly the go-by, ran to the water-side. The buffalo pursued him briskly, and drove him to such a strait that, to save his life, he was obliged to plunge into the water. He swam well, and made off from the shore as quick as he could. The buffalo plunged into the water after him, and pursued him so closely, that the fellow could only save himself by diving. The ox, by this means having lost sight of him, turned and swam towards the opposite shore, which was three miles off; and he had undoubtedly reached it if he had not been shot by the way from one of the ships in the harbour. The ship's crew hauled him on board and feasted jovially on him. His skin was presented to the governor, who ordered it to be stuffed with hay and added to a collection he had made of such-like curiosities."

Permission having been obtained at Cape Town to shoot two buffalo in the Government bush, and leave kindly given by the farmers to go over their adjoining land, a start was made one evening in a Scotch two-wheeled cart drawn by four oxen. These springless carts are very strongly and heavily built, well adapted to work over the hard, rutty, and stony roads, and through the heavier bush. Having seen ours

packed with all necessaries in the way of food, cooking utensils, tent, and rugs, my companion and I took our places, the foreloper charge of the leading oxen, and away we went. Lying at full length, level with the top of the cart, it was a wonder that we were not shaken off during that night's rough journey; but, having travelled for several nights before, I, after a short look at the brilliant stars above, was very soon sleeping soundly, only waking at daybreak on arrival at our friend's farmhouse. Greatly refreshed, but very wet from the heavy dew, we were quite ready thoroughly to enjoy the hot coffee prepared by our kind hosts. The farm was very prettily placed on the slope of a hill, and surrounded by large gardens and extensive orange plantations. The giant trees were laden with golden fruit, and perfumed the air far and wide.

After a short halt the oxen were once more inspanned, and we started down-hill to the Kowie River. This for the equilibrium of the cart was a most trying journey; we preferred to walk rather than risk the bumping over rocks and bushes, very frequently on one wheel only. At last we arrived at our destination, and made a camp close to the Kowie River, in a small and beautiful green valley. Here another Scotch cart joined us, bringing two farmers and their dogs. A pack of ten, in all sizes and every variety of breed, they all were painfully thin and hungry-looking, but said to be good at following and rushing a herd of buffalo, at singling out a bull and bringing him to bay. He, when hard pressed, puts his hind quarters into a thorn bush and defends himself against any number of dogs, thereby giving time for the rifle to approach. This, the supposed best and only method of hunting the buffalo here, we were, unfortunately, not to see crowned with success.

My gun-carrier, a woolly-headed Kaffir picked up on the road, whose uncovered locks often had to be disentangled from the thorny bushes, was arrayed in an old sack with holes for arms and neck, and trousers so wonderfully patched that to tell original stuff from new additions was simply impossible. He was a great smoker, and very keen, thanks probably to visions of glorious feasts on buffalo steaks and other dainties.

A visit was first paid to some water-holes, far away in the bush, to ascertain whether they had lately been visited for drink-

ing purposes or to roll in, and having found a spoor more fresh and promising than others, we followed it. Rain was badly wanted, there had been none for many a day; the ground was very hard, and tracking most difficult. New spoor almost impossible to tell from old. It is no easy task to get through the Kowie bush, but very hard and tiring work—a constant struggling up the steep hills and climbing down again, a perpetual stooping and creeping under the low bushes and stumbling over a tangle of monkey-ladders and other creepers. At one moment one's hat is knocked off, the next, one's clothes securely caught and held by the ever-present and tiresome thorns, the disentangling costing many scratches; while the hot, musty, and close atmosphere in the bush adds its full quota towards the trial of temper and endurance, more particularly towards evening, when, tired after a long day's tramp, the chance of coming up with the buffalo has become very faint. After following the difficult spoor for hours up and down hill, the sharp bark of the great baboon was heard, and off rushed the whole pack, making noise enough to scare all game for miles around. These baboons are a great curse to the buffalo hunter, and more so to the farmer, who ruthlessly destroys them wherever and whenever found. They travel for miles in search of cultivated land, eat all they can of the crop, and destroy the remainder. Chased by the dogs, they run up trees, not always without first killing or seriously maiming some of their pursuers, and are then shot by the farmer. The old males are formidable antagonists, and many of our dogs bore long and ugly scars, the result of former battles with the baboon tribe. As no buffaloes were thought to be in the vicinity, and as it was an impossibility to get the dogs away or to stop their furious barking, permission had to be given to kill some of the baboons, as the only way out of the difficulty. The hungry dogs, having vented their rage on their fallen enemy, did not at all disdain to make a meal of him.

The tracker's opinion that no buffaloes were near proved false, for hardly had we taken up the spoor again when it became evident that a herd had been near when we unfortunately came upon the baboons. The spoor became fresher and fresher as the animals had moved rapidly away, but it was only after some hours' walking at our best pace that one of the dogs gave tongue. Away the whole pack rushed, and we after it, running

as hard as we could, up and down hill, perspiring, stumbling, out of breath, out of temper with the thorns, every now and then stopping to listen for a sound of the dogs, whose bark soon became inaudible. The speed of so heavy a beast as the buffalo when hunted is wonderful; his weight, of course, breaks a way through everything, but the pace with which he scrambles up almost perpendicular hills is marvellous. Although full of hope that the dogs would bring one to bay, we were, as usual, disappointed. All sound was lost, and nothing remained but to follow the largest spoor. As the dogs returned one by one, the chase had towards evening to be given up. And yet this is said to be the only way of successfully hunting the buffalo here, sitting up at one of the many water-holes affording too poor a chance. These are too numerous, and the river is always close at hand wherever the constantly moving herd may happen to be. When tracking without dogs the buffalo, always on the alert, is certain to hear, and will probably see, the hunter in the thick bush long before he himself is visible, and be gone where pursuit is hopeless. Luck also here plays a prominent part. When going home one evening through some thick bush close to the camp, alone and without a rifle, which had been given to a Kaffir, I suddenly came on a buffalo cow. It would be difficult to say who was the more surprised at this unlooked-for meeting. Luckily for me, she was not desirous of prolonging the interview. The herds are very difficult to find, they roam about from one end of the bush to the other; it is only by living on the spot and making certain of their whereabouts that the chance of success would be improved.

There is some very valuable timber in this bush, more especially sneezewood and olinia—both almost indestructible to damp, and therefore of great value for fencing. The bush, as a whole, is low, but thick, long festoons of beard-moss hang from the larger trees, and a musty aromatic odour pervades the denser parts, whither the sun's rays cannot penetrate. The paths cut through the bush look very pretty on these sunny mornings; the ground is thickly carpeted with luxuriant grass and many-coloured flowers; of every shade of green are the trees and shrubs on either side; all nature fresh and bright in the powerful sunlight and heavy dew, which latter hangs like so many sparkling gems from the huge spider-webs suspended everywhere across the

path. Here is brilliant sunshine and the freshest air; a yard within the bush it is almost dark, the air stagnant and laden with heavy odours. Bushbok, duyker, the lovely little bluebok, jackals, wild dogs, baboons, wild cats, and leopards are found in it. Once we came to a spot where one of the latter had killed a buck; on following the trail a bush-buck was found, about fifty yards away, under some thick scrub, one of the haunches half-eaten. The remainder provided a welcome feast for our ever-hungry dogs. Bird life in the bush was conspicuous by its absence. Bee hunters, armed with axe, spade, and bucket, we frequently met, their search for honey in hollow trees, old ant-hills, and holes in the rock being apparently successful. The bees, though small, made excellent honey.

The white tents on the green grass, and the curling smoke as it slowly rose from our pretty camp, formed indeed a pleasing picture as we toiled home thoroughly tired out—a promise of rest and ample refreshment. As the sun disappeared behind the mountains, and the moonbeams began to silver the higher trees on the ridge beyond the river, the cooing of the numerous doves ceased, and the hoarse bark of the baboon and bushbok became fainter and fainter, as those animals returned, after visiting the river, to the deeper recesses of the bush. After we had enjoyed our frugal repast, and partially quenched the raging thirst with I don't know how many cups of tea or coffee, and then taken our places in a tent just large enough to hold the four, it was not undisturbed repose which awaited us. This beautiful spot, doubly so during the bright moonlight nights, was cursed with what are commonly called "ticks," in millions. Hardly had we arranged our weary limbs on the rugs, lit our pipes, and commenced to talk over the events of the day, when these brutes appeared, crawling into the tent from every side, all fully intent on filling their expansive bodies with our blood. How these ticks live, and what they subsist on when no unfortunate biped or quadruped is near, is indeed a puzzle; but let man or beast lie down on, or even pass through any part of this country, where maybe no one has been before, and without loss of time these little pests, some so small as to be almost invisible, appear with wonderful speed, go straight for the intruder, and work their way to any uncovered spot. It is much more than any one can do to intercept them all, even in the brightest daylight; they come in

swarms, one apparently calling the other, and no easy task it is to kill them when caught—their bodies are so hard and tough and crack between the nails like some other well-known insect. It is comical to see them arrive; all in a terrible hurry; all apparently afraid of being too late for the feast. They are disgusting-looking animals at any time; but particularly so when gorged with blood, their enormously distended abdomen then resembling a tightly stretched bladder, out of proportion altogether to their tiny head and thorax. When quite full the tick lets go his hold on man or beast, and remains wherever he may fall in a helpless state of engorgement, with, it is hoped, all the attendant horrors of indigestion and nightmare, until empty and shrunk to natural size. Then, once more full of life, and keenly on the look out for another meal, he lies in wait on the ground, or hangs from the edge of leaf or grass, until his hook-like hind feet come in contact with a passing animal. The chances of getting a good blow-out are therefore exceedingly rare; no wonder he makes use of the opportunity when it is offered. Our slumbers were not altogether peaceful—one heard a good deal of scratching, tossing about, and strong language—and at early dawn all hands were busy tick-hunting, with every success and great slaughter. But the most ludicrously woe-begone creatures were the dogs in the morning; from their lips, noses, and most parts of the body hung well-fed ticks—especially were the eyelids adorned with them. The poor animals looked, and were no doubt, most miserable, and gratefully acknowledged our efforts to tear off some of their uninvited guests. When a tick is full to bursting he drops off, but if before that shape has been reached a small hole is made in his expanding body, large enough to allow the blood as it is absorbed slowly to escape, he will go on sucking and sucking for ever, delighted and surprised, no doubt, at his increased capacity for enjoyment. This was told me as an absolute fact; but, unfortunately, my time in South Africa was too short to finally settle this interesting question.

We tried our luck with the Kowie buffaloes again and again; but, in spite of very hard work, always unsuccessfully. We approached quite close to them more than once, but the dogs never succeeded in bringing one to bay. We tried hiding near water-holes, while others searched the surrounding bush, in the

hope that the disturbed buffalo would come to the water; but all to no purpose. There was ample opportunity of watching the busy ants, the many butterflies, the red and steel-blue wasps, or the dung-beetles, as with hind legs they pushed their ball of dung over all and every obstacle in search of a suitable spot to leave it guarding the egg. Nothing else appeared, and very annoying it was finally to leave the Kowie bush without bagging a buffalo.



## XVII

### PUT NOT YOUR TRUST IN OWLS

1898

"**I**f dat owl hoot eight times, we get big moose, dat sartin," said my faithful Indian guide and hunter as we sat one evening at the camp-fire—somewhere in British North America. It was a superb night, magnificent alike in scenery and colouring, in its beauty as impossible to describe as in its gorgeous tints to reproduce by brush.

Our huge camp-fire was burning brightly on an eminence overlooking a forest-girt lake, and lighted up the spruces and pines and cedars which crowded around, gilding the nearest stems and branches and bringing them out in sharp relief from those in the darker recesses of the forest. Below us, due west, lay the beautiful lake, not a ripple disturbing its mirror-like surface, which reflected vividly and faithfully the hills beyond and the indescribably gorgeous colouring of a Canadian sunset in the "fall." Black in deepest shadow lay the hills, and sharply drawn stood the pine-trees on their crest against the rich red of the sky, the deepest colour gradually shading off into orange and yellow towards the clear blue above; a silvery crescent moon, only a few days old, and innumerable stars, doubly large and brilliant in so pure an atmosphere, completed a picture half reality, half watery image, which rarely could be equalled.

The owl, hidden in its dark retreat among the spruces, and evidently pleased with our appearance as we three sat in the bright firelight, hooted, not eight times only, but ten! The big moose seemed as good as bagged; but what did the bird of omen mean by the two extra hoots? Did it promise us an extraordinary big head, or did it refer to the quarter of a certain cow

moose which we had already eaten? The death of this lady was entirely due to my hunter. I should have let her go, but the fatal word "meat" was whispered into my ear at the critical moment, and the thought of all the salt fat pork we had lately eaten, and visions of all we were likely to eat in the future unless something was killed, rose up before me, and that cow died. Then we had nothing but moose at every meal; we ate one quarter of the cow, equivalent to two hoots of the owl, and gave the remainder to some lumberers working near. However, we settled among ourselves that the owl had referred to the size of the future bull, and, with this happy solution of the problem, turned into our blankets. The last thing I remember that night was the ringing laugh of the loon (great northern diver), so natural and so mocking as almost to shake my belief in our friend the owl.

This was the only cow moose fired at, to the disgust of my guide, who had an eye to skins and the number of moccasins to be made out of them; but this regard for the sex cost me a bull—the bull meant by the ten hoots of the owl. Mistaking him for a cow as he stood more than half hidden in thick birch and balsam scrub, I refused to fire until the momentary appearance of one horn had decided the sex; it was then too late, he had seen or winded us and was off, the bullet striking the twigs which formed a screen. It was a terrible disappointment to me after three weeks' hard work in the bush, especially as my time was up, thus losing the only bull we had seen, or rather only partly seen. My hunter also felt it grievously; he got violently ill in consequence, his stomach sharply resenting the loss of moose meat. I commenced the cure with chlorodyne; he finished it successfully with a large Spanish onion fried in pork fat! He was, and is still, I hope, a very fine specimen of the genus man, powerfully built, hard working, willing, and a first-class tracker. In winter he hunts fur; in summer, I fear, he poaches; and in the autumn becomes a guide to moose hunters. It was not advisable to interfere with his wishes in the kitchen; he was an autocrat there. Salt fat pork and salt pork fat were his gods, and present in some shape three times a day. Nothing would persuade him that tea might be drinkable without boiling at least an hour. No, "people in Canada like their tea strong"; and strong we got it. A request for a stew

as a change was met by: "In dis country only ole men with no teeth eat stoo." I said no more, but the fried moose steak that night seemed very tough.

It was a delightful life in so beautiful a country and climate; we travelled entirely by canoe, for lake succeeded lake with only short portages between. Canoeing over these lovely waters, surrounded by wooded hills on all sides, was most enjoyable. Bright yellow birches and here and there a blood-red splash of maple in its autumnal garb relieved the dark, sombre foliage of pines, spruces, balsams, and cedars. In some places the shores were crowded with golden-leaved birch, in others with venerable spruces and larches in primeval confusion, and in their old age covered with masses of grey lichen. We paddled past lovely islands resplendent in the brightest colours of the "fall," and reflected sharply in the mirror-like surface of the lake. Some of these lakes contained trout in abundance, both grey and the beautiful and delicious "fontinalis," which looked exceedingly well on the table, or rather the log; in others, nothing would persuade the fish (if any existed at all) to take the hook. On our arrival a camp was soon made in the recesses of the bush—firewood collected, piled up and lit by means of birch bark, balsam branches cut for mattress, and so on. And how delightful it was in the dark forest to sit around the big camp-fire and talk over the events of the day and make plans for the morrow!

Bird life seemed scarce; the birds of passage had no doubt already left for the south, and only the raven, owls, large and small woodpeckers (the former with a gorgeous red crest), cross-bills, loons, snow and moosebirds remained. The latter were my favourites. Hardly had a camp been established before a pair of these delightful birds made their appearance, hopping about from branch to branch and closely watching all preparations for a meal. With head turned to one side they looked exceedingly knowing, and are so tame as to take scraps almost out of one's hand. With a constant and voracious appetite they devour anything—even uncooked salt mess pork—to any extent. On this account I should without the least hesitation award the moose or meat bird the first prize for digestive power. Of part-ridges there were a few, ridiculously tame and stupid, very different from those shy birds in districts where they are constantly hunted. The lively little squirrels went through their

pretty antics, skipping, chattering, and staring from log or branch at the new-comer with their large and lovely eyes, busy now collecting stores for the long winter before them. A few very shy ducks visited the lakes, but the weird, mocking laugh of the loon was common on all.

Delightful pages are those in Nature's open book in the wilderness; the more attentively read the more engrossing they become.

Though rather late in the season, we first tried "calling" moose, but in spite of every effort and the most seductive and thrilling sounds produced by my hunter on his birch-bark trumpet, no bull could be persuaded to come or even to answer. It was very impolite of him, to say the least, to the fair sex of the moose tribe, for I am sure that the sounds produced, though not very musical, were all that maiden in distress would utter. Bachelor moose evidently existed not, or had been grievously disappointed in their love affairs, and therefore would have no more to do with the gentler sex. We called in the lakes from canoe both morning and evening; we called near swamps, where tracks were numerous; we uttered sounds of love, drifting down rivers from lake to lake, where moose had lately crossed, till we nearly froze—but no, marriage had no charms for them. On one of the latter occasions we met our friend of the owl tribe again; he sat on a tree not twenty yards away as we floated past, watching us and a musk-rat we had disturbed. He did not hoot this time, but seemed pleased when we had passed and left him to prepare his supper, at which the musk-rat probably played an important part. Leaving our characters of love-sick moose maidens, we took to tracking, but this time it was too early—we wanted two or three inches of snow, and no snow came. The ground was thickly covered with dry leaves and dry sticks, which rendered noiseless walking impossible; a stormy day after rain now gave the only chance, when sticks and leaves were soft and the noise of the wind in the trees deadened that even then made by one's footstep. But even if the acute hearing of the moose does not catch any suspicious sound, his nose comes to the rescue, and the slightest taint of man destroys all chance of a kill. In summer moose lie in swamps and shallow waters to escape the fly pest and to feed on the succulent weeds; in winter they "yard"—take up their quarters in a certain part of the bush where food is good, to stay there, unless disturbed, until

Nature's supplies have come to an end and they are forced to change quarters. There is no doubt that both in summer and in the deep snows of winter large numbers of moose are killed in violation of all game laws and all true sporting instincts, simply for the sake of their skins; but, unfortunately, in an immense country like British North America no such laws can be strictly enforced. In the "fall" and early winter, when moose are allowed to be shot, they are constantly on the move, and only to be killed in two ways—either they must be brought to the rifle by "calling," or the rifle must go to them, by "creeping"; and this is only likely to meet with success when sufficient snow has fallen to make the hunter's footstep noiseless and the spoor easily followed. To any one fond of true sport and Nature at her best, nothing is more enjoyable than a stay in these glorious woods in the "fall."

The owl was nearly right in her prophecy, the loon quite.

## XVIII

### AFTER VIRGINIAN DEER

1898

ON a bright morning early in the month of November the daily steamer took me and guide with camp equipment from the little town of Mattawa, in Ontario, up the Ottawa River to Seven League Lake, where we joined two professional hunters, and I was to be initiated in the art of hunting the Virginian, or white-tailed deer. Mattawa as it gradually receded from our view looked very picturesque among wooded hills at the junction of the Ottawa and Mattawa Rivers, with its struggling houses and quaint wooden bridge spanning the latter stream. Formerly simply a post of the Hudson's Bay Company, it now has grown into a town, constructed partly of wood and partly of stone, with many a stately mansion on the outskirts, the whole being overlooked by a well-built hospital and very handsome church. The white houses and stores of the Hudson's Bay Company surrounded by their white fences remain where they stood in the days when the occupants of Indian lodges were their only neighbours, and from here the deer and moose hunters, equipped with everything necessary, make their annual start, after thoroughly enjoying the kindly hospitality of the chief and his family. Mattawa is now busy building a branch line from its own station on the Canadian Pacific Railway to lake Temiscamaing, to be continued perhaps to the far away Hudson's Bay, and the trains will run along the Quebec shore of the river Ottawa on a bed of very hard and ever-present rock, which is being rapidly prepared by clearing the ground of trees and by extensive blasting.

Our little steamer had a hard task to make headway against a

strong wind and stream, handicapped as it was by the heavy barge lashed on to one side, which barge carried two broad tramway trucks loaded with flour, pork, and other provisions, consigned to various ports and lumber camps in the wilderness beyond. The passengers, mainly lumbermen about to begin their hard winter's work, were all more or less overcome by their farewell carouse in the last town they were likely to see for many a month, but after a time they settled down under shelter of the tarpaulin which covered the stores, to escape the keen wind and to sleep. This steamer took us only to the first portage, near which strong rapids among huge boulders stopped all navigation. Here the trucks were run across on a tramway and on to another barge with steamer attached on the further side, then on once more up the narrow river, which ran swiftly past the rocky shores where hardwood scrub, now leafless and shorn of its autumnal glories, found precarious foothold. Parties of men were working here and there along the future railway, blasting, chopping down trees, building bridges, and throwing up ballast; still further on small wooden stakes alone marked out the track. The rattle and whistle of the trains, which will bring down grain and lumber from the north and thus may prove a success financially, will sound the death-knell to all shooting on this river, which up till now has been the favourite resort of deer hunters year after year.

We had three portages to cross, at the last of which was an hotel with dinner on the table. Here we met the down passengers, and, everybody being hungry, the scramble was great for the good things provided, consisting, as at all country inns, of salt pork, potatoes, cheese, bread and tea. At last, there being nothing more to eat, we parted, and exchanging steamers made another start. Leaving the long and dangerous rapids, we steamed up a wider reach of the river miscalled Seven League Lake. The Ontario side now was covered with pines, spruces, and balsams and their varieties, young hardwood clothing the opposite, or Quebec, shore, with higher forest beyond. Only white pine is cut for the great lumber market at Ottawa, and further and further have the lumbermen to go in search of trees large enough to meet the demand, and harder becomes the task of getting the logs to and down the river. Here and there a bush fire had swept over the country, leaving

nothing but blackened pine stems, and causing enormous loss to the lumber company. It is a curious fact that after one of the bush fires in a needle-wood country no similar trees spring up; brambles are the first to appear, and then hardwood scrub, oak, birch, poplar, and ash. On the other hand, should a hardwood forest be destroyed by fire none of those trees are found among the new vegetation, nothing but pines, the various spruces, and balsams. No reason can be given for this, but fact it is, and an undisputed one.

About 6 p.m. the steamer arrived off a tent pitched on the Ontario shore, and my guide and I with camp impedimenta landed, the steamer going a few miles further to the foot of the "Long Soo," and the end of the long tramway which runs across the portage as far as the southern end of Temiscamaing Lake. We were received by the owners of the tent, two professional men from Mattawa, who spend two months of every "fall" in the woods in quest of deer, and by two clergymen on a short visit for change of air and scene and in the hope of sport. It being dark we did not pitch our tent but accepted the hospitality offered by the others in the shape of supper and a night's lodging. The former, made up, as all meals are, of pork, bread, and tea, was greatly appreciated; not so the latter, for we six had to lie like the proverbial sardines so closely packed together in the very small tent that the least movement of one disturbed all the others. The sheet-iron stove in our canvas home used for cooking and warming purposes and generally red-hot, made the atmosphere in the closed tent very trying to most of us; we gasped under our blankets and were not at all offended if a more chilly neighbour seized more than his share; towards the early morning, however, when it was freezing hard outside and the fire had long since gone out, a fight commenced for every inch of blanket, the tug-of-war continuing until to everybody's satisfaction daylight appeared, and the danger, which every moment had become more threatening, of shocking the parsons' ears by some remark more expressive and forcible than polite, passed away. We were encamped close to the river in some hardwood bush; three deer were hanging up by the hocks, one buck and two does, for in shooting for the market all was meat that came before my friends' rifles. These beautifully shaped deer are plentiful on both sides of the river, and are hunted every year by



several distinct parties encamped at various points along the Ottawa River. Of the fact that a deer, when hard-pressed by dogs or other animals, makes for the nearest water and swims across to rid himself of his pursuers, is taken full advantage, and affords the only chance of filling the larder with venison, for it would be easier to find a needle in a haystack than kill so extremely wary and shy an animal as the white-tailed deer by still hunting. The dogs generally used are large fox or blood-hounds, and are taken singly or in pairs into the woods away from the river or lake, and released when a promising spoor has been found. At this, the rutting season, the spoor of the buck is easily told from that of the doe, the points of his toes being rounded off by the restless stamping and pawing of the excited animal. The hound or hounds jump away at once, and giving tongue all the while follow the buck or doe to the water, near which the shooters are posted at various points, each one with his canoe ready at hand. A deer having entered the river makes straight for the opposite shore; the canoe is paddled after him, and an easy shot when the water is smooth, more difficult when rough, at as close quarters as may be desired, finishes the scene. Poor sport, if indeed it can be called sport at all; not only is the standing about all day long and the waiting for a deer which may never come miserable work in the cold and often severe weather, but the art of shooting requires no skill and brings with it little or no excitement. Fawns are a great trouble and annoyance to the hounds, as they usually run round and round in circles instead of making straight for the water as their parents do, but by these infantile manoeuvres they frequently escape the slaughter which would surely await them in the river. It is said that fawns as long as they are dependent upon the doe, and does until fawns are independent of them, leave no scent and that therefore no dog or other animal can follow them by nose; if true it is a beautiful provision of Nature for the protection of the young when not yet able to take care of themselves.

After remaining for some days at the same place we shifted camp further down the river and pitched our tents again among some hardwood bush close to a temporary lumber camp. The men were putting up a shanty, their home that was to be during the winter when employed in logging the river, and afterwards in helping timber down which other parties were cutting in the

forests beyond. They were housed in two tents and an open-air kitchen supplied them with food. It was a real pleasure to watch these hungry men eat their several meals, they ate so heartily and enjoyed their food so thoroughly—pork, beans, potatoes, pumpkin, cheese, bread, syrup, and tea disappeared with marvellous facility and celerity, three, and sometimes four times a day. We had many a meal together, and among the various excellent dishes which the cook, who was an artist, prepared, I can highly recommend the white beans in the morning after they had simmered all night long in the company of pork fat in an iron pot buried among the hot ashes. A hardy, fine set of men these lumberers are, who lead a very arduous life, especially during the extreme cold of a Canadian winter. After the trees have been chopped down and hauled over the snow to the river or lake, the men, when the ice has broken, have to pull the heavy logs into the icy water and to push them into the stream, often working up to their hips in the half-frozen river. Winter supplies for the future shanty were brought daily from a neighbouring farm on a famous craft called the *Beaver* but more commonly the *Crocodile*, names earned by her ability to travel on land as well as on water. When desirous of leaving her natural element, to have a run on shore or perhaps climb over a hill a mile long, a steel cable is fastened to the trunk of a tree on the road to be travelled over; the wire rope is now wound up by the machine on board and the *Crocodile* slides on her runners as far as the hawser will allow; this is now hitched on to another tree further afield and the boat continues her travels. She is naturally a very slow craft both on land and water—the latter fact a sore point with her captain and hotly disputed—yet her amphibious nature does away with a great deal of loading and unloading. We passed our long evenings assembled in the largest tent, tales were told, a great deal of tobacco consumed, and the favourite game of “Pedro” played with immense enthusiasm.

A great variety of timber grew near our camp or lay as fallen trees or logs upon the ground, and one evening we found that the camp-fire was made up of no less than eight different woods—ash, hard and soft maple, yellow and white birch, pine, cedar, and poplar; easily we might have added spruces, balsams, tamarac, oak, and others to the blazing pile. A tent, although

made of one fold of thin canvas only, becomes a very comfortable and wonderfully warm abode with a large fire burning in front of the entrance, even during very cold weather. A few handfuls of balsam branches, laid on the ground previously cleared of roots and inequalities or snow, as the case may be, equals a spring mattress, while its fragrance is very pleasant and soothing. With the addition of blankets it forms a bed where sleep comes soon and sound, no matter whether it blows, rains or snows outside. Besides deer, a few of the ordinary and pretty spruce partridge, there was no game in this bush; the woods at this season seemed very deserted, for even the moose bird was scarce, while the cry of the raven and loon were rarely heard. No fish would take our hooks whether on a troll, adorned with fly, or baited with pork or other dainty morsel, so we had to go without what would have been a most welcome change from the somewhat monotonous fare of pork and bacon.

After a severe snowstorm I hunted over on the Quebec side—Ontario was closed for all except deer—for moose, but found no spoor. Very hard walking it was up and down the mountains in the slippery melting snow, and harder still to climb over the many fallen trees which lay about. But nothing is more trying and tiring on these occasions than an old lumber road, with its perpetual stumbling over roots which are as slippery as glass, the frequent splashing into mud-holes, the balancing along fallen trees, the stepping upon sharp stumps which seem to project from everywhere, and which to avoid is impossible, be one ever so careful. The slippery moccasin finds no certain foothold, and is for ever coming into violent and painful collision with every sharp stone and every pointed stick.

In about a fortnight we got thirteen deer of sorts, and our neighbours lower down eleven. With them we had several disputes as to the ownership of certain deer, a question which could only be decided on the appearance of the pursuing hound—the owner of the hound was the owner of the deer, no matter who had killed it. On two occasions, curiously enough, a deer jumped into the water just as the daily steamer was passing. The captain and all the passengers opened fire at once, to the considerable danger of everybody on shore and in canoe, for with Winchesters there was no lack of bullets.

But after a time life on the river bank and the miserable sport

became very monotonous, and as no snow fell to make a moose hunt in the country further north likely to be followed by success, my cook and I at the end of a fortnight returned to Mattawa.

The largest head had 18 points, 6 and 7; lengths of horn, 14 inches, 6 inches round base near skull, and 5 from point to point, but very much larger ones are occasionally met with.

Three things no man has ever seen, so say the hunters here. The gall bladder of a deer, a bear in cub, and the nest of the blue jay. The two latter may possibly be very rarely met with, but bears and blue jays being in the woods, they no doubt breed there; the former is true, for deer are without a gall bladder, as also—so it is said—the bear. The want of this important organ is supposed by the Indians to make these animals proof against every kind of poison.

## XIX

### IN THE HEART OF THE MOOSE COUNTRY

1894

**WE** had pitched our two small cotton tents on the top of a tiny island in one of the many lakes in Canada. The island was of solid rock and rose about 20 feet above water-level; bare everywhere and worn by waves and ice except on the summit, where a thin layer of mould gave a precarious foothold to a few stunted birch and spruce-trees. It was a charming situation for a camp—given fine and still weather—such as we were then enjoying after all the pouring rain of the last few days, and before all that was yet to come. A lovely spot, overlooking as it did the beautifully clear water which splashed incessantly against the rock; beyond, wooded hills, now in their autumnal garb, confined the view all around, the dark pines, cedars and spruces, in different shades of green, throwing out in sharp relief the gorgeous foliage of their neighbours, the golden birches and the crimson maples.

Beautiful was it by day, but greatly more so by night when the full moon had risen, and her silvery rays were playing with the ever restless waves, lighting up parts of the forest while they threw others into still deeper shadow.

To this islet we—I and my two Indians—had come in search of moose after a hard and extremely wet canoe journey of several days, with many portages from lake to lake and many others to avoid the frequent rapids in a long creek which meandered for several miles through dense alder swamp and among low wooded hills. It would have been a most enjoyable trip but for the almost ceaseless rain which made the sitting in the canoe unpleasant, while the tramps through the dripping bushes did

not add to our comfort. Nothing, however, seemed to damp the spirits of the men, they were always cheery and full of chaff, but as their speech was in Algonquin all this was unfortunately lost to me. One of them would rattle off some long sentence in a peculiar sing-song voice greatly resembling the intoning of parts of the Church service, to be answered by the other in the same way, so that at first I thought they were imitating some English clergyman they might have heard. It afforded them apparently a great deal of amusement and they would go on in this poetical manner for a long time together. It seemed to me as if the text might be as follows:—

F. Oh, you will see that unto us to-day more rain will be vouchsafed.

T. Yes, but for this morning's sun let us be truly thankful.

F. It has dried our clothes a little, but our skins are very damp.

T. We shall soon have crops of fungi growing on our mouldy hide.

Or,

F. Be mindful that we get good dinner and prepare it to my taste.

T. Whitest pork, no streaks of red, and frizzled in the savoury fat.

F. Then add to that some fried potatoes, swimming in the porky grease.

T. And well-stewed tea to give our stomach rest and joy till supper-time.

This went on daily, and when asked what it meant, the men told me that the Kippewa Indians talked in that manner. What a musical village theirs must be!

My Indians deserved all praise; they were always happy; it was impossible to tire them, however long the portages or heavy the loads; rain made no difference to them, or wet clothes, or damp blankets, and damper ground at night or at any other time. Plenty of pork and tea was all they required and that fat and strong. A big lump of tea-leaves at the bottom of the cup meant a big moose, and I have more faith now in these fragrant lumps than in the supposed prophetic hoots of my friend the

owl, on which another Indian on a former trip set so much store. When the sun did appear the trip up the creek became very enjoyable; the deep chocolate brown water reflected the banks and everything on them as in a mirror. The golden yellow birches, the sombre spruces and balsams, the feathery larches—tamarac—sometimes covered as in a mantle by long trailing grey lichens; the olive-green cedars, now in autumn picked out with brown, were relieved by a splash of red here and there, while near the water grew large-leaved ferns, now also turning yellow, and bright green mosses. Oval lotus leaves floated on the water, sometimes turning up their crimson under-surface, and long hair-like grasses. Here we disturbed a pair of black ducks, or ruddy mergansers, there a musk-rat, but bird life in the woods seemed limited to woodpeckers, titmice, and moose birds. It was very attractive to a lover of nature, and more particularly to us, for every now and then we came upon unmistakable signs of moose. Two days after leaving the creek we arrived at "our" lake, and the great advantages of our position on the island very soon became apparent. Moose were very fond of visiting this lake in the evening and during the night, to bathe in its cool water and feed on the roots of the yellow lilies and other water-plants; the Indian's "call" on his birch-bark trumpet from this elevated and central spot echoed far and wide into the surrounding country, and, if answered, we were enabled to locate the probable whereabouts of the noble bull, launch our canoe, and silently paddle to where he might be expected to leave the forest and come down to the shore.

At first no luck attended us; we saw a big bull splashing in the water and another walking along the shore, but did not get either. One night we paddled close up to two bulls fighting on the edge of the water, and heard their antlers clashing as they fought their giant combat close to heaps of dead trees piled up along the shore by ice and storms in inextricable confusion. Urged by the Indian, who probably saw them better than I, to shoot as they suddenly stopped the battle and crashed into the forest, my bullets whistled harmlessly past the flying shadows, for they were nothing more to me. "Big bulls dat, nebber see dem 'gin," in a despairing voice, was all my companion uttered with a grunt. I urged the impossibility of seeing sights or barrels even, of judging distance in the more than uncertain

light, and the ever restless canoe as sufficient excuses. Still I felt very depressed and annoyed, did not enjoy the journey home, went straight to my blankets, and felt greatly irritated at the long conversation which took place afterwards in the Indians' tent, which I could not help thinking referred somewhat unfavourably to my skill as a shooter. It was not a happy evening.

No luck whatever had we at night. We called on many occasions in the moosiest and swampiest of beaver meadows, remaining out till morning. Oh! how cold it was in the early dawn, when the white mist rose from the water, but no moose did we ever see. These beaver meadows are very frequent, very wet, and generally surround small lakes, where moose feed during the summer, and by lying in the water escape their tiny enemy the flies. Fresh spoor we found everywhere, but whether the most wary animal, gifted with the most acute sense of smell and hearing, scented our presence or not, our vigils remained undisturbed.

What, however, we failed to do at night we accomplished by day in a much more sportsmanlike manner by tracking, and when eventually we began our homeward journey, two large moose-heads adorned the bows of the canoes.

On a beautifully clear frosty morning after calling unsuccessfully near a beaver meadow some miles away from our camp, my tracker and I started off to see what we could do by daylight. The mist of the night before had frozen on the trees, shrubs, and grasses, giving them a beautiful silvery appearance, and a thin coating of ice covered the water in the swampy meadows as we floundered through in search of fresh spoor. Moose tracks there were many but none very fresh, and it was some time before the Indian seemed satisfied as he pointed to a large spoor made only that night. It led towards some high tree hills and we followed it over these and many more, through alder swamps, where the walking was simply terrible; we climbed over and under fallen trees innumerable, walked along many more *à la* Blondin, had to make long detours to get the wind right, until I almost began to think that a little rest might not be amiss. The spoor, however, became fresh and fresher, another crossed it and we were puzzled at first which to follow. This settled, the Indian soon after began to sniff the air whispering "smell bull."



In my inexperience I felt rather doubtful about this and inclined to back the moose's nose and my man's leather breeches, which apparently had done yeoman's service, against his smelling powers and the moose, but there seemed now no doubt but that the trail was getting very hot. All fatigue vanished, and shortly afterwards we heard the (to us) most delightful sound—the clashing of huge horns against the bushes. The wind was blowing straight from the sound to us. We crept up a little eminence, and on the other side stood a magnificent bull-moose looking in our direction. The first bullet was smashed to fragments on his ribs, as we found on removing the skin; the second killed him dead. There he lay, my first moose, and what a huge creature he was! His magnificent antlers proved just under 5 feet across, were of a beautiful rich brown colour, and carried thirteen points on one side and eleven on the other. As he lay the bull was 80 inches from top of withers to point of toe, measured along the curvatures of his body. I had now no longer any doubt as to the possibility of smelling a bull-moose at this season even at some distance, and still less during the skinning, which we had for want of knives, &c., to defer to the next day, when we all three returned and carried off the head and skin in triumph. On seeing the enormous development of the nostrils and the very extensive spread of the olfactory nerves, together with the size of the huge ears, one could no longer wonder that the moose is endowed with probably the most acute senses of smell and hearing of any animal, and this fact greatly enhanced the satisfaction of having secured such a trophy by fair tracking.

It is a marvel how the animal with his huge antlers manages to get through the woods, especially through the thickets of the terrible alder swamps, and at a gallop even as I have seen and know him do, and for a long time together; to get the 5-foot horns over the various portages was no child's play, even when the Indian who carried them used his axe freely to clear the way. On the journey back we passed the recent battle-ground of two large bulls, where brushwood was torn down, young trees broken off and the bark of the larger ones deeply scored. What combats such must be when each animal weighs from 1,200 lbs. to 1,400 lbs and more! This bull was one of the larger variety with widely spreading antlers, smaller palmation and larger

points; the other having smaller antlers inclined more upwards, with wide shovels and shorter points. One morning, when busily engaged with bacon, home-made bread, and tea, at our early breakfast on the island, the Indians heard a distant splashing in the water. "Dat moose," said one, "Come, go," and our canoe was soon making good time in the direction of the sound. No moose was anywhere to be seen, but on the sandy beach at the end of the lake were the absolutely fresh footprints of a big bull. He had eaten the roots of the water-lily and afterwards entered the woods. The Indian, after closely examining the spoor, thought that the bull was probably making for a large bay some distance off. So towards it we paddled, keeping close to the shore. On rounding the point, there, near an old shanty, stood an enormous bull-moose, motionless as if carved out of black stone like a beautiful statue. He flew round quickly as I fired and disappeared in the bush. For some moments, truly horrible moments, there was a sickening doubt in my mind as to whether he was hit, when to my intense relief blood was found on the shrubs, but finding blood and carrying off the head of a moose do not always follow as a natural sequence. The Indian took up the trail, grumbling about the very slight bleeding; but we had not to go far before the bull lay dead before us. How delightful it was thus to have all doubts removed, and the canoe had two happy occupants as it went back to the island. This moose belonged to the species with smaller horns, the shovels being broader, however, the points, five on each side in this case, smaller and less numerous than in his large antlered relatives. He was almost jet black, and measured  $79\frac{1}{2}$  inches on the ground from top of withers to point of toe. This was indeed a lucky incident in moose hunting, or was it due to the sagacity of the Indian and his thorough knowledge of the habits of the animal? When the head was being cleaned the moose birds, our only visitors on the island except flies, had a great feast; when completely gorged they carried off all that remained to some hiding-place in the forest as a provision, no doubt, for days of scarcity. Having now a grand specimen of each variety, a piece of good fortune which probably does not happen to many hunters on a three weeks' trip, we shortly after commenced our homeward journey. Before, however, finally leaving the moose country we had one more hunt, and struck the fresh track of a

very large bull. It was terrible walking; there had been extensive windfalls and plentiful indeed were the trees we had to climb over, and then those alder swamps! They were fearfully trying and tiring to get through. After a good deal of walking we once more heard the welcome sound of antlers rubbing against the bushes, and presently saw a bull looking in our direction and swaying his huge horns from side to side. I fired and hit him, but off he started at his best pace, clearing in a marvellous manner every obstacle in the way, as we afterwards saw to our astonishment and regret. We followed the blood spoor for some distance, but it became slighter and slighter and a very heavy thunderstorm washed it out entirely. That walk I shall never forget; the Indian followed the spoor as fast as was possible and I had to follow him, over and under fallen trees, up-hill and down-hill, through swamps and alder bush, until, as the chase already seemed hopeless, I was very glad when my companion at last gave it up. It is sincerely to be hoped that the bullet inflicted a skin wound only from which the bull has long since recovered. We returned to camp in pouring rain drenched to the skin.

A long journey by a different route to that which had brought us, yet differing but slightly from it as far as the weather was concerned, ended our enjoyable and most successful visit to the largest representative of the deer tribe in his native haunts.

## XX

### CHRISTMAS-TIME IN FOUR CONTINENTS

#### I. ASIA.

**WHEN** Christmas came in 1865, the plains of Bhootan, a country lying between Assam and Sikim, in North-Eastern India, and—with the former—the wettest in the world, had been just a year under English rule. In consequence of perpetual raids into British territory, the Bhooteas had been deprived of their low-lying possessions, the famous Dooars, and turned out of a number of hill forts, really robber nests, built on the lower spurs of the Himalayas, with but slight opposition and loss. Fate had decreed that I should spend more than a year in charge of the British garrison of one of these, Fort Daling. A tiny fort, a speck in a vast sea of jungle, perched on the summit of a conical hill, it was surrounded on all sides but one by much higher mountains, all covered with the densest vegetation of infinitely variegated green. Towards the south, when not obscured by rain or clouds, or mist, occasions most exceedingly rare, a distant view could be obtained of the plains, the fertile but very feverish Dooars, which at this time were covered with water.

Only at one point could this little fort be entered, at all others the sides of our sugar-loaf hill fell away almost perpendicularly from the thick stone walls surrounding the summit, against which walls the quarters of the garrison—a battery of artillery, a wing of the 81st Punjab Native Infantry, some Engineers, and odds and ends—were constructed entirely of bamboo. It was a very cramped place, in the early days hardly able to accommodate everybody, but by Christmas, when nearly half of the old garrison had died, there was room in plenty.

What an existence it was in that fort! never to be forgotten by any surviving member of its first garrison. Days and months passed, we did not know how—passed as if in a long sleep, hidden from all else by a dense curtain of mist and cloud which but rarely lifted; holding no communion, often for weeks together, with the outside world, cut off by flooded country, as we were, through which even dāk elephants could not pass and in which many with our mails were lost. Now, at Christmas-time, it had rained for some months: the rain continuing for several more with short interruptions, during which the whole country was enveloped in the very dampest of mists. The result, in the hills around, was a most luxuriant vegetation, among which tree-ferns and bamboos excelled in feathery beauty. In the fort our condition was a wretched one; the poor Sikhs especially, accustomed to a perfectly dry climate, suffered terribly here where nothing was ever dry, clothing and bedding always wet, rations mouldy, and the whole interior of our leaking bamboo huts covered with a rankly growing foetid fungus.

In this constant moisture thrived swarms of flies, large and small, and mosquitoes—the plague—no doubt the “Bhoots,” or evil spirits of Bhootan—was everywhere, in our food, in our drink, in ears, nose and pockets; the insects crawled up one’s sleeve and down one’s neck reckless of fate but maddening in their persistency, forbidding sleep except in the middle of the night, when the tormentors themselves urgently required rest; they ran and fell into the ink and then dried themselves on the pages of a newly written letter, official and in the best handwriting; they got caught between the lids in their frantic efforts to examine the interior of one’s eye, went to roost in the hair and cared nothing for punkah or fan. No doubt it was a wretched place this Dalimkote—sharing with Assam the highest known rainfall—during this apparently never ending wet season, and especially depressing, as half the garrison was always on the sick list with dysentery, fever, and scurvy, thanks to the perpetual damp and mouldy food. There were no striking incidents to mark the time except deaths, nothing to do outside the fort but bury Christians and Mohammedans, and burn the poor dead Sikhs, not to mention the slaughter of some jungle fowl among the hills

around. With the exception of one reconnaissance into the mountains to the north, there was no soldiering to be done except garrison duty. No Bhootas came near us to our great regret, nor did they disturb the Government coolies living in the village of Ambiokh, at the foot of our hill. These coolies were natives of Sikhim and wore the picturesque garb of Thibet, pigtail and all; very dirty, for they never wash from the day their eyes first behold the light to that on which their spirit enters the Bhuddist Nirwāna; they will sell anything living or dead for rum and are most skilful workers in bamboo.

This lovely plant flourishes exceedingly among the hills and supplies almost all their wants, as it did most of ours. Out of it, and out of nothing else, is the whole house made and all the furniture, if that word can be applied to a bunk, rickety chair and table; cooking utensils, water vessels, pipes, needles, thread, ladders, bows and arrows, and the scabbard for the ever-present long knife. Visit at their houses, which are always raised very high above ground on piles, and the chatelaine, who, by the way, belongs to several brothers in common, will offer you boiling hot tea, largely mixed with native butter, in a bamboo pot. When young these ladies are very pretty; they are bought according to their market value from their parent by the future husbands, generally brothers, although two or three friends sometimes club together to make up the necessary sum.

The only white people living outside the fort walls were the political officer and his wife, who had lately taken up their quarters on the spur of an immediately adjoining plateau, where they lived in a bamboo bungalow, at first not altogether free from scares. Here the only European lady in all Bhootan presided at the Christmas dinner, to which the few officers of the garrison had been kindly bidden. Considering the place and time of year, and the fact that we were then cut off by flooded plains and raging torrents from civilisation below, the dinner was a great success, and spoke volumes for the inventive genius of our hostess. Everything, indeed, from soup to dessert, with the exception of a brace of jungle fowl, was extracted from tins, but it was novel and not mouldy. The last wish expressed by every member of that party was

that we might all very soon leave fort Daling and never see it again.

However, April had come before we finally handed over the fort to some native police, with our best wishes, long after the Bhooteas had come to terms, when we crossed the Teesta River on our way to Julpigoree.

Although the forests around the fort swarmed with every kind of noble game, it went almost untouched by the garrison of Dalinkote, owing to the want of proper rifles and permission to be absent from the fort at night. In less than a year I was back on leave in those Dooars on shikar bent; but although elephants and rhinoceros were frequently met with, I bagged nothing except the most pernicious and intractable fever, which eventually necessitated my return to England.

## II. EUROPE.

On Christmas Day, 1870, a small party of six, five men and one lady, all endowed with the best of appetites, took their places at the dinner-table in the house of a doctor in the village of Beaune-la-Rolande, Department Loiret, France. Four of the party were surgeons attached to the ambulance sent out by England in aid of the sick and wounded during the Franco-Prussian War, the other two being the owner of the house we were billeted in and his wife. The dinner was a great success, all the more appreciated by us who had lately been used to very rough fare. It had been prepared under the superintendence of the lady of the house, and consisted of soup, a goose, which, in some miraculous way only known to itself, had managed to escape the keen and hungry eyes of both French and German soldier on the war-path, at last to be rewarded by being the honoured and admired dish on our Christmas table. A piece of beef of American origin, flanked by various vegetables, and then, to crown all, a more or less successful plum-pudding à l'Anglaise. The many ingredients of the latter, with butter, cheese, &c., luxuries here at the front, I had been able to collect during an expedition with a wagon to a neighbouring town, ordered to bring in stores urgently needed for our many patients in the village.

Some bottles of excellent wine of the country assisted in making the evening a very pleasant one, for such a feast had not fallen to our lot for some time. All the more enjoyable was it made by the knowledge that we had been able to distribute some few little extras among the unfortunate wounded, of which cigars, cut up by them and made into cigarettes, were always appreciated more than anything else.

We had been about a month in Beaune-la-Rolande in charge of the wounded, of which the greater part had already been evacuated further to the rear, for supplies ran short near the front; many others had died of their wounds, and only the more serious and immovable cases now remained.

The wounded had passed through a terrible time, for they were stricken when the land was deep in mud after several days of rain. All the shelter available was in the town and adjoining villages, the houses of which, with few exceptions, had suffered severely from shot and shell during the French unsuccessful attack on the German position. However, now they lay in comparative comfort, instead of, owing to former want of space, piled one on top of another, as during the first days after the battle, and reposed on mattresses, beds, &c., instead of the bare floor perhaps covered with a little straw as long as that was procurable.

Beaune-la-Rolande, altogether, had a woebegone appearance, enveloped as it was in its mantle of snow and ice; for on the evening of the 29th of November the weather suddenly changed to frost. The buildings on the outskirts, loopholed and crenellated, were everywhere marked by bullets and partly demolished by shell; roofs were sadly in want of repair, and windows innocent of glass. Above all rose the church spire, half shot away, so that it seemed wonderful that it still bore itself erect; while but few tombstones in the small churchyard were left standing or unbroken, for here also the fight had been severe. Temporary graves with rough wooden crosses to mark the spot, graves in which German and Frenchman lay together, all feelings of enmity gone, were plentiful around the village, but a white shroud of snow had long since hidden all other evidence of the fierce fight which was fought here on the 28th and 29th of November, 1870.

On the early morning of the former day three brigades of



the 10th—German—Corps, under General von Voigt-Retz, were attacked by the whole of the French 20th and part of the 18th Corps, under Aurelles de Paladines, troops belonging to Gambetta's New Army of the Loire, with which the relief of Paris was to be accomplished, so it was fondly hoped. Only with the greatest difficulty did the Germans hold the village, until, during the afternoon, part of the 5th and 1st Infantry Divisions came to the relief of the hard-pressed troops. Then the French drew off under cover of the night, leaving on the field more than 1,000 dead and wounded, and 1,500 prisoners in the hands of the victors. The Germans, fearing a renewal of the attack, took further steps to defend themselves in the little town; strong barricades and earthworks were thrown up where streets opened into the country; all outbuildings were further loopholed, an outlook placed in the rickety steeple, while Uhlans, of course, watched the enemy's movements. In the meantime the French had retired to some low hills, entrenched themselves there, and were apparently content with throwing an occasional shell into the town. The advent on the 29th of further German troops forced them, fighting, to withdraw altogether in the direction of Orleans, which city once again had a French garrison, thanks to the strategical retreat of the Bavarians.

When all was over, poor Beaune remained, a dilapidated, severely stricken village, and evidence in abundance of all the horrors of war. All round the town lay the killed and wounded in pools of blood, confused heaps of dead and dying horses, *tentes d'abris*, cooking utensils, gun carriages, guns, rifles, articles of clothing, &c., &c., while the ground was deeply scarred by shells, the segments of which were sown thickly everywhere. Parties of French prisoners were already on their way to the rear, and surgeons and their staff searching everywhere among the heaps for those still alive. After a busy time among those wounded which had already been brought into the village, we went beyond the houses, there where the fight had been hottest, and a ghastly picture was here revealed. It was full moon, and almost as light as day. The French, as they fell in their attempt to carry the village by storm, lay actually in heaps, a horrible sight as the bright light lit up their white and blood-bespattered faces. A few had sought

shelter from the piercing wind under some bush, and tried to reach their wounds ; but although we examined all, none were still alive. Three French line battalions, recently arrived from Algeria—the 8rd Zouaves, the 22nd, and 79th—were the only regular troops in Gambetta's New Army, which was, with these exceptions, formed entirely of Guardes Mobiles and Nationaux, men who had never had any experience of real war. The regular troops were therefore ordered to show, so a wounded Zouave told me afterwards, their rawer comrades the way in which a village should be taken by brave soldiers, and nobly did they obey their orders ; but with the result that the whole battalion of Zouaves was wiped out, and the other two suffered grievous loss. Very plainly could this be proved on the ground. Close to the houses lay the Zouaves in heaps, then came the dead 79th and 22nd, and after long intervals scattered Guardes Mobiles and Nationaux. Nobly indeed had the brave troops set the example ; but, insufficiently supported, their glorious effort proved unsuccessful against stone walls and Prussian fire.

Very hard work followed those days ; the wounded had to be housed, attended, and fed, which, thanks to plentiful supplies brought in the wagons, we were fortunately able to do. Shortly afterwards the Germans sent their own wounded away, and as their troops left the village for the second taking of Orleans, the Frenchmen were handed over to our ambulance altogether. Soon we were able to send convoys of them away to hospitals further back, and when our Christmas dinner was placed upon the table but few remained. Many of these convoys of wounded prisoners have I taken, and a curious experience some of them proved. Thus, on one occasion we left Beaune in charge of five ambulance wagons full of wounded, with orders to leave them at Puisieux. It was already dark when I reported my arrival to the German commandant there, who, after telling me that every place was full, ordered the convoy to be taken to Malesherbes and failing room there to Fontainebleau. There being no way out of it, I returned to the wagons, which, to my horror, were empty ; the villagers, full of pity, had in my absence taken their wounded countrymen into various houses, there to regale them with hot wine and bouillon. It was freezing hard and I was

very sorry for the poor creatures, but orders were orders. With the greatest difficulty, every obstacle being put in the way and very bad language used at what the temporary hosts considered downright inhumanity, the wounded were collected and loaded up once more into the cold and draughty wagons. Being very anxious to return to the front as soon as possible, and not to be sent still further to the rear, I this time took precautions against a second mishap. A driver mounted on one of the team horses was sent ahead with strict instructions to go straight to the Maire of Malesherbes—where there was no commandant—with the request that the necessary accommodation might be ready on our arrival. This proved successful, and the wounded were soon comfortably housed. After the Maire had receipted the list of wounded, we took the wagons into the enormous yard of an old-fashioned French country inn, and rested the horses and refreshed ourselves with coffee. Before daybreak we were on the road once more, with several sacks of corn which we had luckily been able to purchase from the charming landlady.

Just after the second taking of Orleans I was sent to that city to see whether room could be got there for our horses. It was freezing hard and ice covered everything. On arrival I rode into the courtyard of the largest hotel, and finding an adjoining barn-like stable empty, tied up my horse there. Knowing better by that time than to interview the landlord, I went straight to his better half and stated my wishes. Her immediate response was a derisive laugh: "Oh, yes," she said, "the stable is empty now, but a Prussian supply column is expected and will fill it; it, as everything else, now belongs to those — Germans." She, however, gave me a huge loaf, which I cut up and gave to my horse, who enjoyed it greatly.

After lunch at *table d'hote*, with a large party of German—chiefly Bavarian—officers, I went for a walk in the town, and on return, to my disgust, found my horse tied up outside and the barn crammed with "train" horses. On complaining, and explaining matters to the colonel, he had it put back and everything seemed right, until a little later the horse once more stood shivering on the ice outside. Taught by experience, I now got hold of the colonel's servant, who very soon discovered an empty stall in his master's private stable. There the horse

at last found an undisturbed resting-place and squared matters with the colonel by doing himself thoroughly well on his oats during the following twenty-four hours.

How I thoroughly frightened and dispersed the Town Council of Blois is perhaps also worth telling:—

With orders to engage stabling for the horses, about 100 in number, of our ambulance, &c., I left Orleans for Blois soon after noon on a very cold and snowy day. Snow lay thickly everywhere and a long ride along that most depressing of all roads, a French *chaussée* in winter, was not a pleasant prospect for my horse or me. We had started too late, the days then were very short, and all chance of reaching Blois before night was soon gone; it was slow travelling on the hard, frozen, deeply rutted ground. Thanks to heavy snow clouds, night, and a very dark one, came on rapidly; hoping, however, to find some place to put up in we stumbled along, but no lights became visible anywhere. Presently, close to the road, a huge barn loomed darkly and, any shelter being better than none, I rode up to it and through the open door into the black interior. The light of a match disclosed a vast empty space and a floor deeply covered with straw. It certainly did not look a very comfortable quarter for a winter night, but there being no choice I closed the door and let the horse go to choose a resting-place for himself; I did the same and was soon asleep with straw and coat as bedding. Cold and hungry after an apparently endless night, I barely awaited the first streaks of dawn to continue my journey, and before noon entered Blois, then one of the advanced posts of the German army. My quest for stabling for so many horses in a city crammed full of troops was not likely to be successful, yet the only way to give it a chance was to explain matters to the Maire, and him I found in session at the Mairie surrounded by his councillors. My request was received with derisive laughter—apparently all their houses were full of the detested Prussian horses—but after further conversation I was told of a barn on the other side of the Loire at Vienne, then empty but likely to be occupied at any moment by a German supply column. With former experience of these “trains” this information did not give much hope, still it was the only chance.

When about to leave the room, one of the councillors asked me about the journey from Orleans, and when told of my quarters of the night before, he excitedly requested further particulars, and everybody else seemed strangely on the *qui vive*. Wondering greatly I gave these, when with one accord the City Council jumped up as if horror-struck and made for the door. Thinking that the people had suddenly gone mad, I shouted for an explanation, and was given from a distance the following solution of the riddle. The barn in which I had so peacefully slumbered had only just been vacated by a large number of small-pox patients—hence the bountiful supply of straw on the floor which I had found so useful!

Small-pox then was raging along the Loire among the French wounded, and my barn had been used as a temporary hospital. It was a nasty idea, and no wonder the city fathers fled from me—but there were other things to think about than a possible attack of that terrible malady, and neither my horse nor I felt any the worse in consequence.

Oats, so necessary for our horses, were very difficult to get; stores of them which still existed here and there in the country were most carefully hidden away in all sorts of curious places to avoid a German requisition; until fully convinced of one's non-German nationality to ask for a grain was useless. It was hidden in cellars, between double walls, in caverns, &c., &c. Even after repeated assurances that there really was *rien-de-tout*, a good feed was often given to my horse but in the apron of the landlady and the darkest corner of the stable into which no uninvited eye could look. Articles of food, all drinks, live stock, &c., were hidden before the German advance. In one instance, to my knowledge, numerous bottles full of the various curious liqueurs, so dear to Frenchmen, were deeply buried in the garden of an inn. Shortly afterwards a German cuirassier noticing with his practised eye that the ground had lately been disturbed, continued his researches and uncovered bottle after bottle, greatly to his own delight, but not at all to that of the landlady, who heaped every abuse upon all cuirassiers in particular and the whole German Army in general.

## III. AMERICA.

The night of December 23, 1888, proved a trying time for those on board the Royal Mail steamer *Moselle*, for the good ship tumbled about terribly on the Caribbean Sea to anger roused by a strong north-east wind which had been blowing steadily for some days. Poor *Moselle*! Since then she has been wrecked and now lies in peace below the waters undisturbed by wind or weather.

Coming from Jamaica, we carried a large number of coolies on their way to labour at the Panama Canal. Deck passengers, closely packed and railed off in the forepart of the ship, they were indeed objects for pity, for not only did Neptune exact his tribute in full, but they were wet to the skin from spray and blue sea which splashed frequently on board. The journey, however, was then nearly over, for at ten next morning we arrived alongside the wharf of Colon.

Our first impression of Aspinwall was not a favourable one, nor indeed did it change for the better with further experience. Everything was dirty and foul, especially the yellow sea as it washed against the filthy shore and filthier wharf, whereon stood groups of ragged negro coolies waiting for the agent to send them in batches of ten to unload the vessel. The wooden houses near the landing-place were built on piles over evil-smelling swamps, the receptacles of every variety of refuse from the habitations above; from the black mire rose large bubbles of foul gases, and in it wallowed pigs and land tortoises, the only scavengers of Colon. Although nose and eye were everywhere met by evil smells and filthy refuse, the city was very much *en fête* at this Christmas-time, and crowds of people in their Sunday best had come to spend the hard-earned dollars and celebrate to the full the holiday in this the nearest town to the canal. And what a crowd! All the Central and South American Republics and the adjoining islands were here represented by the worst riff-raff from each, the whole collected by offers of high wages for work on the deadly track of the Panama Canal.

All had come now with the full intention to spend their money gained by hardest toil and at constant risk of death among the

terrible isthmus swamps in drinking shop and gambling hall, of which the town seemed almost entirely composed. Bar adjoined bar, resplendent as night came on in dazzling light reflected by numerous mirrors, all crowded with swarthy men decked out in holiday attire, all armed and reckless, drinking, gambling, quarrelling, becoming more noisy and quarrelsome as evening went on.

At this festive season Colon, no doubt, looked its brightest and best; the inhabitants and visitors turned out in their newest garments to see and to be seen, and to take the air in the only respectable part of the town among the cocoa-palms along the sea shore. Here, on the fashionable alameda strutted the sable ladies decked out to their utmost satisfaction in every shade of dazzling colour, truly gorgeous, from marvellous hat to dainty boot of golden bronze. Be-plumed and be-flowered, head proudly thrown back, they marched passed, ogling here, and smiling there, vigorously fanning themselves all the while, thoroughly well pleased with themselves and apparently well content with all the world. Here, indeed, the air from the sea direct was pure, the only pure thing in all Colon.

Flags were fluttering everywhere in the light wind, from the ships in the harbour, the consuls' houses, and those of the many shipping agents, the small line of blue between broad stripes of yellow and red of the United States of Colombia being naturally most conspicuous. Some unkind people thus interpret the colours of this flag: There is but a small chance of escape from the far greater chances of death from yellow fever, or during bloody revolution. Let those abandon hope who fall into the hands of the soldiery here, for a more ruffianly-looking lot than the Colombian men of war it would be impossible to imagine, unless, perchance, the captive be able and willing to pay handsomely for his release. The Minister of War apparently has a standing contract with every old-clothes man in the world for the supply of any cast-off uniforms to be picked up anywhere, with a hat thrown in here and a boot there. No two men are dressed alike, but they all have a cigarette between their lips and the same hungry, cut-throat appearance. As a means of amusing the crowd and reducing the population of Colon, a mad bull was led into the main street, and, he not liking the appearance of the city and the people in it, made with

the utmost celerity for the open country, dragging the rope with him and scattering the crowd in all directions.

Some holiday-makers in their terror sought the shelter of the deep mud, others the raised trottoirs in front of the houses—all had narrow escapes from the horns of the infuriated bull. The scene afforded the greatest delight to the originators of this novel Christmas entertainment, as also to those who were then safe and able to laugh at the comical spectacle presented by the flying people.

As evening fell the streets became deserted, and probably unsafe; but bars and gambling houses blazed in light, and were crowded with thirsty souls, all anxious to spend their dollars with the least possible delay. Noisy and noisier became the saloons; songs became yells accentuated now and then by a pistol-shot, as we sat on the deck of the steamer after our Christmas dinner on board, and continued probably long after we had retired for the last time to our comfortable berths on the *Moselle*.

Evidence in plenty of the last night's orgie met us next morning as we walked to the depôt of the Panama Railway to make inquiries about the trains to the Pacific side. We found the station building and saw the cars on the rails which ended shedless and unguarded in the middle of the street. But not a living soul could we discover anywhere to give us the necessary information. We searched the depôt everywhere, up and down stairs, but all in vain, until at last, projecting beyond some corn sacks piled up in a corner of the upper floor, we espied a black foot. Delighted at our discovery, my companion and I after a short consultation got hold of the foot regardless of a probable revolver behind the sacks, and pulled so successfully that at last the black foot was followed by a black man. He had only just recovered sufficiently from his Christmas night's entertainment to use some very vigorous language, but his eyes still refused to open and face the daylight. Certain doubts as to the advisability of crossing the isthmus on that day passed across our minds; if all the railway employees were in the same condition as our exhumed station official it augured badly for our trip across the swamps.

As the ship, however, was to leave the same day, and hotel life in Colon did not offer sufficient charms for a prolonged stay, we made up our minds to risk the journey. After a certain



amount of trouble our baggage was passed through the Custom House and taken to the depôt to be weighed. To escape the trouble of procuring change, our station friend was quite content to take five dollars instead of the six originally charged for overweight. Although the train to Panama was crowded, my companion and I were the only passengers who paid the recognised fare—25 dollars; the fact that we had done so created some amusement among our fellow travellers. Most of them had paid the conductor five dollars to let them off without a ticket, while the others had joined the train a mile outside Colon, and only paid half the legal fare—at least, so we were told. Poor strangers in a foreign land—poor shareholders!

#### IV. AFRICA.

Christmas Day in 1884 was spent on the banks of the Nile, on that wonderful river which is as wide at Khartoum as at Cairo, 1,800 miles away or more, running its course sluggishly between sandy banks through stony deserts, except here and there, where interfered with by rocks which try to bar the way, it rushes swiftly and foams in anger. Sometimes the few huts of a village are reflected in its muddy waters, now and then a magnificent ruin, but little affected by that pure desert air, well-preserved monuments through all the ages of the greatness of former empires. Nothing else but these and fringes of date-palms does Nature offer to our eye already so wearied by desert plains apparently endless and sandy hills, as we slowly ascended the mighty river in our way, *viâ* Khorti to Khartoum, the longed-for goal of everybody taking part in the Nile Expedition of 1884–85.

On this Christmas morning I had reached with my camels, carrying a part of the advanced field hospital, a point where it became necessary to cross the Nile to a place called Shabadood on the left bank, about 1,000 miles south of Cairo. There to my great delight I found temporarily encamped the Camel Remount Depôt commanded by a brother officer, a discovery which promised a cheery Christmas evening. But my camels, men and baggage, had first to be got over to the other side, for which purpose two country boats composed of palm planks

lashed together were placed at my disposal. The shipment of the camels proved no easy matter; gentle persuasion with endearing epithets failing to touch their heart, the Aden boys had to drag and push them down the bank by main force and then into the boats which were just large enough to take three at a time. Once in the boat the animals were made to lie down at right angles to the keel, two facing one way, the head of the third in line with the tails of the others. The work was attended by a good deal of swearing, spitting, biting, and groaning on the part of the camels, and by thoroughly forcible language on that of the men, but the boats, however frail they no doubt were, did their duty well, and before the sun set in its desert glory the detachment was across without mishap.

Beyond the fringe of palms the depôt camels, several hundred in number, were picketed in long lines; a very interesting spectacle, now when they were sleek and well fed and well tended. All their hard work was to come; excessive hardships, added to severe privations during the desert marches, caused the death of almost all of them.

Full arrangements for the Christmas dinner had already been made, and when at last the supreme moment came six hungry people sat down at a table improvised of various boxes and of anything upon which a plate could be put. The place next to me remained vacant for some time, but presently the belated guest approached with stately step and proud bearing, dark as a native and clad in the long white spotless robes of a Moor. My misgivings as to possibility of anything beyond the slightest conversation with my neighbour were rapidly dispelled, for to my surprise he wished us good evening in perfect English. It was Abdul-Kadir, then a well-known personage, an Englishman by birth but really a Moor, for most of his life had been passed in Morocco. Being thoroughly at home in the Arab language and customs he had been sent up the Nile to get letters through to Gordon, which he successfully accomplished. He proved on further acquaintance a very interesting personage and a cheerful companion on the long marches as he rode his high-class camel escorted by several negroes armed with the long Arab spear and various other weapons. We saw a great deal of him afterwards, especially near Matemmah on the other side of the Bayuda desert, but on the return of the Expedition

he suddenly disappeared, murdered without a doubt by his attendants for the money he was well known to have about him.

We had a very cheery *al-fresco* dinner under the date-palms and the glorious desert sky, crowning the feast with a Christmas pudding specially prepared by a soldier servant, a feat on which he greatly prided himself. After a little whiskey, which in some mysterious manner had found its way up here, and tobacco of course, we retired to rest. But the pudding proved too much for mine; a most vivid nightmare disturbed my slumbers, a nightmare many times repeated, in which I rode a monstrous camel, certainly not less than 50 feet high, along the lofty bank of the Nile which ran glittering in the moonbeams far, far below. The camel, not content with its usual steady pace, swayed to and fro like a ship in a beam sea, and every moment a sudden descent into the cool waters seemed more than probable. It was truly a terrible night, and never shall I forget the plum-pudding, or rather the consequences of my Christmas dinner in 1882. It is sincerely to be hoped that the recipe of that pudding is lost for ever!

We all were more or less overcome next morning, but ill or well the day's march had to be done and the distance lessened to Khorti, the place of assembly and of starting to cross the terrible Bayuda desert.

Two other Christmas Days were passed in Africa, one north of the Equator, the other south. The former was in 1881, when a friend and I made a good march through very arid burnt-up country and among sterile mountains along the dry bed of the Baraka River *en route* from Suakim to the borders of Abyssinia. Late in the afternoon we unloaded the camels near a disused well dug in the sandy river-bed; the water was very scarce and terribly foul, the taste of which neither tea, coffee, nor cocoa could remove; we had, however, plenty of gazelle meat, so everybody was content. Our own dinner consisted of antelope soup and chops, gazelle liver, and a plum-pudding, which had been brought from England specially for this night. And then into the blanket, to sleep under the deep-blue sky illuminated by myriads of the most brilliant stars which sparkled through the feathery foliage of the beautiful camel thorns under which we slept.

The other in 1889, when at the last hotel on our road up to Matabeleland a Christmas dinner was given by the landlord to all his guests. It was a very festive dinner with speeches and toasts in plenty, followed by a more than festive evening and night, during which the echoes of the little town were severely tested and certain property grievously injured.

## XXI

### NO LUCK

1895

MOOSE.

**I**N the hope of beating my moose head of last year, we, I with two half-breed hunters, had made a temporary home in what had once been the blacksmith's shop—the least dilapidated log shanty of an old lumber camp in the Canadian forest. The surrounding bush, long since despoiled of all pines of marketable size, no longer echoed with the sound of the axe; fresh "limits" were now being worked further and further away, new camps had sprung up where formerly only the hunter or trapper passed, and the old homes of the logger were left to their fate. A few of the old shanties were still used as stables or stores on the line of communication and kept in some sort of repair, but the majority, left to their fate, had soon become unfit as places of abode. The huge pine and cedar logs of which the shanties are constructed of course withstand the ravages of wind and weather for an almost unknown time, but the moss with which the interstices were securely filled soon loosens and falls out, particularly from the roof, when rain and melting snow find ready ingress.

No doubt ours was the best shanty in that camp; about 20 feet square, it had a door which required repair badly and soon got it; a paneless window which was at once covered with boards and closed; a large 5 feet by 5 hearth of earth at one end, with a 4 feet by 4 hole in the roof above it. At first the place did not look particularly inviting, but a broom made from the scrub which grew around more or less cleansed

the log floor, while a huge fire quickly kindled showed everything in a more favourable light.

Snow and ice having made canoes useless we could only get as far away from the railway as a hired sleigh would take us; although I mistrusted the country from previous experience my men thought well of it and were glad to give it a trial. A terrible discovery awaited us on unpacking our kit—cooking utensils, drinking-cups, and plates had all been left behind, and left where they were altogether out of reach! Knives and forks were also absent, but we all carried the former and after all fingers were invented before the latter came into use. Cold, hungry, and thirsty after our march in the snow things looked serious; we had stores in plenty but nothing to make them eatable and drinkable. A thorough search through the other shanties and the immediately surrounding scrub was rewarded by the fortunate discovery of a long since discarded cast-iron bean pot with a gaping crack across the bottom, another pot, of tin this time, fortunately entire, and a washhand basin which would then have been most useful as a sieve. The former, the bean pot, was the most valuable find; by tilting it on to one side it turned out most fragrant dishes of pork and bacon, while as a means of baking bread it was unrivalled. The tin vessel made our tea while we drank out of another lucky find—an old jam pot—while the damaged tin washhand basin quickly repaired with the aid of a bullet and resin did duty in various useful ways. This part of our outfit was, however, soon perfected by the addition of a frying-pan, tea-kettle, and cups, by knives and forks borrowed from a lumber depôt, the nearest habitation to us. Boards and planks from the long-deserted bunks in the adjoining shanties were converted by us into more or less comfortable bedsteads, into tables and stools, and thus in a very short time our house presented a most home-like appearance, more particularly in the evening when a gigantic fire blazed on the hearth, warming and illuminating the whole interior.

When after a long day's hunt in the snow-laden forest we returned tired and with soaking clothes, the latter were soon exchanged for dry ones, and suspended in picturesque variety from the beams of the roof; the kettle found its way on to the burning logs; bacon presently spluttered in the frying-pan, and

things very quickly wore a cheerful aspect. The Indians preferred to dry their garments on the body—partly because they had no change—by sitting close to the fire, almost hidden in a cloud of steam; luckily for me the latter had a free and unimpeded exit through the large hole in the roof. Supper over, and the elaborate “service” washed and cleaned ready for the morning, the Indians lit their pipes, chatted in Algonquin, and played “spoilt five” on the bunk, where they afterwards slept in the closest proximity between two blankets, dreaming, no doubt, of the happy hunting-grounds where all fur-bearing animals are plentiful, and pork, tobacco, and rum are to be had for the asking. Until we had a sudden thaw, ushered in with heavy rain, our roof seemed perfect, but now the water poured in everywhere like through a sieve, and hunted us from place to place in search of some spot less wet than another. A heavy snowfall, followed by a sharp frost, however, came presently to our assistance, and made the roof once more as a respectable roof should be, but spoilt for a time all chance of tracking moose. We wanted fresh soft snow or rain, with plenty of wind, and not the noisy crust which now overlay the ground everywhere. Several other unfortunate circumstances combined to make this trip a total failure as far as moose were concerned. The hunter, François, who had proved so valuable the year before, and who was now again engaged, had taken to drink just before he was wanted, and, after experimenting on the relative strength of an axe handle and his wife’s head, the former winning easily, had sought the retirement of the bush, and was nowhere to be found. The half-breed—Joe—who was with me two years ago, a very indifferent hunter, had to take his place, and brought a friend as cook. The former was not worth his two dollars a day, but the latter—Frank—proved, though surly and bad-mannered to a degree, an excellent *chef*. His spatch-cooked partridge, broiled on a stick in front of the fire, was excellent, only to be beaten by a *salmi* of the same bird *à l’ognon et au lard*, prepared most artistically in our treasured iron pot, tilted on one side as usual. He, the cook, had looted a pocketful of currants somewhere on the way up, and these he now and then introduced into the bread, baked to perfection in that truly wonderful but sadly-cracked utensil. It was now November, and although the large lakes and running creeks

were not yet frozen over, the timber slide of the adjoining lumber dam was heavily coated with ice, and adorned with long fringes of gigantic icicles. Snow had fallen, slightly thawed and then frozen, making silent walking impossible; the crust broke underfoot, and the underlying leaves gave a hollow sound to be heard a long way. A heavy fall of snow soon afterwards made the woods exceedingly beautiful in their winter garb, but very bad walking; insufficient for snow-shoes it yet hid every obstacle, and caused frequent falls, many bruises, and much bad language, while the powdery snow fell in dense showers upon us as we forced our way through the balsam thickets. It was not by any means easy work this search after the coveted moose head. Starting before daybreak always, while the stars yet shone in the deep-blue heavens, and returning only with dusk; constantly sliding and slipping about, never certain of our foothold, snow falling down our backs and filling our pockets, it was no wonder that we were tired on arrival at our shanty, and glad to rest in the warm glow of the huge log fire.

Exceeding stillness reigned in these woods, but rarely broken by perhaps a raven's hoarse cry, or a partridge startled by our approach from its shelter under a balsam bush, or the twitter of a family of blue tits eagerly searching for food. Most other birds had long since left for the south.

Alas, no bull moose could we find; there were a few uninteresting tracks of cow and calf but, as my hunter said, "all too dam small." Moose were beginning to "yard" and no doubt difficult to find, they did not now move about much and were probably hidden in some dense balsam or cedar brake. We, therefore, extended our trips in another direction and eventually found the tracks of a big bull near a very dilapidated shanty several miles distant from our camp. Too late to follow them at once we determined to shift our belongings next day in order to get more within reach of the coveted moose; but before our intention could be carried out a wagon arrived loaded with camp kit, two American hunters and their men, the whole outfit bound for "the shanty!" Of course we could say or do nothing, could only growl, and etiquette forbade our going near their ground. All chance of the hoped-for moose-skin gone, my hunters used language sufficient to curl the hair



of a brass idol; it was no good, however, we had to remain where we were and try the old ground once again. At last we gave it up in sheer despair, we did not want cows or calves, and bulls there were none—the hunt was adjourned for a year.

The Americans did get a moose, but not a bull, only a wretched trophyless cow! With my local hunters I should probably have done better than they did with their States trackers, new to the woods and new to the noble moose. At all events let me hope so.

## XXII

### NO LUCK (*continued*)

1895

#### CARIBOO

“WOODMEN report cariboo plentiful” was the pith of a telegram received from the south-eastern end of Canada proper, which finally decided me to try that country in preference to another north of the St. Lawrence, which had also been suggested as a hunting-ground by friends in Montreal. A twenty-four hours’ journey by train brought me to Rimouski on the Gulf; it had been snowing heavily and freezing hard afterwards, so that the drive next morning to Father Point lighthouse was a very cold one and rough also in consequence of the snow-drifts. Thence to St. Annelet, one of those straggling villages which join others in a string all along both shores of the St. Lawrence River and Gulf—villages composed of wooden farm-houses on small fenced-in patches of land, with a picturesque church and priest’s house attached every nine miles. I put up temporarily in quest of supplies at the house of a well-to-do farmer, a French Canadian, of course; he spoke a little English and had consented to be my guide and cook. The ground floor of all these houses consists of a day room into which open the sleeping apartments of the family, in this case consisting of eight. There was a large stove which also did the cooking, a barrel of drinking-water with tin cup suspended above in one corner, while highly coloured advertisement placards, a crucifix, holy water, a rosary and pictures of saints adorned the walls. Here we collected supplies while the wife prepared an ample repast of excellent pancakes, and the more or less aromatic

children stared at the stranger, insisting on examining his clothes and baggage and succeeding in making themselves generally objectionable. The rooms, thanks to the hot stove, the mass of humanity in it and the tightly-closed windows and doors became very stuffy and almost unbearably hot, so that when about 6.30 the sleigh arrived I was delighted to make a start for the home of my hunter that was to be, some miles further inland. The sleigh travelled well on that still, beautiful evening, the bright moon lighting up the pretty snow-covered woodland country and it seemed all too soon when we stopped at Mr. Brissou's house, where, although unexpected, we were hospitably received by that famous hunter, by his wife and his nine children. I may here state that the proud father of twelve is further rewarded by a generous Government with the free gift of 100 acres of land, and hope that my friend will soon be able to put in his claim and thereby enlarge the extent of his property. The usual aromatically stuffy and most trying atmosphere markedly pervaded this house also, crowded as it was by a numerous and not very cleanly family. Two small dark chambers opened into the day room, in one corner of which stood a large bedstead and at first it seemed a puzzle where all would find a resting-place for the night. When the time came the riddle was solved; the old-fashioned spinning-wheel and weaving frame, whereon the homespun garments of the family are made, had to make room for various mattresses and blankets. Into and on to these the youngsters crept, the elder boys disappearing into the loft, while the old people and the youngest baby, the ninth, retired into the family bed in the corner, after I had been hospitably shown into the adjoining state apartment, cleared now of its usual occupant or occupants, the eldest daughters no doubt. It was almost filled with a large bedstead which at once inspired me with great misgivings; along the wall were suspended various articles of female apparel belonging probably to the young ladies who now were mixed up in hopeless confusion with other members of the family on the floor next door. I did not dive into that mysterious bed but covered it carefully with a large waterproof, then lying upon it wrapped in an overcoat I blew out the candle and awaited events. To my delight nothing disturbed my slumbers until called at 4 a.m. to take my place at the breakfast-table, which I found supplied

with excellent bread, pork, and tea sweetened with scrapings from a brick of maple sugar, the only sugar used in these districts. The sap is collected from the maple-trees in the spring in birch-bark pans, afterwards evaporated and the resulting sugar placed into moulds, in which it becomes hard and brick-like in shape. It is very sweet and cheap, ten cents a pound, and 3,000 cuts into the trees produce 400 pounds of sugar. Monsieur Brisson, the best hunter, it was said, in the district, having agreed to follow my fortunes, we left in our sleighs long before daybreak for the shanty owned by a fishing club some miles distant, and well within the bush. French was now the language spoken, but somehow the Gallic tongue has not the true ring of sport about it. The men talked about "gibier," and the word "gibier" reminded so strongly of the thrushes and small song-birds stalked by the gunner on the vineyards and was so suggestive of blasts from some *cor-de-chasse* encircling the green-coated and hunting-capped chasseur of *la belle* France. The men were anxious to bring a considerable quantity of rope, and when asked who this was intended for, replied that here it was the custom to catch cariboo in nooses arranged in the forest paths and to shoot the poor beasts when struggling half-choked in those ghastly snares! Needless to say we did not take the rope, but dozens of deer-catching contrivances did we find only wanting a noose to be complete.

After a very rough drive over bush-roads, with insufficient snow, we arrived at the picturesquely situated shanty built close to a small lake, surrounded by dense fir and cedar woods. Occupied every season by the members of a fishing—trout—club, our future home was in excellent repair and proved very comfortable indeed. In it we found four bunks and a useful cooking stove; we borrowed, without asking the owner's permission, various cooking, drinking and eating utensils, and with bedding unpacked and placed in the cots, fire lit and bacon frizzling in the pan, felt very soon thoroughly at home. As in all such shanties, a bag of tea, another of flour, a box of matches, and in this case a pack of cards also, hung from a beam. Should a supplyless wanderer belated or lost in the woods strike the hut, he would at once be able to make a fire, tea and bread, and, if not alone, to finish up with a game of cards.

We hunted through that bush every day from morning to night in the hope of finding cariboo. We visited numerous frozen lakes, trusting to see them feeding on their favourite moss, which grows close to the edge; we went to all places where cariboo were said to have been plentiful lately, and where, according to the hunters, they ought to roam in herds now, but nothing could we find. The total absence of this, said to be so common, animal puzzled the men greatly—they could not make it out at all—it was truly extraordinary! It is very disappointing this tramping about all day long and seeing nothing, not even old tracks much less new ones, and so tiring; there is no excitement to make one forget fatigue, no stimulus to turn on a fresh supply of nervous force. So ruffling to one's temper, too, to have it constantly dinned into one's ears that the game has never been known absent before, as if now it were elsewhere with the sole and only purpose of grievously annoying you.

We tried our best, stumbling and slipping about all and every day in the snow; we crossed innumerable lakes all surrounded by dense bush where apparently the men expected to find cariboo skating parties, and altogether we wasted no time, but the game was no doubt far, far away. Following immediately behind the hunter I fervently hoped that no puff of air would blow from him to any cariboo whose nose might be within reach, for that would immediately have been fatal to any chance of a shot. One day he suddenly became very restless and a new odour of a strangely compound nature strongly pervaded the air; with a cry he plunged a hand into his trouser pocket and drew forth a smouldering mass of miscellaneous articles, among which I can now only recollect seeing a pipe, matches which had caught fire, biscuit, tobacco, string, a fishing-line and hook, a knife and a rosary.

We returned every evening very disappointed to our comfortable shanty, and after supper the men played cards with my matches as prizes; a glass of hot grog finished the day. Mr. Brisson, who suffered daily from violent cramps in the stomach, due, no doubt, to frequent draughts of ice-water when hot, at last gave it up as hopeless; he declared that "*la chasse au cariboo est de la coohonnerie; ils en sont pas.*" We put our traps upon the jumper and returned trophyless to the

railway. I was not in luck's way this year, that had become very evident, and it would have been difficult to picture my disgust when on return to Montreal I was shown six magnificent cariboo heads just shot by a party in the very district which I had given up for one considered by the cognoscenti to be the better of the two! This was indeed bitter—so bitter that I resolved to try no more but to hope for better luck next year.

### XXIII

## WOODCOCK IN IRELAND

1896

“IF we could only get some snow on those mountains” was the wish expressed nightly as we took our candlesticks to retire to roost. It was December in Southern Ireland, and we were keen after woodcock. The most charming and favourably situated coverts and woods were there in abundance, offering seductive seclusion and undisturbed midday rest to those most “sporting” of birds, which indeed were in the country, but scattered among the heather all over the mountains. We wanted snow and frost instead of the usual warm, wet, wetter, wettest weather that had prevailed hitherto, which made even the trees look wet through, and drove with its perpetual “drip” all birds out of the woods. Snow from the mountain-tops to the upper fringe of the coverts on their slopes was required, and earnestly wished for, to concentrate the birds into the bush, but none came, alas! until the very day we had to leave. Hard fate! and harder still, for the same thing had happened two years ago. As our train ran northward among those snow-capped mountains, we looked longingly at the coverts and thought of the shivering cock crowded there together for warmth, and bemoaned our luck that we should no more hear the beater’s “hi! cocky-cock-cock!!” or see the glorious birds flash like lightening across the all too narrow rides, or dart, the vision of a moment, among the trees and bushes. To walk gun in hand along these rides on the mountain-side while the men are beating the woods is most enjoyable, especially on clear, frosty mornings, which, however, were few and far between. The foot sinks deeply into the soft carpet of bright green moss

and short grass and silver-grey lichen, thickly strewn with light brown larch needles; the whole sparkling in the sun as his rays catch the thawing frost. On each side larch plantations or coverts of young oak, birch, and beech, now mostly bare in their winter nakedness, from which stand out in pleasing relief bright green holly covered with red berries, young spruces, golden flowered gorse, fir and pine-trees. In the larch plantations the ground is yellow with a thick layer of needles, patches of cover of brambles and other shrubs flourish here and there; in the coverts a dense undergrowth of heather, bracken, broom, and blueberry bush offers a warm shelter to woodcock—"pheasant," as the Scotch keeper called it—or rabbit. Bullfinches and tomtits were very numerous in these woods, and probably at home here for the winter. Above, the mountain-top, now alas! without snow, below, a very extensive landscape, a network of high banks enclosing very small grass fields; here and there a ruined castle half hidden by a curtain of trees, and farmers' cottages all coloured white and heavily thatched.

What struck a visitor most when driving to and from the shooting-ground was the small size of the fields, the great width of the huge fences dividing them and consequent loss of ground—probably of no consequence here; the never failing position of the cabin at the immediate foot of the mountain-slope, one end being generally built into it, in a spot where all moisture must infallibly drain into it; the deep mire and foul slush, the home of wallowing pigs immediately in front of the door, and the extreme ugliness, the dirty, unkempt and poverty-stricken appearance of the people, who probably would not be happy under any other circumstances.

The car rattled over the road which had lately been patched in squares by means of stones thrown into the holes, passing small two-wheeled donkey carts driven by women wrapped in dark-brown shawls, who, by dint of violent tugging at the animal's mouth, aided by voice and stick, managed to get the much maligned creature slowly along; the latter obstinately preferring the wrong to the right side of the road. In the morning the carts carried milk for the town creameries; on their return journey buttermilk for the family and its beloved pigs; while the men were at work on the mountain cutting gorse to be afterwards chopped up and mixed with hay as food



for cattle. Hawthorns, heavily laden with red berries, grew abundantly on the stone-faced banks along the road, and gorse with golden flowers; geese and ducks waddled about in the puddles and ditches; donkeys and cattle picked up what they could in the bare fields, while hobbled goats took their chance by the road-side.

The hindquarters of our car horse were safely kept down by the heaviest straps probably ever turned out of a saddler's shop, but those hinder parts were very nimble, had proved very expensive in cars, and great agility, skill, and time were required to properly adjust the ponderous kicking-strap. When once safely within the shafts, the animal had a rough time; it was constantly whipped because when cantering it did not trot, and when trotting it did not canter, and treated to frequent refreshers by violent tugs at the mouth. So, perhaps, its decidedly expressed objection to the shafts was not altogether incomprehensible. After escaping various dangers by road, from roving pigs and hobbled goats and obstinate donkeys, we at last arrived at our destination and were received by the Scotch keeper, attended by a wild-looking lot of native beaters. They were excellent men for this purpose, however, and worked willingly and well through the very thick coverts, undeterred by brambles or gorse, stimulated, no doubt, by the certain and glorious prospect of the Saturday night carouse with the money earned by beating during the week. Porter, here the favourite and universal drink, unlimited, or at all events sufficient in quantity to make Paddy incomparably happy, is the just reward for work performed in the woods and among the heather. When at last homeward bound from the shebeen, over roads which move about unsteadily, are curiously rough and singularly confusing by their number, and on treacherous knees which refuse to carry so much extra weight, a body thus contented can hardly be blamed if he stops short and follows the example of his friend, the woodcock—source of all his enjoyment—and hides among the ferns and soft surroundings of the nearest ditch. He has thoroughly enjoyed the day's sport and his beloved porter in the beershop at night, and, like a true sportsman, is anxious and ever ready for more. Even the youngsters are very fond of sport, as the following incident will show. Certain coverts were being beaten on a very misty morning;

a lad from a neighbouring cabin, who had been looking on from a distance, suddenly rushed up in violent excitement to one of the guns posted on the road, and pointed with great glee at two men of the Royal Irish Constabulary who were just emerging from the mist. Intense longing written in his face, the boy exclaimed in an imploring whisper, "Have-at-em, Sorr! Have-at-em, Sorr!!" So glorious an opportunity of bagging two of the police to be thrown away was surely very hard and no doubt a great blow to this Irish youth, who retired disappointed and took no further interest in so low a form of sport as woodcock shooting. In former days a good many individuals, objectionable to others, were removed in this part of the country—not perhaps in the most "sporting" manner, but by stalking the game in the evening when alone and beyond help from behind walls, banks, or hedges. The houses of the victims now stand empty and fall rapidly to ruin; no one will live in them, as the restless ghosts of the murdered are known to visit their former abodes at night, naturally provided with lights to avoid sharp corners no doubt, and rotten floors. Tenantless they are, and tenantless they will remain, memorials of a time when landlord-shooting was considered the king of sports.

Nothing can compare with woodcock shooting if the birds are plentiful. When lying out in the open heather, or low scrub on the mountain or plain, as they do in warm weather, they are easy enough to hit; but it is a very different affair if cock are flushed in thick and high coverts such as larch, when they dart swiftly across the ride, unseen until high over the gunner's head; or when rising in the more open woods, among oak, birch or beech, laurels and holly, they flit and zigzag about, and generally succeed in putting the first tree between themselves and the gun. Shoot, however, and quickly, it does not matter through how many trees, a pellet or two may reach the bird, and it is easily killed. If you don't, the bag at the end of the day will be light indeed.

It seems marvellous how quickly a woodcock is on the wing and at full speed, twisting and turning about in a most bewildering manner, among trees and foliage, however thick. Its agility becomes more easily understood if we weigh the bird and measure the spread of his great wings. The former

was found to be 12½ ozs., the latter 26 inches. A wild pheasant shot on the same day, also a fast-flying bird, as many people have experienced, gave the following proportions: Weight, 2 lbs. 15 ozs.; spread of wings, 30 inches. Thus the latter, although nearly four times the weight, has wings but little larger than the former. The swift perplexing movements and vanishing power of the woodcock are, therefore, not to be wondered at.

Then, on the mountain-side, unless the light be very good, a woodcock is not by any means an easy bird to see, so wonderfully do the markings on and the general colouring of his coat agree with the autumn and winter tints of the scrub over which he flies. The formation and colour of the dead bracken leaf almost exactly match the markings on the woodcock's wings and back; the dead pale brownish-grey flowers of the heather, the underparts of the body and wings; while dead leaves, heather scrub, bare twigs and dead grass make up a background so protective to the bird that a miss becomes more excusable than would at first sight appear. To find a dead bird in such surroundings without a dog is almost impossible. To bag a woodcock in rides, cut through woods and coverts, especially when the trees are high on both sides, affords more satisfaction than success in any similar sport. The surroundings are delightful, one is always on the *qui vive*; skill and quick shooting, and last, but not least, luck are urgently required.

Thanks to the warm climate of this part of Ireland, the moisture—if a stronger term would not be more appropriate—and consequent term “softness of ground,” and easy access to an unlimited supply of worms, a great many woodcock stay altogether, make apologies for nests almost anywhere, and rear their four young. If later on the young brood be disturbed, the mother flies away with one of her little ones held with her legs firmly against the body, while the others run into any cover near, keep so quiet and hide themselves so effectually, that to discover their whereabouts is a most difficult task. In July these home-birds disappear—1896 was an exception to the general rule—where to, is not known, returning in October to their old haunts. The big flights from the west travelling probably *viâ* the Orkneys, Shetlands, and Hebrides, arrive on

the west coast of Ireland in November. Coming from the east, they pass Heligoland in large numbers, but are much more abundant in the autumn. . If the weather is warm and calm, with light south-easterly to southerly winds and is succeeded by a stiff north-wester, a great flight of woodcock is probable, in which case the migration hosts are evidently unexpectedly surprised during their flight by the stormy weather and large numbers of them are driven to seek shelter on the ground. On occasions of this kind the number of these birds which has been found within the limited area of this island, covering barely a square mile, has almost approached the marvellous. On October 21, 1823, the number of woodcock caught and shot have exceeded 1,100, eighty-three of these were bagged by Jacob Lassen and ninety-nine by Hans Prohe. Most of the gunners then used old infantry muskets—the remains of a cargo of a Dutch vessel which had run ashore; its contents, after lying for months at the sea bottom, had been fished up during calm weather; for measuring the charge of powder and shot these old sportsmen used as a rule the bowl of a clay pipe. On October 18, 1861, about six hundred cock were caught and shot here, five hundred of which I saw lying on the shop floor of a dealer. The young migrate before the old birds.\*

Some of these birds, no doubt, resume their journey south (Spain?), but the great majority remain all the winter. In February woodcock are said to be more numerous here than at any other time, thanks probably to immigration from the south. On the spot the belief is current, however, that the cock at that time collect from all parts of Ireland and rendezvous prior to the departure northward of the greater number. The birds are seen everywhere in that month "flying about like owls all over the place."

To account for the great difference in size between the birds, some authorities state that there are two distinct races of woodcock, others that it is due to the supposed fact of the female being heavier and bigger than its mate. Thus Morris gives the average weight of the male as 11-12 ozs., that of the female as 13-15 ozs., and says: "The head on the sides about the streak from the bill to the eye is darker than in the male, and the small triangular-shaped specks are less defined; the

\* Gaetke.

back has less of the pale brown and grey; the first quill feather is without spots on the outer edge; upper tail coverts more red and less grey than in the male."

On the other hand, Gould states: "Many I have dissected, weighed and measured the moment after they were killed, and I must admit that at the end of a day's shooting I am still unable to say with certainty from their size which are male and which are female. This arises partly from the circumstance of there being two distinct races frequently intermingled in the same coverts.

"In the case of the common snipe I have ascertained that the male is undoubtedly the bigger bird, and if there be any difference between the sexes of the woodcock, I believe it will be the same as in that bird; at the same time I must remark that dissection has proved many of the large and long-billed birds are females. Some sportsmen assert that they can distinguish the sexes by an examination of the outer primary, affirm that those birds which have the external margin of that feather plain or devoid of tooth-like markings are males, and those in which they exist are females. But they are absent in both sexes in very old birds."

Twelve male and twelve female birds measured gave greater weight and length of wing to the former than the latter.

"I believe that the males generally have the shorter bill, the longer wing, and the finer tail, while the rump of this sex is more red, and the barrings of the under surface of the body more distinct."

The "Badminton Library" believes that "the male woodcock may possibly be distinguished from the female by its smaller size and darker colour." Yarrell agrees with Morris so far that the female is the larger bird, but is of one mind with Gould about the triangular marks on the outer web of the first quill feather being rather the indication of youth than of sex. "They are obliterated by degrees, and in succession, from the base to the end of the feather."

## XXIV

### IN NEW BRUNSWICK

1897

**A** SMALL lake deep in the solitudes of the Canadian forest set in a frame of marsh, of spruces, cedars, and tamarac. The former, beautified by a dense covering of yellow grass, red moss, cranberry scrub and willow, the latter, in their several generations, the most ancient now but fast crumbling mould, a soft bed for their immediate successors, trees long since bare of bark and stripped of branches, piled up as they have fallen one on top of the other, often stretching far out into the lake. Of those still standing many are now but gaunt skeletons, others show their great age by long beard-like masses of lichen which hang from their dead and dying branches, while the younger generations, full of life and strength, have pushed out fresh shoots in every direction. As I sit on an old log overhanging the placid mirror-like lake a woodpecker hammers most energetically against a dead tree, a vigorous summons to the juicy occupant to come forth and surrender. From a spruce branch a moosebird peers wistfully at me and no doubt considers the likelihood or otherwise of any scraps for him when my lunch shall have been finished. A beautiful swallowed-tailed butterfly, gorgeous in yellow, black, red, and blue, flutters past in the bright sunshine, in which sparkles a lovely steel-blue dragonfly as it settles for a moment on my log. A large brown frog with a deep bass voice croaks at regular intervals in the marsh, and several smaller ones, but in bright green coats, put their heads above water and with their big black eyes stare at the intruder. To complete this picture of nature undisturbed a bull moose walks out from the bush on the further shore, enters the water to

have a bath and rid himself temporarily of the flies which at this season torment both him and man. After feeding on the water-lilies, he lies down, has a roll, and then swims slowly across the lake, steps out and regales himself with the young maple shoots on the bank. Evidently pleased with his bath, he returns to the water, crosses the lake once more, and disappears in the bush, totally unaware that he has been watched. By the bath for a short while freed from the pest of flies, it is to be hoped that he escaped a worse, that of the leeches which infest this lake, large olive green horrors, with orange stripes and brown belly. They were not slow at all events to attach themselves to a finger held in the water—indeed, they ran races for it—and so strange a thing as that must have been to them a startling novelty and a new experience altogether.

#### FOUND ON THE WALL OF A FISHING HUT.

“ + Salmon — Mosquitoes = Heavenly  
 + Salmon + Mosquitoes = Very Enjoyable  
 — Salmon — Mosquitoes = Bearable  
 — Salmon + Mosquitoes = Hellish.”

A long reach of a clear, fast-flowing river, between picturesque banks, thickly covered with spruce, cedar, ash, poplar, and birch in every shade of green. The former are tipped with the pale blue shoots of youth; the cedars, no longer upright in their old age, overhang the river and lean against each other for support, and enveloped as they are in a dense grey mantle of lichen, contrast sharply with the fresh green of their deciduous neighbours. Roots and trunks are deeply scarred by ice as it descends in springtime, but are almost hidden by scrub, green grass, and ferns, while irises, violets, marguerites, and buttercups grow here and there in patches, and give bright colour to the whole. Above all is a clear, cloudless, deep-blue sky.

Three fishermen are intently watching the river; one a man from a bark canoe, held in position by an Indian, casts his fly just where the swiftly flowing water swirls round a rock, the well-known resting-place for salmon on their way to the spawning-grounds above. The second, a black and white king-fisher from a dead branch over-hanging the river, is waiting for a

smaller fish to come within range before he darts into the crystal water after his prey. The third fisherman is a bald-headed eagle soaring aloft in gradually lessening circles; suddenly closing his wings he descends like a stone and diving deeply generally returns with the fish which his marvellous eyesight had revealed to him far, far below. The two latter probably secure food sufficient for the day, the former not always—the fish were there but would but rarely rise to the beautiful flies so persistently and in such variety offered them morning and evening. Not only was this annoying, but insects in millions, yellow and black flies, mosquitoes and midges, were simply maddening—it is to be hoped to one of the trio only. The winged fishermen had at all events not to smear their faces with evil-smelling grease, wear a veil or sleep in curtains, nor had, I trust, bad language to be put to their black account—language which if ever was surely here excusable. The creature called man—whether black, red, or white—is the greatest sufferer; colour makes no difference to these flies, for was there not our odd man, black as a boot, Charley, sitting on the bank watching the fishing with his head well in the dense fumes from the smudge-pot, a pipe of the strongest tobacco in his mouth to add still greater pungency to the already almost suffocating smoke? Charley even in his tough hide hated the flies with an intense hatred although they found him most attractive, but loved his smudge-pot; the two always went about together and were inseparable companions.

Surely those nighthawks which appeared about sunset did not realise how sincerely and heartily we wished them success and the best of appetites as they circled round and round in their hunt for supper and swooped open-mouthed through a cloud of our deadly enemies.

The following will show the frightful tenacity of purpose and brutal bloodthirstiness of the mosquito. That it really occurred as related is vouched for on paper by three Americans and their three Indian guides who fished some salmon pools below us. A mosquito having settled on the bare arm of one of the former, a man keen on scientific research, and found the location promising, soon got his suction apparatus into full working order and began to fill up fast. Now came the American's turn, who with a pair of scissors neatly snipped off the end of the reptile's body. Undeterred even by this cutting insult the mosquito sucked



harder than ever, being astonished no doubt and delighted by its apparent extra capacity for the refreshing liquid. When the blood taken in in front began to pour out behind the other members of the party were summoned to watch the phenomenon. Drop after drop trickled from the wound in the mosquito's body until there was a blood trail down the arm 4 inches long; only then did the disappointed animal open its wings and fly away, humming strong language and deeply insulted no doubt at the trick which had been played on it.

## XXV

### VANCOUVER AND BEYOND

1897

ONCE more salmon and three kinds of piscators, those on the water, those in it, and those in the air, but the sea this time, Burrard inlet, the mouth of Vancouver harbour on the Pacific. The northern shore upon which stands an Indian village or two rises gradually towards some bright green mountains further inland; to the south is that most beautiful natural park famed all over the world for its gigantic cedars and spruces. To the west, now hidden by a dense veil of mist, lies Vancouver island with its mountains, while the harbour and Port Moody rounds off the landscape to the east. It is all very beautiful—the sea, the sky, the thickly-wooded shores, huge trees and high mountains in the distance. As we—the fishermen—sit in our boats waiting for the incoming tide, there is plenty of time to enjoy the beauty of the scene, bathed as it is in the brightest sunshine, and to get our tackle ready—now fitted with a spoon—for these west coast salmon are not to be taken in with the fly. At last, and quite suddenly, the tide rolls in with a rushing sound, forcing its way against the until then placid sea and causes the boat to dance about on the warring waters and become difficult to manage. And now what a commotion there is all around us; thousands and probably millions of salmon are brought in on the tide, the sea is thick with them, they roll about everywhere and hundreds jump clear of the water as if for very joy of living wherever one can look. But it is not all joy which makes them thus momentarily leave their native element and take a leap through the air, for there are deadly enemies

behind, far more deadly than the man with the spoon in the boat, pursuing them right into the harbour—the seals. Every now and then there was a rush, dozens of salmon leaped high out of the sea, and presently the round head and black eyes of a seal appeared for a moment to vanish the next, well content no doubt with its capture. But the salmon had yet another enemy which never left them—this time in the air—the osprey. These beautiful birds followed the rush of fish in great numbers, swooped down now and then and diving deep into the green waters reappeared with as big a fish as their wings would permit them to carry. Poor salmon, they had indeed a bad time on these to them inhospitable shores, but far worse was yet to come higher up when the huge nets of the many canneries were reached, which, during the great run of '97, had the best season on record. The catches were so immense that incredible numbers of fish had to be thrown away, for there were not hands enough to clean and preserve them, or mouths to eat those that were left, a terrible and pitiful waste. Those who had fortunately escaped all these dangers even then, in their greatly diminished numbers, crowded the spawning grounds in river and creek to such an extent that there was not room for all; the stronger fish pushed the weaker out of the water and on to the banks, which were literally covered with dead salmon—the rivers simply could hold no more. Very red the fish looked then, their bodies raw and bruised; all those beautiful silver scales had vanished, as also from their back the rich dark metallic green which so exactly matched the colouring of their ocean home. Stories are told of the immense quantities of fish making up a "run" at the height of a good salmon year; how river steamers have been stopped by their paddle-wheels becoming choked with salmon, and how high water has been brought about by the thronging of fish to the spawning ground.

The Canadian *Western Recreation* of May, 1897, states that these stories "tinge even the Siwash's" (Indian) opinion of the truth of Biblical history, for a pioneer missionary of the Methodist Church relates how sharply he was "called up" by a grey-haired old Fillicum, to whom he had been describing the passage of the Red Sea by the children of Israel. "And so with Moses at their head, they crossed over on the dry land," said the teacher. "Helo!" answered the Siwash, shaking his grey

locks with positive conviction—"Helo! dry land! Hiyou salmon; maybe they walk over them!"

Thought and talk here ran on salmon and gold and gold and salmon, and very little else was discussed; the wealth so huge a run of fish was to put into the cannery owners' pockets, and those far greater riches to be thawed and scraped out of the frozen ground in the lately discovered gold regions of the arctic Klondyke.

Boats from Seattle and Victoria for Alaska were crowded with sanguine miners anxious to have their share of the golden harvest already being gathered by those hardy pioneers who had crossed the mountains and the Arctic wastes, packing on their backs their food and all worldly goods long before Dawson as a "city" was thought of. The boats stopped at Wrangel, a heaven-abandoned spot, described to me by a fellow passenger as consisting of two cesspools and an open drain, and Juneau—with Douglass Island opposite—home of the famous Treadwell gold mines.

Here, in the Lynn Channel, in a most comfortable Treadwell launch, we tried our hands at halibut fishing, our non-success with the fish being amply made up for by an excellent Treadwell lunch. There was plenty of snow and ice on the hills around, and a good deal of floating ice, which made it very cold for the fingers holding the long deep-sea lines, which we hoped would attach themselves to one of the 175-lb. monsters said to be about in these seas. The captain's son, a little boy and keen fisherman, alone had a pull, so suddenly and so forcibly that he was only saved from joining the fish by the strength of the back end of his trousers, which luckily held under a very severe strain.

Scagway, the terminus of the journey by sea to the gold regions of the interior, had for some time been groaning under the rule of an American outlaw and his band of ruffians, ably assisted by the United States Marshal, who preyed on those going to the gold fields and on those coming out, frequently adding murder to robbery. However, on the day but one before our arrival the leader, Soapy Smith by name, had been killed by the outraged citizens, whose patience had at last come to an end, shot by the leader of the townspeople at an open-air meeting which Smith had tried to break up, but not before the latter had

mortally wounded his chief opponent. Some of the band had been gathered into the shanty prison, the remainder having retired into the hills to be presently collected and brought down by my host of the hotel as captain of the Civil Guards. Scagway then consisted of rows of very primitive wooden shanties, mostly drinking saloons, supply depôts, and transport agencies, erected among huge stumps of trees, all that remained of the once primeval forest. Wonderful advertisements, gigantic in size and gorgeous in colour, were displayed everywhere, but one which excelled all in beauty was painted on an enormous rock close to the harbour recommending "cristallized eggs" to one and all as the best food for the whole of mankind. A huge hen flapping her wings and dancing a *pas de-seul*, in delight apparently at having been safely delivered of a particularly good-looking and nobly-shaped egg, the whole in colour which would frighten any domestic fowl and no doubt aid in the laying process.

Of course the White Pass and Yukon Railway was not then built, and all supplies were taken to Lake Bennett by horses and thence by boats; the remains of 8,000 of these poor pack-horses were even then scattered over the White Pass.

On Soapy Smith's removal the citizens and visitors of Scagway breathed freely once more; their lives and hard-earned gold were no longer in continued danger, but the news that the dreaded band had been captured had not yet reached a number of very rich miners who had crossed the Chilkoot Pass and just arrived at Dyea on their way home—pioneers who two years before had packed in through snow and ice and discovered, and now owned, some of the richest creeks on "Eldorado," "Sulphur," "Bonanza," &c. Having safely brought their golden load so far, they naturally were very anxious to leave by our steamer—there were not many boats then—but afraid to come to Scagway a few miles away, on account of Soapy Smith and his scoundrels. Overjoyed at being reassured on this point by the arrival at Dyea of the second officer in the steamer's launch, they presently appeared at Scagway, about fourteen of them, attired in their last remaining suit, which evidently had done noble duty, and carrying in their only blanket nuggets innumerable. They, mostly Irish Americans, were a rough, hardy, unkempt-looking lot; and no wonder, after two years of such a life in such a climate. Highly delighted at being safe on board,

they all came into the saloon cabins, and what a paradise that must have been to them! They proved thoroughly well-behaved and most interesting fellow passengers; they had brought out a great deal of gold—all they could carry in nuggets—of all shapes and sizes, and larger sums in bank orders. They owned the best claims on the best creeks and were rich men one and all. Often do I wonder, and much would I like to know, what has since happened to those fellow passengers of mine.

They were most grateful to the captain for having kept the ship and sent for them to Dyea, and presented him with a large and very beautiful nugget and an address, composed after much difficulty by three of them. This address, read out after dinner, was a great success; part had evidently been copied from some book—where it poetically hoped that the skipper, after all the storms of life, would at last anchor in a haven of rest where fogs, ice, or gales could no longer reach and trouble him. May they one and all have found such a peaceful spot, and—stuck to their riches!

## XXVI

### GOATS AND SHEEP IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

1897

OUR outfit, consisting of three men, twelve horses, three tents, provisions for six weeks, and all the other necessary impedimenta were supplied by Mr. T. E. Wilson, of Banff, a station on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and sent on to Laggan, further up the line, to await our arrival. The head man, Fred, a native of Montana, proved himself a first-class packer, for his loads, thanks to the excellence of the "diamond" hitch, rarely shifted even on the most difficult ground, and a mountaineer very trying to keep up with. He ate tobacco and thrived on it. No. 2, who hailed from our Cumberland, was the *bête noir* of our party in more ways than one. We took him in the belief that he was a hunter, to which proud title he, however, did not even aspire; he was always clothed in black—a blot on the landscape—and when his mouth was not engaged in eating it poured forth the vilest language, the worst extract from his native slums mixed with the choicest American. Fred's conversation was indeed equally forcible, but he averaged the strongest points with quotations and names from the Bible. But at the tail of the caravan No. 2 was very valuable; when any of the pack-horses strayed off the trail in the difficult country covered with windfalls, he would pour forth language unceasingly with ever-increasing vigour until even the most awkward pony returned frightened and cowed to its companions. No. 3 was our cook, a young Englishman, and just the right man in the right place.

It would be impossible to praise too highly our twelve Indian ponies; they were simply marvellous in their sure-footedness,

whether crawling or jumping over the thousands of logs and trees lying in intricate confusion on the ground and each other; when travelling over the long and dangerous stone-slides where a false step would surely have sent pony with rider or pack tumbling down into the valley or river far below, or in fording the many rapid and deep streams with a precarious foothold of slippery boulders. In our ignorance we had not brought any dogs, and thanks to this neglect the bears, cinnamon and grizzly, which without doubt inhabited several of the valleys passed through, remained unseen, and no snow fell at that time to render tracking possible. At the last moment when made aware of the desirability of having dogs (small foxhounds or beagles would be best) we annexed two curs, an Irish terrier belonging to a policeman to whom we paid five dollars for the brute, and a collie. The former had, so the story went, gained a reputation as a "bear" dog by having jumped on to a grizzly soon after that animal's death, which showed at all events the dog's intelligence in so far that he waited with his acrobatic feat until quite certain that the bear was really dead. All our pack did, however, was to hunt butterflies, and squirrels and mice when we had reached an altitude too great for the former small game.

At the end of the second week in September we made a start, crossing the Bow River, passing over some horrible country, miles and miles of windfalls, and to say the least of it very tiring, but with the aid of No. 2 in full blast behind we got well into the first valley by the afternoon. These valleys in this part of the Canadian Rockies are very narrow and drained by rivers now shallow but in the spring roaring torrents. Beautifully clear and blue they are as they rush over the many boulders and rocks which try to bar the way, adding a great charm to the lovely scenery already so lovely and grand. From the edge of the rivers rise the mountains clothed on their lower half by a dense forest of deep green spruces and a thick undergrowth of blackberry, blueberry, and other berry scrubs, ferns and grass; grass, herbs, lichen, and moss stretch away beyond to the bare rocks, which, covered with snow, form the tops of all these mountains. These huge masses acted on by the frost easily break up and



roll down in immense bodies into the valleys, often filling them completely. Upon the higher peaks snow lay thickly, and lovely glaciers were very plentiful, the glistening pure white snow contrasting most strikingly with the pale blue of the ice often hundreds of feet in thickness.

Feeding on the grass just below the upper bare rocky portion of the mountains the goats are generally found, and before many days were over there we discovered a herd looking like tiny white dots from below. It being then too late the stalk had to be postponed until morning, when the goats had disappeared. As they, however, could not have wandered very far, we scrambled up the steep mountain-side, puffing and blowing terribly, to their feeding-ground of the day before, only to find them after a lot of spying on the almost perpendicular side of the mountain opposite, a huge glacier and moraine intervening. C. and I had had enough climbing, at least we thought so, but Fred, anxious to display his qualities as a mountaineer, volunteered to try and get behind the game and drive it back, C. to remain where he was, and I to climb down to the moraine and scramble to the glacier. C. sat down contentedly and smoked; I accepted the proposal as if delighted with the prospect—it was our first day among the mountains—and started on the expedition getting safely to the bottom, but not without great difficulty and many a slip on to the 50-foot high pyramidal ledge of loose stones at the foot of the glacier. Fred did succeed by lighting a fire and shouting in driving the goats back across the latter, but they took up a position on an overhanging ledge of rock high up on the mountain on my side and altogether out of reach. The terrible Fred having rejoined me answered my suggestion of home and dinner by the horrible proposal of a climb up the moraine with a chance of a shot from the top. Unable to suggest this exploit to C., who still sat smoking hundreds of feet above, I started with Fred, who had in the meantime refreshed himself by eating more tobacco, up the very steep incline, a mass simply of loose stones worn smooth by ice action all ready to move at the slightest touch. We scrambled up on hands and feet with many halts for breath, slipping down a foot in every two and constantly falling. As we got higher up the

goats became alarmed and moved up on to a higher ledge, dislodging on their way many stones, which gathering impetus as they descended whizzed and bounded past us like cannon-balls. It was most enjoyable, the more so because when at last arrived at a certain rock utterly beat, I blazed away cartridge after cartridge without a single hit. C., who had heard the fusillade but could see nothing, naturally thought that I had bagged at least a dozen, and was greatly disappointed with my shooting!

During our march further up this valley, which became more and more picturesque as it narrowed, we saw several more bunches of goats, which, however, always escaped us until one day six fell to our '808's; they had very good heads, but unfortunately two were broken in the terrible fall they got when hit on to the rocks below. The Stony Indians, who were hunting in this valley when we again passed through on our return march, had killed over forty goats here in their wholesale manner. If only game laws could be framed for and enforced against Indians generally, how much more plentiful would game of all kinds in Canada become!

We then crossed the Saskatchewan River and encamped after several marches just above the timber line at an altitude of over 7,000 feet and well in the sheep country.

We found these deer-like animals much more difficult to approach than the goats, far more wary and ever watchful; the rams, surrounded by ewes placed as vedettes all round their lords, were ever ready to give instant warning of danger, when the herd would disappear as if by magic. They live among the highest mountain ranges on patches of coarse grass growing on the almost bare rock, coming down in winter with the snow. Lovely views we had of the surrounding country, especially from the "sheep" mountain, thus named because here we saw our first herd. Across a very narrow deep valley lay a huge glacier surrounded by lofty snow peaks, the glacier ending far below in a wall of deep-blue ice several hundred feet thick into which Nature had carved two lovely grottoes, birthplaces of the Saskatchewan and Athabasca Rivers, infants here but soon to become giant streams and flowing in opposite directions. The weather had been perfect all the time, with hard frost at night, but here the first snow fell which, however, did not remain long

on the lower ground. There were a few ptarmigan not yet quite white, otherwise bird life was noticeable only by its almost entire absence, especially in the forests below, where only a few foolhens and moosebirds were to be seen on rare occasions.

On our first day in this upper valley we saw a flock of sheep feeding at the foot of a mountain and tried to stalk them, crawling on hands and knees and in various other uncomfortable attitudes, only to find that the outposts which we had not noticed, being almost the exact colour of the ground and motionless, had given the alarm—having first, no doubt, watched the extraordinary antics of the bipeds below—and disappeared over the crest of the mountain. We tried to cut them off, but although we saw them again through our glasses and admired and coveted the two splendid big-horns, they never came within range. We had several stalks after others, but only got a small ram; never succeeding in getting above them, it seemed impossible to approach sufficiently near from below, the males were far too well guarded.

On one occasion C. and I walked alone, one on each side of a narrow valley, which indeed had almost been filled up by huge blocks of rock fallen from the mountains forming it. Noticing some very fresh sheep spoor I went on, and climbing up on to one of the boulders saw a small marsh some way beyond and four ewes and two rams feeding in it. Quietly slipping down I went on very cautiously to the last rock, fully satisfied that my chance of a shot at a ram was at last about to offer, but to my intense disgust the swamp was empty when I peered round the boulder and the sheep already half-way up the mountain opposite. This was a great disappointment, but to attempt to follow them across the marsh was useless and very nearly so to try and approach them by scrambling over the long, noisy stone-slide, at the further end of which they stood and where only an occasional rock, rising beyond the others, offered a doubtful hiding-place.

After a consultation, C. and I agreed to attempt it, however, and off we clattered and slipped and stumbled over the field of loose stones until from a rock sufficiently large enough to hide us we had a look around. There about 400 yards away lay the big ram, and standing close to him the smaller one on the lookout. They had not seen us but were intently watching the

place below near the swamp where I had lately been. The presence beyond of many ewes at once explained the emptiness of the marsh, for those sharp-eyed sentries had from their higher position seen me and given the alarm. Not daring to go further, we decided to wait for the ram to rise, for as he lay half his body was hidden by rocks. We ate our lunch and shivered, became thoroughly cold and uncomfortable, for it was very chilly and snowing hard, but the ram took no compassion on us and did not seem to mind the cold and snow. Our patience at last exhausted, we tossed up a coin or a button for the shot and C. won it, but not the big-horn's head, for that disappeared over the nearest ridge.

At last we had to give up sheep hunting; snow began to fall heavily and we were nine long marches away from the railway and did not wish to be snowed up. To keep the pot boiling we shot a ewe or two—there was nothing else edible about—and we all thought the goat's meat less "goaty" than the mutton.

In spite of the poor bag it was a most enjoyable trip, but we ought to have had a good hunter apiece so as to be independent, and proper dogs for the bears.

## XXVII

### THE ·308 AND BEARS

1898

ON May 2, 1898, I arrived in search of bears at Kelowna (Indian for grizzly), a small town on the Okanagan Lake, having previously secured the services of that well-known and able guide and hunter, Aeneas MacDougall. Aeneas, if called an Indian, would probably be greatly offended, for his grandmother had been a French Canadian, but white blood seemed scarce even in the veins of his father, while he himself has the broad Mongolian face and dark colouring of a true Siwash Indian. The family lives on a native reserve on the opposite shore of the beautiful mountain-girt lake, and subsists by agriculture, fishing, and trapping. The male members take shooting parties in spring and autumn into the surrounding country, and in return pocket goodly sums. Their name as reliable guides has long since been made, and fees are correspondingly large.

We, Aeneas, his brother as cook, I, and six horses, were bound for the mountains drained by the Mission Creek which enters Okanagan Lake close by a Mission station—the oldest white settlement in the country.

We passed many small ranches all doing well in this fertile valley. We crossed a range of treeless hills and mounds over which Nature had lavishly spread a gorgeous carpet of brilliant gold, a sheet of dwarf marigolds in full bloom, the blossoms so close together as almost to hide entirely the silvery grey leaves of the parent plant—a lovely picture in this brilliant sunshine and a pasture greatly appreciated by our horses, who every moment stopped to raise the flowers, but utterly disdained the leaves. Indeed, our ponies enjoyed themselves thoroughly during that

springtime excursion; fresh, luxuriant grass was everywhere, flowers and sweet herbs in plenty, while later on when we returned and the marigolds were dead, lupins had taken their place in extraordinary profusion, changing the colouring of Nature's carpet from richest gold to brightest blue. Then we entered the bush, riding among spruces and pines, patches of bright green tamarac, balsam, and cottonwood, the green mountains on either side sloping to the creek, which, filled with snow-water, rushed noisily towards Okanagan Lake. Lynxes had evidently been trapped here in plenty during the winter; their skulls, bones, and pads were hanging on many a bush—thankofferings to the Great Spirit for the successful hunt—an ancient custom even now followed by the old-fashioned Indian. In my small experience these offerings always consist of that which is absolutely useless to the giver, such as bare bones and pads, never of anything which is of any market value, or capable of digestion by an Indian's stomach. An old Ojibbeway Indian, my companion in another part of the country, never failed to transfix the paper wrapper of his lunch on one of the highest boughs of an adjacent bush by way of offering to the Spirit, but never until the last morsel of the contents had been gratefully accepted by his own stomach.

After two marches Aeneas and I left our camp on the creek to prospect the country for bear, finding on the very first day fresh marks of a grizzly, who apparently had made his home in the thick brush which covered the mountain-top. But these bears are very difficult to find, roaming as they do over a very large area, and hiding in all sorts of impossible places. We therefore left the carcase of a deer in an open spot—a card of invitation for our friend to meet us. The deer was easily procured; they were in plenty, feeding on the sweet, new grass, and visiting alkali spots here and there in quest of seidlitz powders. After securing the best parts for our larder, we left the remainder to get "gamey," the better to attract Mr. Grizzly, who has a powerful nose, and prefers his venison *haut-gôût*. This meat although, of course, out of season, was most acceptable in our menu, which until then had consisted of bacon and beans three times a day.

The remains of many deer, dead from climate, ticks, or want of food in winter or early spring, lying about on the mountain-

side are visited by bears, who, foul feeders as they are, pick up any tasty morsel, crack the shin-bones, and lick out the foetid marrow and the numerous beetles which this dainty article attracts. Anything and everything is food for bears, they are not particular; their stomach never rebels—happy creatures!

While the sun was rapidly preparing the venison to bruin's liking we roamed over the mountains looking for other bears, admiring as we went the beautiful mountain scenery, the bright verdure of grass and herbs which framed the bright patches of colour of innumerable wild flowers, the grand spruces and pines with golden-brown stems. Black-tailed deer, now hornless, and still in their grey winter coat, were remarkably tame, and numerous ground and tree-squirrels busily dissected fir cones, and here and there a cock blue grouse strutted and swaggered along the trunk of a fallen tree. A fine fellow this, in a bluish-grey coat; his jet-black tail, barred with white on the under-surface, is raised and spread out to the full like a fan; the brightest orange membrane above the eyes and beautiful white collar are displayed to the utmost as, with head well up and ludicrously high step, he marches majestically along, every now and then shaking and rattling his opened wings to attract the attention of his wife or wives—a proud monarch indeed!

At last, one afternoon came Aeneas's marching order: "I tink deer stink now, we go," and we went, climbing the mountain near the top of which our bait lay upon a huge rock overlooking the steep slope. It was a fatiguing walk, but all fatigue vanished when, on approaching the spot, Aeneas's face widened into a satisfied grin as he whispered the inspiring words, "Dere is grizzly; he sleep." Unable at first to see the bear, my attention was soon drawn to a yellow patch near the end of the rock—the bear's nose, nothing else was visible, and that snout a hundred yards away, immediately above us. The intention to let sleeping bears lie until we should have got round and above our friend was nipped in the bud; bruin had already heard or smelt us, probably the latter, for it was very hot, and raising his head with a yawn, he lazily sniffed the air in all directions. Now, although taught never to fire at a bear from below, grizzlies were scarce, and the probability of this one retiring to where he would at once become invisible was great;

then again the invincibility of the '308 plus dum-dum bullet had been so constantly dinned into my ears that without loss of time I gave it a trial, firing at the now exposed neck and scoring a hit. Instead of dropping the grizzly at once the shot had the opposite effect; he jumped like a flash from the ledge, gave two hoarse, angry coughs, and rushed down the sharply-sloping ground straight towards us at his very best pace, turning, fortunately for our skins, sharply to the right when about fifteen yards away. Here, on getting another bullet, this time in the side, he stumbled badly and would have fallen had not a young cotton-tree caught and held him up. We thought that he was ours, but the grizzly was of a different opinion; he went on and on and very fast too, eventually crossing the mountain-top on his way probably to a deep gulch on the other side. The cotton-tree stem was thickly smeared with blood; there was blood on the trail which we followed until dark, but at last realising the ease with which the bear had scrambled up the steep mountain-side, we most unwillingly gave up the pursuit—to be renewed next day with no better result. It was a bitter disappointment, but the old bear hunter guide told me that he had several times seen the dum-dum bullet fail, and therefore, with bears, had no confidence in it; it appears to lose impetus when passing through the thick, hairy coat the animal carries, to bury itself in the dense layer of fat, and it breaks no bones. The fat and hair again quickly close the small external wound, making the pursuit difficult and slow. The blood on the trail, abundant at first, became rapidly less and less, until all sign was lost; only on a tree here and there it still showed as the bear had brushed against it in his flight. The uselessness of the dum-dum bullet against these animals was evidenced still more decidedly in the case of the black bear. Shortly after our encounter with the grizzly we found the fresh spoor of his black brother, and him we also tried to coax to a savoury dish of venison, specially prepared by us and the sun. The bear, however, outwitted us, ate the bait during a dark, moonless night, and never showed himself, although we waited for him morning and evening; afterwards he left the country, our presence having probably interfered with his accustomed hours for meals.

When climbing about one day on the mountain-side among thick scrub we suddenly came upon another black bear grubbing



among some roots. Although hardly ten yards away, he seemed altogether unaware of our presence until his attention was sharply drawn to us by the entry of a dum-dum bullet into his right shoulder. Instead of instantly tumbling over as was to be expected of a properly educated bear, he, to our intense astonishment, ran away as if untouched, and disappeared like a bolt among the scrub. We followed that blood-trail for over two miles until it ended in a dense cedar swamp. The fallen tree the bear had crossed to enter the thicket showed ample blood smears, but beyond those all trace was lost. We went round the swamp, which apparently he had not left, looked through it that day and again on the next, but the wounded bear was never found. The swamp, indeed, was an impossible place to search properly; huge cedars of many generations lay piled one on top of the other, the swamp itself being hidden by dense alder and willow scrub, ferns, reeds and grass, by everything likely to afford a secure hiding-place; without dogs there was no chance for us.

The much-belauded '308 was now, and deservedly so, in utter disgrace; two bullets fired into a grizzly, and a third into a black bear sitting motionless only ten yards away, with the sole result of making those animals travel at a pace they probably had never thought possible until then, up the steepest mountain-side and through the thickest bush. This was too disheartening!

Our confidence had gone, as had, no doubt, also any other bears from the now disturbed country, and, as the main river was too swollen to permit our crossing to another and promising district, we turned our horses homeward, and arrived at Kelowna bearless, but determined never again to go bear hunting with that wretched '308 or without dogs. A good Indian cur would probably have secured us two beautiful rugs.

On this occasion I went to Canada *via* New York in the *Campania*, and, returning to England by the *Lucania*, could not help comparing these voyages in every comfort and luxury with the discomfort of my first two trips across the Atlantic in 1862.

The steamer of 929 tons I then went over in belonged to

some Mediterranean Line and was chartered to take cargo out to Canada and bring grain back. We had the bad luck to meet the full force of the equinoctial gales, and had terribly bad weather almost all the way. Most of the sails—the boat was square-rigged—were blown away, and most of the live-stock, intended for our food and carried in those days in coops arranged on the deck, washed overboard. Water splashed about in the cabins and saloon—it was decidedly uncomfortable. Then, of course, all state-rooms were aft and opened into the saloon, with an oil lamp in the partition between every two cabins, which dim and smelly light was extinguished by the carpenter every evening at 10.30. There were about twenty passengers all told, among them a then very well-known American—G. F. Train—whose tramway schemes in London had failed and made him very bitter against England.

We left London on August 18th, and arrived at St. John's, N.F., on September 4th, at Halifax four days later, and on the 17th at Montreal.

Loaded with loose grain up to the hatches, we left again on September 24th, to meet another gale as bad as the other. Water somehow got in among the wheat, which naturally swelled and threatened to burst the decks. By hard work a sufficient quantity was got out and thrown overboard, thereby greatly lessening the danger, still the trip was not particularly enjoyable. Once more salt water found its way into the saloon and carried off our poor hens, ducks, and pigs. We did not reach Gravesend until October 15th, after a very disagreeable trip of twenty-two days.

## XXVIII

### MORE ABOUT BEARS IN THE ROCKIES

1899

**T**HE want of success last year with the bears only made me the keener to try my fortune once more, and having heard that one of the most experienced bear hunters was ready to take me to "the best country in British Columbia" for grizzlies, I at once made arrangements, and early in May joined my guide "somewhere" on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Owing, however, to the lateness of the season and the large amount of snow which still remained on the mountain-tops, we had to postpone our start for nearly a month, and then only with great difficulty were we able to cross a certain summit and to get into the selected valley.

During the weary days of waiting at the hotel every loafer and prospector had tales to tell of personal encounters and undesired meetings with bears, which animals according to the narrators seemed, to say the least of it, very numerous and very large and ferocious; in fact, their number, size, and ferocity apparently increased with the amount of whiskey in the atmosphere, an experience, by the way, also recorded by some one else.

Well, at last we reached our camping-ground in the promised land, and pitched our tents in a narrow valley formed by two nearly parallel mountain ranges. Our ground was further narrowed by a river on one side and huge masses of snow on the other, which still remained piled up at the foot of the mountains, the result of snow-slides in the early spring. It necessitated the most perfect system of irrigation to keep our tents dry from the

water which ran over our ground in a thousand streams from the now melting snow towards the river.

Our party consisted of myself, the hunter, a Swede by birth, but long resident in Canada, with much experience in bear hunting besides being a charming companion, Fred Anderson by name. The cook, Sandy Fraser, although many years away from the land o' cakes, still proudly wore his glengarry cap adorned with a silver lion, an article of apparel he had brought with him from Scotland over thirty years ago. His other garments seemed to date from a similar period. We had seven horses and three "bear dogs," "Tim" and "Jumbo," collies, and "Jack," a mixture of collie and retriever, who had not escaped unscathed from numerous encounters with wounded bears. He had a huge scar on his back and a broken hind leg, which luckily had mended well and now gave him no trouble; nor had his wounds affected his nerve.

Jack made a pretty picture when his keen nose warned him of the presence of a bear. If not very near he would simply sniff the air; if close, the dog trembled all over in the greatest excitement, tucked in his tail and drew up one forefoot, pointing as a pointer does at partridges. A quick, imploring look at his master said almost in words, "Please do let me have a hunt."

From both banks of the swollen river rose the almost parallel mountain ranges, that on the right abruptly, but leaving the narrow strip on our side which gradually rose as it approached the hills. With the exception of a long, swampy grass-grown meadow in front of our tents, the valley was clothed partly with spruces of all ages and partly by a dense growth of willow 6 to 8 feet high. The former here and there ran up the mountain-sides, but kept well clear of where the huge masses of snow slide down in the early spring; the latter, almost impenetrable to man or beast, flourish where the spruces are not, at the edges and foot of the snow-slides, often extending as far as the river bank and enclosing small patches of meadow where bears could frequently be seen feeding and digging up roots. The snow-slides now were bare rock or covered with loose stones except where earth remained; there a luxuriant vegetation had sprang up on the disappearance of the snow, of grass, herbs, flowers, and ferns. Here again bears dig up roots and tubers, especially those of the wild potato and onion, travelling through the dense

bush from one slide to another over their own well-worn trails. During our visit heavy snow still remained on mountain crest, and at the foot of the slides it lay in huge masses mixed with trees and stones carried down from above. The bears lie up during the warm hours of the day among the thick spruces close to running water, and in the evening retire to near the snow-line in the higher regions. But they are restless creatures, especially in the love season when both males and females roam all over the country in search of a mate, the mothers hiding their cubs when they go courting. The quest of food also keeps them constantly on the move, grass, roots, tubers, skunk cabbage, game fresh or high, and, when all else fails, gophers, which they dig out of their holes, often from a depth of more than 5 feet. Bears in a late spring when snow still lies as a rule do not go far away from their dens, but feed close round and very difficult it is to find out where they do feed. This may be because the soles of their feet are then very tender from long disuse—too tender for forays far from home. In the autumn berries of all kinds—and they are innumerable in Canada—are placed on the menu, but the white clusters of the red willow are the favourites. Berries are eaten as medicine, potatoes and roots to produce the large store of fat with which they enter their winter dens.

During the first few days we saw any number of big bears, brown, cinnamon, and silver-tip, and I readily agreed with my hunter that if this valley was not the best in British Columbia it would be bad to beat. Here, apparently, was a bear hunter's paradise and we had visions of returning to the railway with a splendid collection of the most beautiful skins; but, alas! it soon became evident that seeing bears and bagging bears is not by any means the same thing. At first they showed themselves freely, but soon became aware of our presence and scared by the smell of the fire and chopping and other noises in camp. They then took to feeding all night and hid as much as possible among the willows and spruces by day, probably laughing at us as we sat perched in most uncomfortable positions in trees overlooking feeding-places, shivering with cold and the prey of clouds of mosquitoes. Although nearly a month in that valley we only got two bears, a brown and a small cinnamon, the former as he ran past me over a bare rock chased by a dog, and

the latter as he left the thick scrub to feed on a patch of grass which we were watching from an adjacent tree. We watched the trails and feeding-places diligently but never had a shot at those much coveted silver-tips, the biggest and most beautiful of all, here called grizzlies, of which there were many about. The willow scrub was too dense and too perfect a cover, and there was no bait obtainable to draw the game out on to the open patches of grass which we could watch. No deer were to be got, no goats; some of our horses, especially an old buckskin mare, were indeed lucky to leave the place alive.

In the "fall" we went out again and tried everything to get within shot of bears of which fresh signs were plentiful, but luck was not with us and we bagged nothing. We tied the cook to a piece of meat by means of a long rope, which he trailed behind him from where the bears had recently been digging, a polite invitation for them to join us near where the meat was subsequently fastened to a stake. A big silver-tip did apparently take the hint; we saw him slowly walking towards the bait, his thick coat swaying to and fro at every step, when, unfortunately, a draught from a valley behind gave him our wind. The bear stopped suddenly, turned sharply, and disappeared among the dense spruce scrub. Such is luck and the keenness of a bear's nose! That bear, although anxiously awaited morning after morning and evening after evening, never showed himself again; the bait, however, was taken during the dark hours, renewed and taken again. After that he came no more at night but actually carried off the next piece in broad daylight, a most unusual time, when, of course no one was there to see. We gave up this gentleman after that, he was altogether too sharp for us! Unless a person stumbles by accident upon a bear the chance of getting close to him is very remote; bait is the only means of drawing him within shot, and then only if the wind be right, for bruin has a most highly developed nasal organ. My hunter told me that if you rub dry bear gall on your clothes no bear will smell you—but we had first to get our bear! Chewing wild onion leaves is said to have the same effect with black bears; we tried it, but nothing came near us, and I don't wonder!

One is often told in those parts that so-and-so has shot a great many bears, and no doubt the skins can be produced and bullet holes shown, but I have strong suspicions that most of

these bears were first caught in a steel trap and then shot, and that a close examination of the fore legs would show marks of spiked jaws. Bears always use certain well-worn trails through the brush on the mountain-side and elsewhere, and would be very likely to put their foot into well-placed traps. Traps are against the law, and so are spring guns, a fact which does not by any means stop the use of either. Hunters say that everything is fair in dealing with a bear, as he is certain to do you if he can. And then, perhaps, Fraser (the cook) was right when he said, "Well, there are many more killed in hotels and saloons than were ever shot or probably have ever existed."

There is no doubt of the wholesome fear prospectors and hunters have of the large bears. The former generally confess that when met they have given them a wide berth—the latter are chary about going after a wounded bear except with dogs. Opinions differ as to whether the big bears, wounded or unwounded, will attack a man. My hunter states that he has never seen a grizzly—silver-tip—not go for him when wounded, but only knows one instance of a black bear attacking under the same circumstances. Silver-tips attack sometimes if unwounded, and men are known to have saved themselves by climbing a tree, for, of course, these and the big brown bears with their straight claws cannot climb, but they can reach a long way. Their cubs can climb, and do so if danger threatens. About four years ago a big silver-tip killed two prospectors while asleep in their camp. Nothing was found of them there except the hat of one, some blankets and a feather pillow ripped open. The men had been carried away, partly eaten, and the remainder buried, as bears, like dogs, will do with any surplus food. A friend who visited the place shortly after the tragedy was at once chased by the bears, but escaped up a tree with the loss, however, of half a boot and one toe. The bear stood sentry over him for six hours, went away, came back, but eventually gave it up and allowed the man to return to camp. His comrades now set a steel trap, into which the bear put his foot; the latter was found between the jaws but not its late owner. The bear's spoor, easily recognised by the stump, has several times been seen. Anderson, about four years ago, shot four goats near the top of a mountain on successive days, leaving each to be brought down the next day. In every instance was

the goat removed and partly buried. When at last the culprit, a large silver-tip, was found, he at once attacked the man, and was killed only after a desperate fight. The hunter holds a wounded bear in the greatest respect. He knows by experience how dangerous an animal he is, and never goes without his faithful dogs, who are only too keen to tackle any bear, however big. On the other hand, my hunter of 1898, also with a very large experience, did not believe in bears attacking, and the few I have seen wounded certainly did not. But in hunting bears, as all other dangerous game, there is one golden rule which should never be forgotten—Take the greatest care that you place your first bullet in a vital spot!

Roosevelt, in his "Life of a Ranchman," thinks that the grizzly's character has lately changed. Constant contact with rifle-carrying hunters for a period extending over many generations of bear life has taught the grizzly that he is his undoubted overlord as far as fighting goes. Roosevelt has only known one instance of a grizzly turning on a man when unwounded and suddenly come upon and cornered. He gives two instances from personal knowledge where a man has been killed by a grizzly: (1) Wounded bear charged, gun missed. (2) Man nearly stepped on an unwounded bear, there was no time to fire rifle. "Any of the big bears we killed on the mountains would, I think, have been able to make short work of either lion or tiger."

Another man with large experience says: "Grizzlies are not as savage as they were years ago when men were armed only with a single-barrel small-bore rifle, muzzle-loader. The dangers of bear hunting have greatly decreased with modern rifles."

The stomachs and bowels of bears towards the end of autumn shrink greatly, and before laying up the former are only about the size of two fists, while in summer they resemble that of a cariboo distended with grass. The digestive apparatus seems to prepare itself gradually for the long winter fast. The only authority apparently who notices this is T. G. Wood in his "Natural History." He is one of the few who agree with my hunter in that bears do not lose fat during hibernation; but he makes the extraordinary statement that grizzlies can climb trees! There seems but very little doubt that bears on leaving



their holes are very fat, but they lose their condition rapidly after eating the fresh spring grass on the mountain-side. Whether this also applies to she-bears, whose cubs are born four to six weeks before the mother leaves her den—in March—I do not know.

During our visit to the valley in the spring we saw a great many big bears, and one black, which (the former) seemed to differ greatly both in size and colour. There were brown bears, some turning grey, cinnamon, and, biggest of all, silver-tips, several of which had white collars, and also were of various shades. These were "grizzlies" here, while on the Pacific slope and in some other parts the grey-brown bear is the so-called "Old Ephraim," of the old hunters, and those delightful stories of Western life. Sir Samuel Baker says that that alone is the true grizzly.

There must be a great deal of inter-breeding to account for all these varieties, and Andersen tells me that black bears will breed with cinnamon and brown, also that black and brown cubs are often seen with the same mother. He says that silver-tips only breed among themselves; they are the biggest and live near the snow-line, and the higher the bigger they are; the older the greyer, and one has been seen quite white. After my return home I looked up the best authorities on this subject and append the result:—

Apart from polar bears most authorities only recognise two species of bears—the grizzly and the black; all others are varieties of both species, and these are infinite and include all shades of colour, grey, brown, red, and reddish. They differ not only in colour but also in shape of skull and general form. As Roosevelt remarks, the name of "grizzly" has reference to its character and not to its colour, and should, he supposes, be spelt "grisly," in the sense of horrible. It is so spelt by Cuvier.

Bears inter-breed like dogs, hence the varieties in colour, size, and shape; not only the big ones among themselves, but these also it is said by some with the very much smaller black bears—unless hunger prove stronger than love.

Most hunters have seen black and brown cubs together, and Dr. Rainsford met with three cubs of one sow, one almost yellow, one almost black, and one nearly grey, and notes

another case of a black bear sow with one-year-old grizzly cubs, shaped differently from the mother, and unmistakably owing both their shape and colour to the parentage of the male grizzly. These unions would produce the much smaller bears so often met with—the small brown and cinnamon—which never seem to become much bigger than the black bear. Of these I saw three examples last spring, evidently full grown; indeed one, the cinnamon, had two cubs.

Turner Turner—"Three Years' Hunting in the Great North-West"—however, believes that the cause of bears in some districts so far exceeding in size similar species from other parts of the same country is greatly due to climate and facilities of obtaining food. The huge bears of California probably never hibernate at all, feeding steadily the whole year round, while the comparatively diminutive ones of the North-West can only rely upon satisfying their appetites for three or four months in the year, actually spending five to seven months in a torpid state without any food whatever.

The big bears, silver-tip and brown grizzlies, frequent the higher regions, and probably, as my hunter said, as a rule breed among themselves, while the smaller cinnamon and black and brown ones roam among the brush and forest of the lower ranges, and no doubt do their best to avoid any dangerous familiarity on the part of their bigger brethren. In our valley the beautiful silver-tips far outnumbered the brown and grey bears, as they exceeded them greatly in size.

In his "Wilderness Hunter" Roosevelt divides bears into those which have long, straight claws and those with short, curved ones, a much better means of distinction than size or colour.

## XXIX

### A STALK ON SCARBA

1900

#### I.

IT was a truly perfect day on Scarba. Bright, glorious sunshine, the air clear and transparent; no cloud, no mist, nothing to interfere with the most extensive range of vision. All outlines were sharply defined against green sea or blue sky; the mountain ranges on the Argyllshire mainland, those on Jura and Mull, as also the many smaller islands and innumerable rocks, and not outlines merely, but details, stood revealed clearly as though seen through a glass.

Scarba itself, a green mountain rising out of the sea, forms a very pretty picture as we approach it from the mainland; a pedestal of dark rock covered with yellow seaweed a foreground of bracken and grass, patches of oak, mountain-ash now covered profusely with scarlet berries, of birch and alder, hazel and larch, the remainder being filled in by the gently rising mountain clothed in grass, heather, now in full bloom, giving colour, rushes, and moss. The west coast alone is precipitous and very rocky, and carries little vegetation, thanks to Atlantic gales, to the full fury of which it is so frequently exposed. This coast, inhospitable and wild as it is, is the home of the wild goats, descendants of those mentioned by Tennant in Lightfoot's "Flora Scotica" as long ago as 1777. Originally, I believe, these were white, and many are so still, but several black and brown goats having been imported long years ago from Colonsay to strengthen the blood, the result is a great variety of colouring. They are very wild, shaggy creatures,

with long coats, in many cases touching the ground, and horns which either resemble those of the true wild goat or those of the Angoras.

Red deer in plenty roam all over the island, and, thanks to the abundance and good quality of the grass, do exceedingly well. Venison being wanted, a stag had to be killed, and what could be more enjoyable than a stalk on a day like this and amid such surroundings?

As the stalker and I leave the lodge, we pass some magnificent stags imported to improve the breed; being fed here during the winter, they are not afraid of us and hardly move as we approach them. The wind blowing lightly from the south-east, we go at first in a north-westerly direction, pass through a larch plantation, and gradually ascending, come to a ridge and have a good look around. Several young stags were grazing some way off, all too small and not yet clean, but close to them the stalker spied a pair of horns belonging to a shootable beast. Slowly and carefully we lessen the distance, sometimes stooping low, creeping sometimes on hands and knees, and presently reach a small knoll overgrown with heather well within shot. The young stags had moved further down, but the old one was still in the same place and lying down in a cool peat-hole, his body almost hidden by heather. He also was tormented by midges and flies, and constantly moving his head to brush them away; the wind helped him, however, but not us, who, in our hiding-place, were entirely at their mercy, and the time seemed long indeed before he at last rose with the intention, probably, of seeking some place higher up and more exposed to the wind. But his intention, if such it was, was never carried out, for hardly had he risen when a bullet ended his life, and he fell dead on the very spot where he had lately rested. An old stag, clean, ten points, head going back—just the stag which ought to be killed in a forest.

As it still was very early, and I desired to get one of the wild goats which are generally found on the highest and most rocky westerly parts of the island, we, having sent the stag home, started on our climb to search the upper regions first. Wild indeed it was here, and the view on this most beautiful of days magnificent in colouring and extent—a glorious panorama of sea, islands, mountains, lochs, verdure, and bare rock. But of

goats there were none visible, so we continued in a westerly direction, and presently saw a few nannies and kids, but no billies. All the deer on the island seemed congregated on this face, fully exposed to the wind as it was, and all were moving upward to lessen the plague of flies in the stronger breezes above—a pretty addition to the picture as they lined the ridges and stood fully exposed on the skyline. They looked down at us, and no doubt wondered at our antics as we moved slowly and carefully on, spying frequently as we turned our faces to the south. At last we discovered a herd of eighteen, billies and nannies, crossing the valley below towards a hill overlooking the Atlantic end of the famous whirlpool of Corryvreckhan between Scarba and Jura. White and in various shades of brown and black, they had been feeding below us, but startled by some young stags which we had disturbed but not seen, were now running up the hill at a very smart pace. With the aid of a glass we saw among them a beauty, brown and white, with a grand head, and at once made up our minds to try for him. But what a long way off he then seemed! Fated to die, however, he himself helped us as much as lay in his power. Love led to his death—death which indeed he may have wished for on seeing himself abandoned by his favourite wives. When the herd which we were watching through the glass had got half-way up the hill our friend and another very fine fellow suddenly turned round, trotted down again and disappeared. The latter presently returned with two nannies, which he drove at a sharp trot after the others, butting at them all the while, and exceedingly angry no doubt at their having stayed behind. The other billy did not return, but went still further back, also after two white females who had made off in the opposite direction. After a while he stopped on a high rock casting longing looks after them, but too proud further to follow his faithless loves, he slowly turned to rejoin the herd, and was soon hidden from view. This gave us our chance. We ran, crept, and slithered down the hill to cut him off, carefully keeping out of sight, and peeping over a ridge after a while saw our friend below us looking lovingly towards the nannies. It was quite touching to watch him tear himself away at last and walk off; but in turning he saw us and rapidly made off, the bullet, as we afterwards found, only grazing his hind quarters. A sharp run at

our best pace down into the valley and up the other side brought us, very short of breath, to the top of the hill. Concealed behind a rock we looked for the goat, and soon found him standing on a rocky ledge overlooking the sea. A little more manœuvring took us within shooting distance, and a bullet ended the stalk. As we got nearer the odour became stronger and stronger, and at last almost overpowering. Indeed, he was most highly scented, but a fine trophy, the horns measuring 28 inches in length and 7 round the base. His brown and white coat was very long, some of the hair 18 inches in length. The stalker carried the head home at the end of a long stick, and I walked not behind as usual, but in front of him. Thus ended one of the most enjoyable and successful stalks of stag and goat on one of the most lovely days I have ever seen.

Ever before us had been the whirlpool of Corryvreachkan, swirling in circling eddies between our island and Jura, now calm in waltzing currents merely, but a terrible place when heavy Atlantic sea meets the tide in so narrow and rocky a passage. In the statistical account of Argyllshire the following legend about this whirlpool is handed down :—

“According to a tradition still believed in the Hebrides, Corryvreachkan, or the cauldron of Breachkan, received its name from a Scandinavian prince, who, during a visit to Scotland, became enamoured of a princess of the Isles and sought her for his bride. Her wily father, dreading the consequences of the connection, but fearful to offend the King of Lochlin, gave his consent to their marriage on condition that Breachkan should prove his skill and prowess by anchoring his bark for three days and three nights in the whirlpool. Too fond or too proud to shrink from the danger, he proceeded to Lochlin to make preparation for the enterprise. Having consulted the sages of his native land, he was directed to provide himself with three cables, one of hemp, one of wool, and one of women’s hair. The first two were easily procured, and the beauty of his person, his renown as a warrior, and the courtesy of his manners had so endeared him to the damsels of his country, that they cut off their hair to make the third, on which his safety was ultimately to depend ; for the purity of female innocence gave it power to resist even the force of the waves.

Thus provided, the prince set sail from Lochlin and anchored in the gulf. The first day the hempen cable broke; the second, the woollen cable parted. There still remained the gift of the daughters of Lochlin. The third day came, the time had nearly expired; his hopes were high; his triumph was almost achieved; but some fair frail one had contributed her flaxen locks; the last hope failed, and the bark was overwhelmed. The prince's body was dragged ashore by a faithful dog and carried to a cave that still bears his name, in which the old men point out a little cairn where tradition says the body of Breachkan was interred. From that time, the legend tells, the whirlpool was called Corryvreachkan."

As we left the island for the mainland, the sea seemed alive with cuddies—a small white fish—they were jumping about in shoals. Terns, herring, and black-backed gulls and cormorants plunged in among them, and secured their supper without trouble. A seal, no doubt taking his share also, showed his head every now and then, and looked at us with his big black eyes as we passed rapidly by. As the sun set behind us, its golden rays illumined salient features of the mainland hills, leaving untouched the dark-blue colouring of the deeper valleys; the yellow light crept steadily upward, the shadows followed, and, alas! another day was soon to close.

During the last few days of November I was once more on my way to Scarba, this time for the hind shooting, with orders to find and to kill twenty-five old ladies whose charms were no longer such as to make them desirable occupants of the forest.

Means and ways of travelling at this season differed from those provided during autumn, winter arrangements had come into force, and no steamer ran beyond Ardrishaig; closed and open postcarts, however, took us in some three hours or more to certain cross-roads, and a private carriage thence to the castle. Seen through a misty rain, the scenery in its autumnal colouring was very sombre and depressing, and passengers, luckily, were but few. It was a fair day at Lochgilphead but little going on; a lame horse tried hard, but apparently without success, to find a new master; a piper, dripping with rain, marched stolidly up and down in front of a whiskey shop, making sweet music as if his life—or whiskey—depended on it, and there

was no cause for regret when at last, the mails re-sorted, orders were given for a start.

A fellow passenger during the next stage took an aggressively affectionate fancy for me—whiskey again, no doubt. He told me all his family secrets, at least so it seemed from the little I was able to understand, but after a shilling had changed hands for more whiskey wherewith to drink my health, my friend got out to carry his good intentions into effect without the least loss of time.

Soon after dark we arrived at our destination for the night, and east wind rain and cold were soon forgotten before a cheery fire. How bare and deserted everything looked now, how different from my last visit, when all was bright in beautiful autumn weather! Thanks to a fair breeze on a luckily fine morning after a stormy night, our sailing-boat soon touched the shore of Scarba; I made myself at home in the lodge, once again enjoying the beautiful view from there of sea and mainland, of Jura and the many other islands and rocks scattered about.

Scarba now was in its winter garb, and a complete study in browns, pale greens, and yellows, of every conceivable shade. There was the pale yellowish brown of withered grass among the heather, the coarser kind in lovely crimson shading which grew in swampy ground, the rich brown of dead bracken; grey brown larches contrasting with the purple twigs of leafless birches. The heather, though green itself, was half hidden under its withered pinky-brown blossom; the grass, where still green, ran through every shade of colouring, as did the rushes also; the firs, in their dark green, alone were unchanged. Indeed, so did the deeper browns predominate nearly everywhere, that during the usual dark cloudy weather the general colouring of the ground so closely matched that of the darker hinds—those which we were after—that to see them clearly when standing still among the bracken was often very difficult; when not watching the stalker their white sterns alone gave them away. The dark-brown background equally protects the young, who in their first year are dark like the old ones, and only get their lighter coats the following spring. Particularly noticeable was this one morning, when a very bright light illumined the horizon, while black clouds covered the rest of



the sky; owing to the glare we found it almost impossible clearly to distinguish the outlines of deer, and difficult even to see them at all on ground which so closely resembled them in general colouring.

Although it rained only during one or two nights, a most fortunate provision for us on this usually very wet coast, the sky was cloudy all the time with one exception, when the hills on the mainland, covered with snow, stood out bright and clear against the beautiful reds, oranges, and yellows of sunrise, the brilliant colouring below gradually passing into a deep-blue sky above; it did not remain so long, but was soon hidden by cloud curtains.

With the exception of a few of the younger ones, the stags had now left the hinds, and more or less ragged had bunched together, all jealousies forgotten. They were apparently well aware that it was not them we were in search of, they had lost all their shyness, and stood calmly gazing at us as we passed, often within 80 or 40 yards, or even less; slowly turning, they walked away without fear and with full confidence in us. Was this trusting friendship due perchance to the hope that we might possibly kill certain mothers-in-law who to them seemed *de trop!* But the wonderful instinct which told the stags that at this season of the year we came not as foes, had apparently also taught the hinds that danger threatened them, for they seemed wilder now than the stags in the autumn, and often more difficult of approach. There were great numbers of them together, and perhaps only one, or at the most two, shootable beasts among them, if indeed any, and these were not easy to get at, well protected as they were by all the others. The deer generally were very restless, owing to the almost constant easterly winds, always on the move and look-out. The island was very wet, thanks to the late rainy weather, and crawling about and sitting on the ground when stalking and watching hinds became a very damp and cooling entertainment, but we were out every day as long as the light allowed, searching all parts of the island for the old ladies. The stalker's boots were provided with very inefficient laces—already made a note of in the autumn—which laces constantly came undone. When the climbing was easy I did not draw attention to them, but they always interested me and I watched

them carefully; when, however, on rare occasions it seemed advisable and instructive for a moment to admire the scenery it was necessary only to mention the bootlaces to get what I wanted and without giving myself away. The sport to me seemed every bit as good as that of stalking stags, and was most enjoyable; indeed, the fixed number—twenty-five—was killed all too soon. One hind, luckily only slightly wounded, towards evening got away; we followed it for a long time but never got up to it; a young stag kept it constantly on the move, prodding at it all the time until both entered a wood, and we never saw them again. Another, but much more severely wounded, also gave us a long chase, but fortunately we found it at last standing dead-beat among some rocks near the sea, two miles about from where it was shot. The bullet had traversed the abdomen from end to end and torn the stomach and bowels, the contents of which were escaping externally. Yet the poor beast, followed by a faithful friend which only left it at the last moment, had gone all that distance and at a very good pace. The stalker, who had the most extraordinary ideas about the recuperative powers of deer in general, stated his firm belief that, left to itself, this hind would certainly have recovered.

Rain fell heavily as we left the island with a full cargo of hinds, which not only had afforded excellent sport, but proved the best of venison.

### XXX

## TARPON IN FLORIDA

1901

WE were fishing in the "Boca Grande," the deepest of the several mouths of the twenty-five miles long Charlotte Harbour, opening into the Gulf of Mexico. The "harbour," a shallow expanse of sea, extending to the town of Punta Gorda on the mainland of Florida, is protected gulfwards by a line of "keys," or low mangrove and palmetto-covered islands, and in the deep channel between the two larger ones, Gasparilla and Petrucchio, was our fishing-ground. The deepest part—that most frequented by the tarpon, who passed through here chiefly on the flood tide to the shallower feeding-grounds or flats—is in the northern half of the "Boca," that adjoining Gasparilla Lighthouse, and here at the turn of the tides, and until these became too strong, were generally twenty-five or thirty boats, each carrying a keen fisherman and an equally keen "guide" or rower—black or white.

About four years ago, when trolling superseded still fishing, the Boca Grande became the Melton of tarpon fishing, for the depth of its waters alone permitted the doubtless superior sport. The former great resort for still fishing—the Captiva Pass, south of Petrucchio Island—is now almost deserted, only a very few old-fashioned tarpon fishers still keeping to their favourite haunt. Other famous fishing-grounds of former days near Punta Gorda and in the many inlets near Fort Myers have gone out of favour owing to scarcity of fish; where formerly tarpon abounded they are now rarely seen, banished, it is said, by great impurities in the water resulting from working the phosphate deposits near the coast.

There can be no doubt that trolling from a constantly moving boat must be much more interesting and exciting than sitting still hour after hour in an anchored one with nothing to do but to watch the coils of line on the seat in the hope that they may be run out by a fish. All keen anglers now collect in the Boca Grande, making their temporary home either on one of the many yachts or in Mr. Hughes' floating hotel about two miles away. This gathering of kindred spirits is very delightful; the boats when fishing are close together, and during the lunch hour, and when the tide runs too strongly, all collect at the Lighthouse. Fish are measured, weighed and admired, and the particulars of the capture discussed. A stroll along the snow-white strand entirely formed of shells follows, when always something new and beautiful is to be found, or among the palmetto scrub near the shores where orange-brown lantana and pink and white periwinkles are in full bloom. Shark lines are set from the pier—often successfully—and smaller fish caught, like pomponeaux or sheep-heads, for the table. Thus time passes pleasantly and quickly until the fleet puts to sea once more.

It was a bad season that of 1901: in a good one, one hundred fish have been landed in a month by one individual, while twenty-five was now the best score in eight to nine weeks. The scarcity of tarpon was ascribed by the guides to the stormy weather; it always blew from the N.W., and the heavy swell made it often very lively in the boats. We had several gales, lasting each about three days, when fishing was totally out of the question. Again, the heavy rollers of flood tide washing over high banks carried a large quantity of sand with them and made the water very thick and uninviting to the fish. Then tarpon like the sea warm, but the temperature, owing to the prevailing N.W. winds, remained always below their favourite degree. The above reasons were no doubt answerable to some degree for the smallness of the bags, but I fear others, and more serious ones, contributed their share. Thus so very many tarpon have been killed in this small extent of water since fishing began here, so many others have been pricked and badly wounded and no doubt made very shy of anything suspicious in the way of bait; they are probably kept away also by the large number of sharks which haunt the place—sharks which collect here, being

constantly fed with dead and dying fish thrown back into the sea, and with others which they take off the hooks of the prematurely jubilant fisherman, who, when nearing the shore, thinks his tarpon as good as landed. Whatever the real reason, the fact that it was a bad season remains, nor did it improve in any way after April as it always had done before.

But for all that it was very charming this life on the sea, in glorious air and lovely sunshine, close to the palmetto-covered islands framed in silvery sand, and in company with so many people all equally keen about the same sport. One or more of them was sure to be playing some fish; if not a tarpon, perhaps a shark, a jewfish, one of the rays, a channel bass or grouper, red or brown—the latter indeed proving a nuisance by constantly taking off the bait or hooking themselves; or a kingfish, the most sporting of all, each one as it touched the hook sending that well-known electric thrill through the fisherman, to be followed by a moment of intense uncertainty as to what kind of fish had taken a fancy to the bait, or whether it was or was not securely on the hook. Tarpon travel in schools, and when one boat has a "strike," others near are likely to be honoured also; guides row to a strike of tarpon as miners rush to a strike of gold.

A good guide in a good boat and the very best tackle are necessities, as also fresh bait cut from the silvery belly of a grey mullet, and kept by sinkers as near the bottom as possible, for there the tarpon feed on crabs and small fish. The "strike" of a tarpon varies in kind, and depends on whether he takes the bait from below or from above. When the former, the pull is very light and ceases at once; you draw up the line in the belief that you have missed another grouper, then suddenly, when least expected, the rod is almost jerked out of your hand, the reel rings and away shoots your tarpon. If the bait be taken from above, a heavy jerk and continued heavy pull necessitate a very firm hold on the rod and brake of reel; in both cases the line rushes out, however much you try to check it, cutting the water further and further away, until at last out comes the glorious silver fish, jumping high and straight out of the water, and shaking his head frantically like a bulldog in his effort to get rid of the hook. His appearance above water is received with a joyous shout by your boatman, for only then are

you sure that your fish is a tarpon, and the other fishermen envy you, but edge away to give you and your fish plenty of room. It is a time of intense excitement. The moment you feel what seems to you like the strike of a tarpon, your guide pulls for dear life in the direction away from the fish in order to put all possible strain on the line and drive in the hook, while you support his efforts by checking the whirling reel to the best of your ability. After the first jump you reel in as much as ever possible, in order to be ready for the next rush, which is followed by more glorious jumps, and so on until at last the fish becomes tired, and allows you to get him near the boat. It has been a steady and very heavy drag all the time, pulling in the line inch by inch, giving only when absolutely obliged and you cannot hold the fish, whose rushes gradually become less and less determined. Your arms ache, you have almost lost the use of your thumb, which presses against the brake of the reel; but when at last the beautiful tarpon lies on his side close to the boat, apparently tired out, you have to hold him there and drag him along while your boatman rows towards the beach. There, perhaps, you have another fight, but with your remaining strength you at last drag your prize on to the sand. He is now quickly measured, a silvery scale taken, and away he goes back into the sea. After such a battle, it always gave me great pleasure to watch the grand fish slip back into his native element; he had afforded plenty of exciting sport and all the hard work wanted; he was not really much the worse, and lived, one hoped, to fight another day. It seemed such a cruel thing to see these tarpon lying dead and dying on the shore, only to be thrown back into the water, food for sharks alone, for with the exception of the crews of occasional sponging schooners, no one would eat them.

But not by any means is every hooked tarpon landed; indeed, the great majority is not. So many accidents occur to suddenly change joy on the fisherman's part to disgust and intense disappointment. The interior of a tarpon's mouth is constructed of plates of hard bone jointed by ligamentous tissue, and covered with a thin membrane. It is impossible to force a hook into the bone, even by hand, and unless, therefore, it catches in one of the joints or in the lips the hook is certain to come away, generally during the second jump, which seems the critical one.

And then even the strongest line will sometimes break, or a shark swim off with what you had already considered your own. And yet, if you yourself were dead out of luck, and had been so for days and days together, and others seemed to you to get far more than their share of sport, the battle fought by them and their tarpon was very amusing to watch, and certainly far less fatiguing than fighting a fish yourself. It was very interesting also to look at the huge pelicans fishing morning and evening, as they swooped down on to their prey from a height and gobbled the captured fish into their capacious pouch, their meal being often disputed by some very precocious gulls. Turtle, too—the large yellow “loggerhead”—were very numerous; they frequently rose to the top to breathe, floated for a while on the surface, had a good look round with their large dark eyes, and disappeared; porpoises rolled lazily along; grotesque whiphrays flopped out of the water like some huge bat, and now and then a beautiful kingfish shot some 10 or 12 feet and more into the air, apparently in pursuit of a small fish, which in reality he had knocked out of the water in his lightning rush.

In calm, warm weather sometimes tarpon came in with the tide in hundreds, the sea literally seemed alive with them, all playing about and tumbling over one another on top of the waves, in the bright sunlight a really glorious sight, their metallic green and blue back contrasting sharply with the polished silver on their side. The sea was full of them, but not one would look at bait or hook; the fish were not feeding, only at boisterous play. Their meals are taken in the depths below, and there must the bait be invitingly displayed, for nowhere else will they look at it. Well, I had landed eleven and was very desirous of completing the dozen; time was getting short and strikes had lately become scarcer and scarcer. My best day had produced three tarpon, one of which took me over to the other shore of the Boca, a mile away at least, where it was landed after a long fight; he weighed 111 lbs. by measurement. This measuring gives the weight within a pound or two as was many a time proved, the formula being: Square the girth, multiply by the length in inches, and divide by 800.

The second fish on that day rushed at the bait from below, carried it up to the surface, and knocked the oar out of my boatman's hand. At first I thought there was nothing on the

hook, all weight having disappeared, until the guide's strong language told a different tale. Being well hooked the temporary slackness of the line was of no import and the fish was presently landed. A day or so before I had fought a hard fight with a tarpon when the line broke as he was lying exhausted on his side close to the boat. It was annoying, but he had given me plenty of fun and I only hope that the fish recovered thoroughly before attacked by a shark, and that he soon got rid of hook and line. Another tarpon qualified for a prize for jumping; during his first frantic rush he leaped clear over one of the boats, passing luckily between the fisherman and his guide. As he weighed probably well over 100 lbs. it would have been a serious matter had he hit either. Since landing the eleventh a fish had broken my line, and I had only had that one strike in two days, and therefore became anxious about the twelfth. The weather now was hot, and as most of the tarpon were said to be on the shallow flats feeding on crabs and basking in the sun, I gave still fishing a trial at Palmetto Keys, a number of small islands just north of the Captiva Pass. The bait, a large piece of mullet, is thrown as far as possible from the anchored boat, a certain amount of line coiled up on the seat, and nothing else is required but patience, and—a fish. If a tarpon moves away with the bait the line runs steadily out from the boat until the coil is gone and he feels the strain, when the fish will show himself by jumping out of the water. The hook having been swallowed he is certain to be landed if nothing breaks; this misfortune, however, happened in my case and in a curious way. Part of the line ran out and a tarpon jumped, not as usual straight out of the water, but curled up and wriggling violently. The line stopped and came in broken when reeled up. The fish probably had become entangled in and snapped it when jumping. Twice afterwards the line was cut by crabs, and, being valuable, we gave up still fishing, but there were many tarpon about and I hope that they avenged me on the crabs. The next candidate for the honour of completing my dozen was a splendid fish who gave a glorious display of his jumping powers, showing his beautiful form seven or eight times; being still on the hook after so severe a test I was full of hope of landing him. But no, when near the boat, within 6 or 7 feet, the fish gave two more feeble jumps and out came the hook. A brave fighter



who well deserved his liberty. On the following day my twelfth was brought on shore and, although I fished again, he proved the last. Altogether I had battles with twenty-eight tarpon, of which twelve were landed; the line broke three times, once entirely due to carelessness, and the others were insufficiently hooked.

5th April ... ..	1 of 95 lbs	} With a good guide, Gyles—black.
"   "   "   "   "   "	1 of 66 "	
7th "   "   "   "   "   "	1 of 92 "	
"   "   "   "   "   "	1 of 50 "	
8th "   "   "   "   "   "	1 of 84½ "	
16th "   "   "   "   "   "	1 of 75 "	

From now till the 1st of May I fished on every possible day but got no strikes, owing greatly, no doubt, to a worse than useless guide—Black Joe by name.

1st May ... ..	1 of 100 lbs	} With the best guide there, Johnny Baines (a Scotchman).
2nd "   "   "   "   "   "	1 of 111 "	
"   "   "   "   "   "	1 of 92½ "	
"   "   "   "   "   "	1 of 75 "	
3rd "   "   "   "   "   "	1 of 50 "	
6th "   "   "   "   "   "	1 of 88½ "	

I am sure that success depends on the guide to a very great extent.

My score compared favourably with that of others, and had I not been obliged to employ a useless guide, the others being engaged, from the 16th of April to the 1st of May, it probably would have been greatly better. But the season was a very bad one, the fish scarce and small. The largest killed weighed 171 lbs., but the very great majority scaled less than 100 lbs. Every one went away disappointed but greatly impressed by the sport and very eager to have another try as soon as possible.

#### MEMS.

Get there by April 15th.

Engage the best guide long before starting.

Avoid a flat-bottomed boat.

Get the very best tackle to be procured.

Fish deep (54 feet) with plenty of lead—two sinkers.

On getting a strike hold the fish with every means available and do not put the rod into the socket—a leathern shallow bucket fastened to your seat into which fits the butt-end of the rod—until after the fish has jumped.

Never give the fish more line than you can help.

Reel in wherever possible.

Be careful of your line during heavy jerks.

Let the fish go, unless you want to preserve him, as soon as ever possible after drawing him on to the beach—of course, he must not be gaffed; measure instead of weighing him and save his life.

## TOO LATE—LAPPLAND

1901

**WE** had landed from our canoe to prepare a midnight meal on the rocky bank of a wide river, somewhere—far within the Arctic Circle. Opposite rose a high bank of boulders, gravel and sand, covered with a thin layer of mould, the whole gradually but surely crumbling away under the combined influence of rushing waters and ice passing in the spring. Beyond, and indeed all around, rose picturesque mountains, clothed below in moss, heather, and birch scrub, but bare rock above, those opposite bright and golden now as they reflected the midnight sun. Where we had landed, close to the outfall of a noisy mountain stream, a tiny valley descended from the hills; it was now beautifully green when all else lay dried up, thanks to the moisture from the brook, and flowers, blue, yellow, white, and red, flourished, and gave colour to the scene.

Among the boulders close to the river we lighted a fire and cooked our coffee, the writer and his two boatmen, Lapps, excellent fellows and splendid men at their trade. Although long after midnight it was as bright as day, for we were beyond the 70th degree of latitude and the sun never set. Fishing for salmon, we had tried the pools down from the house, leaving there late in the evening when the sun no longer shone on the river, and were now resting from our, alas! unrewarded labours before giving the fish another chance. But it was far too late in the year, there could be no doubt of that; we ought to have been here three weeks before. An unusually early season was followed by perpetual clear, cloudless skies and hot weather;

there was no snow left to keep up the river, which was lower than had been known for many, many years. No rain, except a thunderstorm, which did no good, fell during our stay; the fish which had come up had gone on, those waiting below could not get over a shallow part for want of water. A fortnight before our arrival the fishing had been very good, but it fell off suddenly, and owing to want of rain and a steadily falling river, never recovered. Such a year had not been known for thirty years! How intensely annoying it is, and how often it happens, after a long journey and very keen on the reasonably to be expected sport, to find a season bad beyond all precedent. Nothing is more exasperating when under those circumstances people will keep on dinning into your ears that they have never known such a thing before. We had, indeed, arrived too late, and were no doubt ourselves to blame, but then other people in other years had reached the "fiske stue" about the same time and got most excellent sport. They had had rain and floods, and snow had remained to melt and keep up the river, but there were no such blessings in store for us—the drought was unprecedented, and remained so.

But the water in our copper kettles, suspended over the fire by means of slanting sticks, is boiling; we add the coffee and let the mixture stand simmering on the coals, while I unpack from my Norwegian box and my Lapps from their sealskin bag cups, sugar, butter, and whatever they contain in the way of eatables. The men having grilled with the aid of a pointed stick a piece of salted salmon, are now eating it together with some flat cakes of very coarse brown bread plentifully spread with butter; some dried reindeer meat, soaked in the coffee, follows as a second course; sugar and milk sweet or sour are not forgotten, and a thoroughly satisfactory meal is made by all hands, and very enjoyable it is in the beautiful sunlit, but starless, night. How doubly enjoyable it would have been had only the fishing approached the lowest average even; now that horrid word "blank" had but too often to be written in the daily record, and landed fish were indeed few and far between. The Lapps had done exceedingly well during the first run and had fished, and were fishing, the river to death almost. About every hundred yards all the way up—100 miles—were huge stake and bag nets, with extensive tangles, more than a third

across the river from each bank. Again, the natives fished all the good pools—harling—with a long narrow spoon, two rods in each boat, primitive affairs certainly but effective, 6 feet long birch sticks with loops of wire for rings; a cotton line wound round a reel, often self-made, with a handle taken from a coffee grinder. Many of them are now, however, equipped with modern reels and tackle, which can be purchased at any of the town stores. The population in these parts is entirely riverine, only reindeer herds were now in the interior; all the males are fishermen, and everybody lives on salmon, supplemented by reindeer meat, bread, coffee, and milk. A few cows and sheep graze about the scarce homesteads, the patch of grass, hopeless though it is this year, near the house being kept for hay. The surplus hay not required for boot stuffing is given to the cattle in the winter, largely mixed with dried and salted refuse of fish, all of which is carefully preserved during the fishing season, and afterwards eagerly eaten by the cows.

My men—as all the Lapps on this river—wear their full national costume; it is rather faded certainly with work, but very picturesque for all that; it has merely lost the brightness of the Sunday dress. A loose, dark blue and woollen cloth overcoat with high stiff collar, open at the throat, is confined to the waist by a red and white embroidered sash. The coat is trimmed round the neck and edges, across the chest and back, to half-way down the sleeves in front and behind, by red and yellow braid; the same colours are let into the seams. A pair of tight white woollen trousers lose themselves in wide brown leather boots stuffed with hay, the uppers of which are secured to the leg by a long and narrow white puttie, again embroidered with red thread. A neckerchief, with pocket at each end, containing tobacco, and a peculiar cap with large square top and far projecting corners stuffed with feathers over a broad crimson band, completes the costume—ancient as it is picturesque. A large knife hangs from the girdle, and is put to every possible use. The women wear short red and white striped gowns and a close-fitting brilliantly red bonnet. These Lapps up the river, not those miserable creatures who are to be seen begging on the various steamboat landings, are splendid fellows and magnificent boatmen, strong and enduring. They will pole a heavy canoe up a rapidly running river from early

morn till late at night, stopping only now and then to cook their coffee.

But it is time to make a start, for we are going to fish the pools over again on the way back to the hut, first trying the adjoining one, into which the mountain stream, now but a brook, empties itself close to our resting-place. The method of fishing here for salmon is "harling" from a canoe; these are all alike on this river, about 25 feet long by 8 feet wide, made of pine planks, and excellently well adapted to the work required of them, especially in the rapids. The canoe is poled up-stream by a man at each end, and rowed down by means of short paddles from the bow, being steered by a very broad one in the stern. When fishing a pool, the canoe is rowed from one side of the river to the other in zigzag fashion and very narrow beats, more or less against the current always, so as to make the flies try every part of the water. The fisherman sits on the floor of the canoe, near the middle; a rod lying in a forked stick fixed to the boat projects outward on each side, while the butts rest on the floor between the angler's legs. About 40 feet of line is out, and the skilful working of the boat never allows it to be slack. A little line drawn from the reel is coiled up and placed under a flat stone close to the butt, to be jerked out should happily a fish take the fly; the noise wakes up the patient fisherman, and the jerk more firmly fixes the hook in the salmon's mouth. Just where the bubbling stream ran wedgelike into the river, one of the flies were taken and the reel went merrily round. The Lapp in the bows quickly took up the other rod, reeling in the line as fast as possible so as to get it out of the way. But, alas! it was only a trout—when salmon were scarce a great disappointment; a very dark fish with big red spots, in bad condition, but weighing about 2½ lbs. Well, we tried that pool from top to bottom without another rise, and then a second and a third with the same results, poling up afterwards through some rapids to a fourth. The river being very low allowed the larger rocks to stand out clear, and the water rushed and swirled among them as if angry at the many obstacles put in the way of its peaceful flow. When near the upper part of the pool the coil of one of the lines was suddenly jerked out from below the stone, and away the line went to the glorious music of the whirring wheel.

We evidently had got hold of a salmon this time, for the fish ran out a lot of line, then turned and came back towards the boat, so suddenly, indeed, that when the line hung slack I had a terrible misgiving that fish and fly had parted. What a relief it was on reeling rapidly in to feel the weight once more! The fish now made straight for a huge boulder, and there he apparently intended to remain. No tugging would move him, and having already had a cast cut against a rock, I began to get nervous as to the results. There was no movement whatever, the line seemed immovably fixed, and it seemed only too probable that it was tightly wound round the rock, possibly without a fish at the end. We put the canoe alongside the boulder, a Lapp took hold of the line to free it, when all doubts vanished, and to my great delight the fish, turned out of his lair, made a splendid rush down-stream. After tiring him out thoroughly he was at last landed on a rocky bank, scaling 20 lbs. exactly. There is nothing more glorious than the first whirr of the reel, and nothing more heartbreaking than when afterwards the hook comes away for no apparent reason or fault on the part of the fisherman. We fished all the pools homewards, but resultless, still the day, or rather night, had not been, as now so very often happened, blank.

In spite of our very poor success with the salmon, the place decidedly came up to the Frenchman's idea of an Englishman's paradise; when you were not busy killing salmon, trout, or grayling, you were fully employed in despatching mosquitoes to their last happy home. These tormentors, thanks to the remarkably dry season, were not at their worst.

The grayling fishing was really good, and afforded excellent sport, especially near the mouth of and in a lonely pool a short way up the mountain stream which entered the river a little below our house. The pool, among huge rocks, was very deep and as clear as crystal, but coloured by reflection by the green birches, the greys, reds, and yellows of the rocks, and the blue sky and brilliant sun above like the inside of a pearl mussel. Here the grayling could be plainly seen; they could as plainly see the fisherman, and yet they took the fly greedily, and only after a really good fight allowed themselves to be landed. Grand fish they were, lovely in colouring, affording excellent sport and eating. They were very numerous also at the mouth

of the stream, but here the Lapps caught all they could in nets. Their then store of salmon being short, they had to supplement it with smaller fry to keep themselves and their cattle alive during the many months of darkness and dreary winter.



## XXXII

### IN CAMP IN NEW ZEALAND

1902

#### FISHING

**WE** joined the Napier-Taupo coach at the former town, bound for the upper reaches of the Rangitaiki River, which, rising at the foot of Ruapehu, crosses a very extensive plain of pumice covered with low manuka scrub. Forsaking the coach at a small wayside inn, the regular stopping-place for lunch of the travelling public, we entered a buggy—here a four-wheeled open vehicle drawn by two horses—and leaving the coach-road drove across country and at the end of sixteen miles arrived at our camping-place, where we found a more or less permanent hut used by parties of fishermen for cooking and eating purposes. The horses were turned out into a paddock, where on low-lying swampy ground better grasses grew among luxuriant bunches of flax; then we put up the tents and our first afternoon was spent in making ourselves thoroughly comfortable.

Manuka scrub properly arranged in layers on the ground makes an excellent mattress, and here takes the place of the balsam branches of Canada, which, if more fragrant, do not make a more restful or comfortable bed. The same scrub, the only fuel available, burns brightly and hotly and soon persuades the water in our billy into boiling. Rain has commenced to fall heavily and our hut, though somewhat leaky, is greatly appreciated, furnished as it is with table and bench. The former is adorned with the carved outline of a noble trout of 8½ lbs., the biggest fish caught on the river and safely brought

to bag by my companion two years ago on the very lightest tackle. The plain is of very great extent, about 800 feet above sea-level, mostly flat but terraced and hilly here and there, the whole densely covered with low manuka scrub, coarse tussock grass, moss and lichen. In cloudy weather and from a distance the country in its general appearance greatly resembles a moor in Scotland in its purple-brown colouring, manuka being, when not covered with white blossom, very like heather, although higher and more grey-green on close inspection. The soil is very poor, almost entirely pumice, for we are in the Roturua-Tarawera volcanic district, with but a very thin layer of mould in which nothing but scrub and coarse grass will grow. The scenery is desolate and wild, yet very picturesque in its desolation. On clear days the beautiful snow-clad mountain Ruapehu, with Tongariro and Ngaurahoe, "the smoking one," were clearly visible in the far distance, and opposite to them on the horizon rose Tarawera, the destroyer of the pink and white terraces; between the two to the north Mount Taupo.

The river, born near the first-named volcano, runs a very zigzag course through the plain and eventually enters the Bay of Plenty on the east coast. Comparatively a small and narrow river near our camp, it was not by any means always confined to its present bed; it overran, no doubt, the plain to a very great extent, and its rushing waters then cut deeply into and through any hill which barred the way, thus leaving those 20 or 80 feet perpendicular cuttings which are seen in so many places. From the tops of these many a fine fish may be watched lying in the clear water below, immovable but for a slight motion of the tail, he is very shy and will dart away should he catch the merest glimpse of the observer, safe though he is entirely out of reach of hook and fly.

We, Mr. C. and I, have come to the river for trout fishing, and brought with us a Maori boy—Poki—to look after the horses, and last, but not least, "Rags," a fox terrier. Mr. C. is the most expert fisherman, and very keen, knowing well every inch of the river and the haunt of every big fish. He has always taken the greatest interest in the Rangitaiki; was instrumental in stocking it twelve years ago, and under his care it flourishes exceedingly. The fish have done marvellously well, and afford in the clear water the very best of sport. As this part of the

river is very much out of the way and necessitates a camp outfit, it is not overfished, and indeed only visited two or three times a season, by generally the same party, which party—four rods—during last Christmas week landed eighty fish, averaging over 4 lbs.\*

We had very wet and cloudy weather for some time, and I, in my ignorance of local affairs, thought a dull sky a favourable condition for fishing, but this was not so here. A bright, warm, sunny, still day was what we wanted and the clearest water; there were insects about then and none on dull days; one could easily see the fish, for no fly is ever thrown here at haphazard, never until a desirable trout has been marked down. To see a fish in the deeper water requires great practice—it was an art I failed in miserably; but Mr. C. and the Maori boy could find a trout in almost any amount of even disturbed water. In some parts the river ran between low banks bare of brush, and here the fish was almost difficult of approach; in others it rushed and swirled among rocks and boulders, the white foam and spray in lovely contrast with the deep and lighter blues of the clear water, grass banks, which in such places, thanks to more abundant moisture, were beautifully green, with flax, cabbage palms, high manuka and other bush, toi-toi grass with its waving plumes, tree and other ferns, a lovely variety of foliage, and all sharply reflected in the river. The extreme shyness of the fish in the clear water renders necessary the very finest tackle, line, cast and fly, which entails unfortunately the risk of breaking with a big trout. The fish, indeed, have to be handled with the very greatest care, and a fish hooked is not by any means to be counted as already in the bag. Verily, there are many troubles in store for the fisherman, who, himself unseen behind the fish, must cast upstream in front of the trout, and most carefully; the wind is but too often very troublesome; it will not allow the line to go out properly, or cause it to splash and so frighten the game, and the line or hook catches in bush or a rock in the river. A big species of manuka grows on the banks, each branch of which at this season of the year is covered with dense rows of rough berries like peppercorns, a most irritating vegetable, for it has the greatest affection for one's line. To clear the latter is almost impossible. The more you

\* Brown.

try to disentangle it the firmer it is held, and in the end you have not only most decidedly lost your temper, but fly, and probably cast as well. I have heard language on those occasions that would turn a team of oxen!

Soon after breakfast Mr. C. and I got on to our horses, each with a rod ready for action; saddle-bags, made out of a sack contained waders, billy, luncheon, &c., and carried home the catch. Thus we rode up or down along the river, through the everlasting manuka scrub, sometimes disturbing a hare or quail, starlings, or a hawk, wild pigs rarely, but always bunches of wild horses, each led by a stallion, and "shags," darters, a very destructive bird to the young trout. Prospecting the river as we rode along, we tried for any decent fish discovered—and what sport it was! On some days the trout would rush at the fly as soon as it touched the water, while on others nothing would tempt them, even if the fly was frequently changed and dangled in front of their noses, almost for hours together. The fish would quickly dart aside, but immediately return to his former position, and apparently never even notice the beautiful governors, claret hackles, and peverils so artistically displayed for his approval. The first-named was the favourite fly, and took 90 per cent. of the fish landed. On one occasion I had already caught three beautiful trout with the same governor, and the Maori boy was trying to get a fourth—a very lively fish—into the landing-net, when in the struggle my cast broke close to the fly. I exclaimed, "What a pity; there goes my best governor!" but the boy, having secured the fish, answered, "Oh! no, here it is in his mouth, and another one with it," a peveril, which evidently had not long adorned the captive's lip. Difficult as the fishing is, the satisfaction of at last hooking a good fish after repeated failures is very great, and the handling and landing him afforded much enjoyment. On several occasions I took the Maori boy with me, who was very keen and skilful at seeing a fish in the water. He was an excellent boy, but his costume seemed somewhat peculiar. Poki always wore a thick blue and black striped woollen jersey and coat, however hot the day; a grey felt hat, terribly the worse for wear, with a once yellow puggarie and crimson feathers. His trousers were badly rent behind, the rent, however, generally filled by a casually protruding shirt-tail; while his boots threatened every moment to separate

finally into their component parts. He was very brown, full of enthusiasm, and an extraordinary natural musician, playing almost any tune with great accuracy on his mouth harmonium.

My best day gave seven trout landed, none under 4 lbs.; biggest  $5\frac{1}{2}$  lbs.; a small one scaling  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. was returned, and three lost. We averaged altogether rather over 4 lbs. than under. Splendid sport, and what excellent eating they were! Those which we could not consume were salted for future use, and on the last day only eight fresh fish remained, when most opportunely a Maori family arrived, and bivouacked near us for a night. We made them a handsome present of the fish, and five of them devoured in that short time the whole lot, about 80 lbs. of trout—truly a marvellous feat! Of course we were delighted at their splendid appetite, for thus no part of our catch was wasted, and we could go away with a clear conscience.

During a subsequent visit to New Zealand I got a good many big trout—brown and rainbow—but they were not as anxious to come to the pot as those of Lake Superior as related in the *Nautical Magazine* of July, 1901.

“In 1894 the ss. *Selwyn Eddy*, going down Lake Superior, had a 85-lb. trout washed on board by a heavy sea. It furnished a mess for the whole crew.” The *Detroit Free Press*, in commenting on his yarn, points out that the older Lake sailors could remember instances of boats that rolled so much that the fish used to be shot by the sea down the smoke-stack and come out just nicely fried at the fire-box!

### XXXIII

## IN CAMP IN NEW ZEALAND (*continued*)

1902

### STALKING

MY next camp was in a very different place, among the high mountains of Wairarapa in the south-east corner of the Northern Island, and the object in view—one or more of the big stags which are said to exceed those in other parts both in size and weight. The camp had been pitched some time before by a professional hunter, who was to act as my guide, a man who spends every season in these mountains hunting for big heads, which he sells at high prices; he, however, houses and takes out any sporting visitor, should such a one fall into his clutches. There are several such men about who, I fear, destroy an immense amount of game for their heads and headskins alone, for the meat is uneatable, the shooting having been fixed in the rutting season. So the headless carcasses are left to rot, of no use to any one except the many wild pigs which roam about in great number. Until this year a hunter was allowed to shoot an unlimited number, but now the £1 licence entitles each stalker to five only, the heads to have not less than ten points. No applicant for a licence is refused, and doubtless even now under the present laws he shoots as many deer as ever he pleases, there is no control; he cannot well bring into a town more than five heads at one time, but he can hide any others in the brush and await a more convenient opportunity. Large numbers of shooters come into the country and numberless carcasses are left lying about to rot—a really horrible waste of what would at any other time be the best of meat. No one with

any sporting instinct would dream of firing at any stag not carrying a first-class head and worth preserving as a trophy; such a one, indeed, is but rarely seen, and the stalker prefers therefore not to shoot at all, losing thus a great deal of fun. Our camp was pitched close to a creek—Cape—in a narrow valley with very steep sides leading to high mountains at a spot beyond which horses were not able to go. The tents stood on a high bank above the mountain stream and were hidden in thick bush and under high trees, chiefly *remo*, plentifully adorned with “supple jacks” in as damp a place as could well have been chosen; no sun did penetrate there, no wind to dry the ground. My only companion was the guide, a Tyrolese by birth, but long resident in the country, a born mountaineer, untiring, always on the move and as keen a hunter—for himself—as ever lived. He and his partner, now in camp some distance away, had hunted in these parts for several years and shot most of the magnificent heads which adorn the walls of so many houses in the colony. These grand trophies fetch big prices, and there may thus perhaps be some excuse for a guide’s jealousy of any one who secures a really good head, also, it may be, for not doing all in his power towards finding such a one for others. The first red deer, a stag and two hinds, arrived in New Zealand from Windsor Park in 1862; they were Scottish, crossed with Hungarian blood, and now they are in their thousands in various parts of the colony. Thanks to the foreign strain, and probably also to the limestone formation of their adopted country, the antlers are very heavy and nearly all carry a heavy crown. Many people, and those men who ought to know, assert that the heads are falling off in size and that they are not now what they were some years ago; nor that any of those extraordinary heavy antlers bristling with points of former days are ever got. To judge from recent specimens and from those shot years ago, this apparently is so, and two reasons for it are given, firstly, that the *corameca* scrub, of which deer are very fond, and which is supposed to greatly help the antler’s growth, is becoming very scarce in the mountains; the second and probably the more probable cause is that owing to the too early opening of the shooting season—before the stags have *really* begun to rut—the big fellows, frightened by the many shots fired at deer and pigs, never come out of the dense bush at all to

visit the very numerous hinds roaming about over the more open country, hinds which are thus left to mate with young and less perfect stags. With the exception now and then of a "traveller" there is no lack of truth about the local saying, that if you want a big stag you must look for him in the dense bush on the high mountains, and there it is not possible to find him unless he roars frequently and during the day. These monarchs are, of course, attended by hinds, but their sphere of influence remains limited. The reason for fixing the shooting in the rutting season is, according to book, that only then do the big stags come out of the bush and become visible, a theory not, apparently, always borne out in practice. The season—March 1st to April 30th—this year was a bad one, or my visit—March 20th to April 5th—was too early, at all events the roaring was very slight and generally only in the early morning in places too far to reach from camp in time, or after dusk when too late to be from home in a country so terribly rough; during the day rarely was a roar heard and no good stag seen. The weather also remained far too hot and muggy; on bright frosty days only do stags roar with a will. We did our stalking on Government ground on the high mountains rising up to 4,000 feet, mostly densely covered with forest and very thick undergrowth, here very green and beautiful, there desolation itself where forest fires had done their work and left nothing but blackened scrub and hollow and branchless trunks, some still upright among the many fallen ones. They were all black birch, these massive trees, very black where the charred bark still remained; silvery white where that had fallen off. Here the ground, being exposed to the sun, was dry and covered with coarse grass, but very wet and swampy in the adjoining heavy forest where flourished many varieties of ferns and a beautiful lichen brilliantly painted in pale yellow, blue and grey. Marching with this Government ground are several private sheep runs, hills and mountains, mainly cleared of bush and sown with English grasses; on these deer are very plentiful, but the stags do not attain the size and weight of those on Government ground, where they have better shelter.

A short distance up the shingly bed, but a terribly rough walk, over slippery boulders and brush and fallen trees, took us into the "basin" where several small valleys met, each one providing a feeder to our creek. Along this stream we waded



and splashed many a time, then scrambled up one of the very steep spurs, generally thickly covered with dense wineberry scrub, to the main ridge, in the hope of seeing something good, a hope always disappointed; only once did we get a glimpse of a fair stag. He had seen or winded us long before and was making best pace up a ridge several hundred yards away. Wild pigs there were many of all sizes and colours, some wild cattle and wild sheep, many hinds and small stags, but too small to shoot, being useless as food and with heads not worth carrying away. Fortune did not smile on me, and although I stayed a fortnight in those parts no stag worth a shot came within reasonable distance. Other people got a few moderate heads, very few certainly, but I not a chance at even one. Our camp was too far from the best ground. It certainly was very beautiful in those mountains; the views were very lovely and the time passed in watching was delightful; all was green and bright. Towards the end of my visit it began and continued to rain heavily for days and nights together, the camp became a swamp; luckily a big fire of black pine under cover in the cooking tent enabled us to keep our clothes more or less dry. At last the wet monotony proved too disagreeable and I was glad to get away.

The guide and I, however, had not been altogether alone in our retreat; a pair of owls lived near us and every evening one of them woke up and roused the other with a loud "hyah! hyah!" followed by cries of "more pork, more pork," to be presently answered in similar language by his mate. One, evidently the lady, repeated in a minor key every cry of the male; when tired of "more pork" they would chatter away in less intelligible language, one strictly following the other's lead, until "more pork" once again came under discussion. They would thus talk by the hour in a sweetly plaintive voice, to which I used to listen with delight—it seemed such a very interesting conversation of a very affectionate couple. At last these our friends also became tired of the perpetual downpour, which had already continued for more than two days and nights, and startled us in the middle of the day by a sudden single cry of "more pork" in a voice expressive of the greatest disgust and indignant protest against that most disagreeable weather. They were truly delightful owls! There was another charming bird,

the "fantail," a small creature like a tomtit, who was not in the least shy and always glad to see one. He hopped round as near as he dared, opening out to the full his dark brown and white fantail and wings, and going through all kinds of antics, gave the stranger a most pretty welcome to his bushy home.

My hunter, they told me afterwards, was some time ago engaged by a large sheep station in the South Island to kill the wild dogs which had lately greatly increased in number and were doing considerable damage to the stock, the man to be paid a fixed sum for every tail sent in. The number of tails produced and paid for was so great that my "friend" was congratulated on his skill in so quickly destroying the pests, when, unfortunately, reports got about that a curious disease had broken out among the dogs of a neighbouring station, a disease of which loss of tail was the chief symptom; and, further, that from an adjoining town several dogs had disappeared altogether, some of which, however, had been afterwards found, evidently dead of the same mysterious ailment, for they also had parted with their caudal appendages.

The pathology of this interesting canine affliction was probably best understood by my hunter, who, doubtless afraid of catching the same disease, suddenly left for other parts.

## XXXIV

### IN HOKKAIDO (YEZO)

1902

**T**HERE is a belief in England that to take a gun to Japan is useless, as no sport worth the trouble is to be got there ; this, however, is a great mistake, at all events as far as Yezo, the northern island, is concerned. In the other islands sport with the gun used to be good, but now, except perhaps during the migrating seasons of woodcock, duck, or goose, it has fallen off terribly. What else indeed can be expected when in 1901 no less than 250,000 game licences were taken out in a population of 36,000,000, men, women and children? Immense numbers of birds are killed by snares, nets, and other contrivances.

But in Yezo very good sport is still to be got ; snipe of four kinds are plentiful in the rice-fields, woodcock, ducks of almost every variety breed in the marshes, and pass through in large numbers during the migratory season in the autumn and spring, as also geese and swans ; there are willow grouse, hares which turn white in the winter ; pheasants, however, only inhabit the other islands. For the rifle there are still some bears and deer, but both are becoming very scarce indeed. The season in Yezo opens on October 1st, in other parts of Japan on the 15th, and for pheasants a fortnight later still.

Yezo being much wilder, less populated, and more out of the way, offers good sport among the above-named birds for those who care to seek it ; the toil, however, and discomfort is very great ; the small road-side inns, the only places to stay in, are very bad indeed. And when a lake or marsh has been discovered—a very paradise for birds—probably no boat is

procurable nor any other means of getting at them. Where roads exist a home on wheels, with tent, duck punt, or collapsible boat attached, would greatly help to get good sport in October and November, and pack ponies with tents in the roadless districts, for thus only could the less frequented and therefore the best country be reached with any degree of comfort.

However, the following trips with a gun were most enjoyable, all being within easy reach of Hakodate. A good excursion from there, the southern port, is to Yunokawa, distance about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and object snipe, which here abound in the rice-fields with which the country is covered for miles. A tram line runs all the way, for the hotels at Yunokawa are popular summer resorts, and the natural hot springs much frequented; most pleasant and enjoyable it was indeed after a day's shooting to sit and soak in the hot water of the well-arranged baths. But here, as indeed everywhere, a good dog is an absolute necessity, and not owning one my bag was very small compared with that of my friend who did. Indeed, in my case, "Allah was very good to the little birds," as the Indian shikaree said. Simply walking round and round the square rice patches on the very narrow bank divisions between them—for to go into them now, with the crops nearly ripe, would never do—is not sufficient to make the snipe rise, and to find them when shot not by any means an easy task. The same applies to quail in the thick weeds and grass, potato, and bean fields. Unless many snipe are seen, the endless circling round rice patch after rice patch, ever balancing oneself on the slippery paths between them, with frequent slides into irrigation rills, becomes very wearisome and monotonous, and these rice-fields extend for miles and miles. However, we got a good many common snipe, but only one of the large "Austrian" variety, no others being met with. The latter pass through earlier, the people say. Occasionally, but rarely, a jack or painted snipe is seen. By religiously working each patch with a good dog a very fair bag can be made. Here and there three or four patches have been left unplanted, but remain full of liquid mud; around them nets made of black string are suspended from poles to catch any snipe attracted by the glistening mud, while others are caught in them when the fields are driven in the early morning. Altogether the poor birds have a bad time of it! Ducks are trapped in the same manner and

many teal, so many indeed that they could be bought in the markets for a few sen—farthings.

Game in Japan must and does decrease very rapidly, for nothing is preserved; everything is destroyed that can possibly be got at. The migratory season alone affords good sport. The same applies to the Japanese salmon; the netting is so constant, so thorough and extensive at the mouth of the several rivers in October, when they run, that but few fish ever reach the spawning beds. Again, the water of many rivers is poisoned by refuse of lately-erected factories and hemp mills. Millions of salmon are yearly imported from the Amur and other parts of Siberia, and the need for more is increasingly felt.

Besides snipe, quail, duck, plover, and geese, birch grouse are frequent in the forests; they are "called" by the natives by means of a small flute, made of bamboo, or a chicken bone, tree'd by a dog, and shot one after another like the "partridges" in out-of-the-way places in Canada.

Woodcock, the same as that in Europe, breed in Hokkaido (Yezo); a few come from Siberia in the autumn and pass south, returning in the spring, curiously enough, in greatly increased numbers.

The shooting licence varies from two to twenty yen (four shillings to £2), and is calculated on the amount of income tax paid in the country by the applicants; foreigners pay about ten yen.

Deer, nominally protected and formerly frequent, are now very scarce, having been ruthlessly killed wholesale. The landlord of an inn told us in great glee that a few winters ago he had killed seven deer with a stick in about as many minutes, the unfortunate animals being unable to move in the deep snow; the slayer, needless to say, was on snow-shoes. The large brown bear, still to be found in the dense forests of the island, is hunted during his winter sleep by the Ainu, who go into the dens after him and bring a good many skins to market, selling them at the ridiculously small sum—when the great risk to life and limb is considered—of seventeen yen, or thirty-four shillings. Indeed, the bears have a rough time in Yezo; not only are the old ones killed wherever met, but any cub found in the den is a valuable prize and is taken to the village chief's house, to be there suckled by a woman and played with by the children. After a time the

bear is put into a bamboo cage constructed outside the house and kept until the autumn of the following year, when, being strong and full-grown, the "Festival of the Bear" takes place. He is then let loose and killed with arrow and spear, his head is cut off and put upon a pole, where it receives libations of saké, and everybody gets drunk. "The more saké an Ainu drinks the more devout he is and the better pleased are the gods" (Miss Bird's "Unbeaten Tracks in Japan"). Drunkenness is supreme happiness, for which man is made. "For why," the Ainu says, "did God make saké, if not to be drunk?" These people are bear worshippers, they admire his strength and courage. During the killing they shout, "We kill you, oh bear, come back soon into an Ainu."

In search of scenery and ducks combined, we went to the lakes near Hakodate—the best time being the middle of October, when the many maples, mountain-ash, and large-leaved vines in the dense forests encircling those beautiful sheets of water have changed to a gorgeous, deep rich claret and scarlet, set off as this is by the golden yellow of birch, beech, and ash, against the dark green of pines and needlewood generally. At this season, ducks in large numbers come here to feed and to rest on their way to warmer climes in the south.

If you go as we went, in a "basha," the trip will give a severe lesson to your liver, and that distinguished organ, upon the trim of which all in life depends, will not dare to misbehave for a long time to come, in dread that such an experience might be repeated. The lakes lie about seventeen miles in a northerly direction from Hakodate; there are two of them—Komuna and Omuna—with a very fair Japanese inn at the former, close to the water and beautiful view of the lovely scenery. Now a basha is a kind of omnibus stunted in its growth, drawn by two horses, or, as such things go in Yezo, very lean ponies. Murray's Guide in its advice to travellers in Japan, says: "Avoid the basha if you have either nerves to shatter or bones to shake," and the advice is good. Having no springs the vehicle moves solidly, plumping and crashing into every hole and against every stone, there is no give and take in its anatomy; when the horses have, by voice and a judicious application of whip, been persuaded into a trot or a canter the concussion is truly terrible. The basha is

provided with two very narrow seats lengthways and one for the driver in front, and whatever space in the well is not taken up by legs is crammed full of luggage, dogs, and food for the horses. Then given the worst, the ruttiest, most holey and stony road, and as I said before your liver will have a doing over those seventeen miles which it is never likely to forget.

A start is made from the Hakodate hotel after the driver has produced some very doleful sounds on his horn, a performance of which he is very proud, and which is repeated on every possible occasion, and we slowly roll through an almost interminable street—in reality three miles long—flanked by low, very poor-looking houses, mostly shops, but flourishing smells from the stagnant and foul open drains which run the whole length immediately in front of the doors on either side. It is a curious thing that the most cleanly Jap seems never to mind the worst smells. There is a great deal of traffic here besides trams: wagons with every kind of country produce, others heavily loaded with material for the railway now building in the vicinity; women and men dragging carts or struggling under heavy loads, bringing in vegetables, huge bundles of flowering yellow chrysanthemums, baskets of apples, &c., &c.; children innumerable carrying others on their backs almost as big as themselves, wrapped in multi-coloured clothing—a motley crowd, mostly clad in blue. When at last the street is done with, we jolt and bump along between long stretches of rice-fields, pass several small villages, at one of which the horses receive a feed of chopped maize stalks and corn, and we have some Japanese tea in tiny cups, with Japanese biscuits, of which there are so many kinds; then on to the hills. Here the road becomes worse and worse, owing to heavy traffic connected with the new railway. The basha having become absolutely impossible without serious risk to our anatomy, we walk up the mountain road, obtaining beautiful views of Hakodate and its mountain—so like Gibraltar—on the slope of which the town is built—of the bay, the ocean and main island beyond. The hills are thickly covered with forest, now most beautiful in its autumn garb, and as we presently cross the crest, the lakes lie before and below us, with the volcano of Koma-ga-take on the further shore of Omuna. After a rapid descent, and violent and triumphant tootlings on the driver's horn, we at last reach

the door of the Japanese inn, to everybody's supreme satisfaction.

The shooting is done out of a flat-bottomed boat, poled or rowed—the oars worked not together, but alternately, giving the boat an uncomfortable wriggling motion—along the reed-fringed marshy shores, the little creeks, and bays which abound. The lakes are surrounded by hills covered with dense vegetation, which now is superb, in the richest shades of red and yellow, the mass of colour again reflected in the water. If that scene were painted true to nature, the picture would be greeted with smiles of derision, and the painter put down as an absurd sensationalist by those who never have seen Nature when she has clothed masses of maples, vines, &c., &c., in their October dress. There are many islands on both lakes, all very small, all very rocky and picturesque—“Japaneesy”—all covered with trees, shrub, weeds, and grass, and they very greatly add to the beauty of the whole. Koma-ga-take alone is bare of all vegetation, covered entirely with yellow ashes and scorise of the last eruption, its sharp peak—the higher side of the crater lip—rising to a height of 8,860 feet. These lakes and marshes, their lilies, reeds, and weeds afforded excellent feeding-ground for ducks, some of which breed there, while by far the greater number use them merely as a resting-place on their way from Siberia south. We got mallard, widgeon, mandarin, golden eye, large brown ducks, teal, and other varieties are frequently met with; geese are occasional visitors later in the season. But the sport here also will soon be ruined, as the new railway—that curse to sport in out-of-the-way places—has already approached the lakes. and the workmen employed on it are felling trees and cutting stone everywhere. As the iron road is about to cross the bigger and best lake, bridged from island to island, the ducks will before long seek out and discover a less noisy place where, undisturbed by trains, they can make a home and find a resting-place.

Such a place I visited afterwards, some seventy miles north of Muroran, a huge shallow lake full of weeds and surrounded for miles with reed-covered swamp, where duck were in their thousands and geese many, a paradise for water-fowl of all description. But the difficulty was to get at them; they were very wild when in the open and hid most effectively among the



reeds. We had to go in tiny Ainu dug-outs, the craziest, wobbliest craft I have ever been in, hardly wide enough to squeeze into, and rendered more unsteady by the man who poles it along. One could only shoot to the left and front, to turn to the right was impossible, and when in it for the first time, unused to its vagaries, I nearly upset at the first shot. A most unpleasant event this would have been, for the shallow lake is densely covered with long weeds which grow luxuriantly in the soft, deep mud. But, however good a place for shooting ducks, the foul and only inn in the vicinity was impossible; we could only stand it for two nights, the smells were simply intolerable, and the flying, hopping, and crawling insects, thriving apparently in the horrible atmosphere, at last drove us away, to our great regret, from this otherwise charming spot.

## XXXV

### A VISIT TO KOREA

1902

WHEN two friends and I, in the autumn of 1902, arranged a shooting trip to Korea, prospects seemed very rosy, and we looked forward to it with great expectations and every hope that big bags of ducks and geese would be made. But, alas! when the time for starting from Japan drew near my hoped-for companions were unable to leave, and all our elaborate plans collapsed. It was indeed annoying, for to go alone was considered next to useless, as indeed it proved; however, I did go, and although the sport was *nil*, the trip proved of the greatest interest, for Korea is unique in almost every respect. The first view of it from the ship as it approaches Fusan is most striking—not the European settlement, not the Japanese or Chinese quarters, for they are very similar everywhere out here, varying only in size, but the native town, a dense mass of small thatched huts closely packed together, and still more so the people, clad entirely in white, moving about everywhere, sharply defined as they were against the reddish-yellow background of the bare hills; and the nearer view of them in the sampans which soon crowded round the steamer. The national flag with the mystic Buddhist symbol in red and blue on a white ground—two spirals closely coiled together filling the area of a circle—floated from the Custom House flagstaff. On landing, one was at once surrounded by a busy crowd of hard-working natives, strong, fine-looking coolies, handling the heavy loads of rice, beans and shirtings, brought by or taken to lighters. A walk through the native town, however, showed the Korean at home, and a most striking picture he made. Clad in white cotton

from head to foot, he wears a black, perfectly transparent hat, with small crown but wide brim, made of bamboo fibre dyed black, or, among the moneyed classes, of horsehair. The latter stalk along with measured tread and dignified air; they are never seen without their pipe, a metal bowl and mouthpiece, with a stem 8 feet long or more, which when not in use is carried like a cane. The material of the dress varies according to the means of the individual; the lower and middle classes wear cotton garments in several layers, thickly padded in the winter, the upper are only seen in silk. The feet are protected by long white toeless wadded socks, into which are tied the tight ends of very wide sacklike trousers. The coat falls to well below the knee, and is fastened above the waist by large bows. The poor put their wadded feet into grass sandals, the rich into very shapely slippers, embellished with a pattern corresponding in colour to the tint of an outer garment of blue silk, or one made of grass cloth.

While the poorer people are entirely in white, the dress of the richer is really very splendid, a fashion which must be a very expensive one, especially as the outer garment seems always to be new. A travelling companion of mine—an official—was arrayed in a very long coat of flowered white satin, reaching almost down to his feet, which were encased in blue velvet slippers; over the white he wore another full-sleeved dress of sky-blue silk, which again was partially covered by a loose sleeveless silk garment of a lighter shade; a crimson cord held it all in place. The hair is gathered into a top-knot—the sign of having reached manhood—and is protected by a curiously formed horsehair cover like a pudding shape, the lower flaps of which are tightly tied round the forehead and back, thus covering the hair entirely; the black transparent hat, with its flat stiff brim, surmounts all, and is kept on by means of ribbons tied underneath the chin. It is a most unique garb, matched probably nowhere else, of a most delicate colour, which always appears clean, most surprisingly so, considering the narrowness and dirt of the streets, and the wattled and thatched houses, with their tiny rooms, often not more than 6 feet by 8 feet, and their many occupants.

Women, who have no position and are spoken of as “things,” seem to be everlastingly washing and pounding their lord’s

clothes at some more or less clean stream, a labour which must truly be without end, especially during the long winter months, when all clothes have first to be unpicked, the wadding taken out, then washed and again put together and re-wadded. The Koreans live on rice, millet, beans, a kind of pickled very odoriferous cabbage, fish and any meat they can pick up. Unlike the Japanese and Chinese, they drink no tea, only rice or perhaps honey-water. In the country, in the villages and smaller towns, the people are all dressed alike, in white with black hat, and the ghostlike stately crowd has a curious effect; except the labouring class, the men apparently have nothing to do but gossip and to smoke their pipes. Mourners, and people mourn their nearest relation—father—for four years, are dressed in sackcloth and wear a huge wicker-work hat, 4 feet in diameter, scalloped at the edges and covering the face entirely. Boys have a coloured jacket, generally pink, and a long pigtail, which is made into a top-knot on their marriage—generally at 14 or 15. After the ceremony the young bridegroom goes about in a yellow straw hat with very small crown for a period of three months.

After a sixteen hours' run round the extremely rocky and dangerous coast of Southern Korea, the ship reached Chemulpo, with its European settlement, Chinese, Japanese, and native towns, its bare hills, bustling wharf and hard-working, powerful coolies; this is the port to the capital—Sëoul—a railway connecting the two. At an interview with a resident, prospects of sport brightened up again; the country was full of geese, ducks, &c., and obstacles were made light of. I had brought, so they told me, too few cartridges, and in my enthusiasm immediately bought several hundred more; a small house-boat could be hired and everything would run smoothly. However, obstacles did present themselves; the Japanese owner seemed anything but anxious to let me the boat, asked a high price; sampans had to be hired to tow it up the river; the necessary Korean hunter declined to go under five yen (ten shillings) a day, thirty-five to be guaranteed in case I stayed away less than a week—a most outrageous attempt at extortion. He told us that it was easy now during the goose season to make five yen a day by shooting five geese, which, like everything else, proved untrue, for geese hardly fetched a half-yen in the market. A cook could not be

got at any price, and the most necessary part of the outfit, an interpreter, was not to be found, nor a companion either. So that idea had to be given up, to go alone into an unknown country, with people who understood nothing but Korean, was out of the question. But there can be no doubt that with a friend and plenty of time for preparations an expedition up the creeks and among the mud-banks of the estuary of the Han River would be a great success, as it offers the best of sport with ducks and geese and swans, which at this time—November—came in vast flights from the north on their migration south. Pheasants and quail are plentiful all over the country except near the settlements, where they have greatly decreased of late years.

On the advice of a missionary and in the hope of sport, I went in a sampan about ten miles up the Han River, which flows down from the capital and beyond, landing at an old fort, Cho-ji, and walked from there to the Mission station of On-su-Tong. The missionaries, who received me most kindly, live in a Korean house close to a village and among beautiful mountain scenery. The hills now were almost bare, the grass yellow, the fir-trees stunted and but a few feet high. These trees being the only source of firewood, the branches are continually cut off, carried down in huge loads on oxen, and stored in stacks close to the homes for winter use. The hovels, on stone foundations, are built of wattle and mud, and thatched, the thatch being tied down by grass ropes; the wooden or reed-plaited door is made to lift up and windows are rare. The houses are warmed by means of a fire outside, the heat from which passes through a tunnel underneath the stone and mud floor and out at the opposite side through a chimney adjoining the wall. The floor inside is covered with very thick oiled paper, which is kept very clean and looks almost like polished wood. On this and a mattress the people sleep, covered with a rug, and I found it by experience in the Mission house a very warm and comfortable bed. The rooms are very small and low, the openings into them like the doors of a cage. Every house is surrounded by a fence of reed or millet stalks, the enclosure being kept very clean, for here the threshing of beans takes place, and here the rice is laid out to dry.

All around were rice-fields, now bare of their crop but very muddy; the rice grain lost during the harvest lay about plenti-

fully and attracted the geese, who alight here at sundown and feed during the night, leaving again just before break of day. We had no luck with them, could never get near enough ; there was no cover, and the geese always got up just out of range. A heavy gun with heavy charges was wanted, or a reed shelter in the fields, or a boat on the creeks. It was difficult to get to the fields early enough, for it entailed floundering along the bad roads and narrow divisions between the rice-fields in the dark, and the same if we remained long enough in the evening. There was then no moon, and the nights were very dark. But at full moon with high tides, when the mud-banks are covered and the geese must all come to feed on the rice-beds, the sport, with proper appliances and a hunter who knows the ropes, must be very good indeed. A reed hut to lie hidden in would probably be best, or a small punt disguised with reeds on a creek near mud-banks and rice-fields. The native hunter walks up to the geese behind a bull, an experiment which a European need not try, for the moment when that, with a Korean, so docile animal with load or without sees a foreigner he turns swiftly round and bolts as fast as he is able. We saw thousands of geese, some in the fields, others flying over, and knocked the feathers out of a few, but no ducks, only a few mergansers. Pheasants seemed plentiful among the dry grass and dwarf pines, oak, and chestnut on the hillside, and quails.

No, the sport was a dead failure. In this country, as in most others, one visit is necessary in order to find out where and how best to get it during a second. The scenery, though somewhat bare, was very pretty ; the small villages scattered about the valleys seemed prosperous ; they have the same colouring as the ground ; but men in white stalk about, the pink jackets of the children and occasional blue coat of a woman, and here and there bright scarlet chillies laid out to dry on the roofs, give colour. The cabbage is not yet all gathered in, and fresh green barley and wheat are coming up in a field here and there.

The grounds of a Bhuddist monastery on a mountain near, surrounded by a huge wall several miles in circumference, was the only exception to this otherwise treeless country. On entering by one of the picturesque Chinese concave roofed gates, surprise was great to find oneself in park-like scenery, in a forest of huge and very old trees of many kinds filling the whole

enclosure. In spring and summer, when all is green and the azaleas in full bloom, it must indeed be a lovely spot. The wooden buildings were very old and picturesque, but, like all else in Korea, rapidly falling to pieces from old age and want of care. A more restful and beautiful spot, with more lovely views of mountain and river, could hardly be found than this abode of the monks, who live in idleness, and care apparently nothing about their surroundings.

All grassy hills and waste lands are covered with graves, circular mounds, often many close together, all nearly surrounded by a horseshoe embankment. In explanation of this I copy the following from Von Borch's "Imperial Tombs West of Peking," in the *East of Asia Magazine*: "On the hangings over the coffin of a rich man are always embroidered two dragons playing with a pearl, which, entrusted to nature alone, according to ancient Chinese belief, can bestow a favourable place of undisturbed tranquillity to the dead." According to this the last resting-place of a rich man is immediately protected by a hillock as round as possible, from which in a half-circle on both sides is always erected a flatter long-extended mound, completely surrounding the tomb proper on three sides. The round hillock represents the pearl, and the two side mounds the dragons. Members of a family are laid to rest near each other, the senior on a higher and the junior on a lower level. In front of the more important ones is placed a large flat granite slab, several feet in length, upon which are put sacrificial offerings of rice, water, &c., for the benefit of the departed spirits. Ancestor worship is very strict, mourning lasts for three years, and every grave is visited on New Year's day at all events. A man will go to his father's grave to announce the approaching marriage of a son. To desecrate a grave means death. Near a town almost every foot of hill is occupied by a grave, and as long as this ancestor worship lasts all that land can never be used for agricultural purposes.

The people in the villages, and elsewhere too, indeed, appear to be most gentle, polite, and well-mannered; they are, I believe, not very cleanly in their persons, but a clean white outer garment covers any defect there may be underneath. Their country inns are not, it is said, very pleasant to stay in; the rooms are hot in winter, small and full of insects, and travelling

in the interior is not an unalloyed pleasure, and a camp cannot well be made. The ponies, hardy, but very small animals, used for riding and baggage, have to be stabled every night, and are never allowed to drink or eat when travelling. They are fed, however, three times a day on boiled beans and chopped straw, for the preparation of which iron pots are found in every inn. The men, therefore will not camp away from a village inn, which, by the way, is known by a wicker-work wine (beer) strainer suspended on a pole. A laden pony will do thirty miles a day. When passing through a village one often hears the sound of a tom-tom—it is the witch-woman driving out the bad spirits from some sick or otherwise afflicted being. Dressed as a man, but in red, she dances and throws her arms about, sprinkles water on the floor, and beats a small double drum, shaped like an hour-glass. The exorcism goes on for hours, so long as money is forthcoming. Some loose earth thrown on the ground just outside the door means “not at home.”

Besides geese, swans, ducks, pheasants (ringed), and quail, both the larger and the smaller bustard are met with, and in Northern Korea deer, leopards, and tigers. Leopards are often called tigers by the people, but there are long-haired—Manchurian—tigers in the forests of the north. The Chinese have a proverb: “The Koreans hunt the tiger during half the year, and the tiger the Korean during the other half.” Most of these are caught in pitfalls and smoked to death, but some are shot with old matchlocks by the “tiger hunters,” a guild of their own forming a guard on special occasions to the Sovereign. When I was in Korea the members were nearly all away after geese and ducks, of which plenty find their way into the markets. Geese were selling at about one shilling, ducks at sixpence, and swans at eighteenpence; pheasants at sixpence and less. A hunter whom I interviewed was dressed in grass sandals, white gaiters, blue loose breeches and jacket; he had an old Tower musket, a very old powder flask, carved in wood in the image of a turtle, a curio which I greatly coveted; a bag with bullets, and another filled with iron slugs, were hanging from a belt.

The most common bird in Korea is the magpie, which seems to thrive here in immense numbers. Although not considered a holy bird, he is never molested.

I paid a visit to the very old city of Kong-wha, surrounded,



like all cities here, by a huge crenelated wall 20 feet and more high, built of enormous blocks of granite; the wall was pierced by four gates with carved and painted very picturesque concave roofs, but again, like all cities, palaces, and houses in Korea, rapidly tumbling down. It is such a pity! So picturesque and quaint, and so beautiful are many of these buildings, and so great their historical interest, yet nothing whatever is done to prevent their rapid decay—there is no money, and nobody seems to care. This especially is the case in S<sup>o</sup>ul, the capital, with its very beautiful and most interesting palaces, its streets crowded with toiling coolies, heavily laden, magnificent bulls, swaggering yang-bans (officials), women covered from head to foot with huge green veils of gauze (for a woman's face must never be seen by strangers), policemen, soldiers, its immense wall running over the hills snake-like, its most striking gates, all of which is so well described in Mrs. Bishop's book.

## FISHING WITH CORMORANTS

1902

ON an hotel card drawing attention to the attractions of Nagoya, one of the show places of Japan, and its surroundings are among others the following items as here copied :—

“Osu Kwannon. A large temple of Goddess of Mercy; prigrimes worshipers are ranging from morning to night, the Image of Kwannon may be seen in perpetual fire of incense.”

“Gohyaku-rakan; five hundred idoles of Bhuddists. Art of carving is a object of the turists' visit.”

“Nagara-gawa. The suburb of Gifu, a river of national fame, celebrated for its cormorant fishing in its stream.”

Letting the worshippers range and the five hundred idols rest in peace, we did, however, pay a visit to the river of national fame. With this object we got into our rickishas at the door of the Japanese inn at Gifu one evening in July, and were soon on the way to the Nagara-gawa. It was just the night desired for seeing the sport at its best—a night as dark as it well could be, with only a star visible here and there in the black, cloudy sky. We were pulled rapidly through the narrow, dimly-lighted streets, crowded at this time with a very picturesque throng in its many-coloured garb. Most of the passers-by were carrying something, many pretty paper lanterns; women, boys, and girls had babies in bright wraps strapped on to their backs; men with heavy loads, boxes containing fish, sweetmeats, or vegetables, ices, and goodness knows what, suspended by means of a pole balanced across their shoulder, advertising their wares by voice, bell, or drum. A blind amma—shampooer—felt his way

along with the aid of a stick, warning people of his approach by occasional very plaintive notes on a bamboo flute, while the strains of a samisen here and there mingled with the shouts and clatter of the many people hurrying to and fro. The men were mostly clad in dark blues, the women in greys, relieved with bright obis, many with a flower in their raven coiffure. The low houses on either side with their dark wooden gables were embellished with many-coloured cotton hangings, paper lanterns, or large banners covered with Japanese characters attached to long poles; picture advertisements are everywhere seen, chiefly of cigarettes and tobacco. The most frequent of these was a vividly coloured representation of the god "Tengu," with a brilliantly carmine and extremely long nose, in close attendance upon a lady, who, to judge from her looks, does not greatly appreciate his celestial attentions; also another, a Japanese officer in full uniform, and thorough enjoyment apparently, of an enormous cigarette. The houses were still all open and lighted up, affording interesting glimpses of Japanese home life and the industrious natives yet busy at their various trades, for this is a hard-working people with no nonsense about eight hours. Here and there, however, men and women, the day's labour over, sat round the charcoal brazier smoking their tiny pipes and sipping tea from pretty little cups, evidently discussing current affairs. A constantly shifting scene of busy life in most attractive colouring, and highly interesting as it unrolled itself before the rapidly passing stranger.

After a forty minutes' drive we arrived at the foot of a bridge which spans the river, and here we got out and found our way, with the help of a lantern, to the water-side and our boat. A very comfortable boat it was, with a "house" in the middle, the shutters open all round, the floor covered with mats and cushions, and lighted by those very pretty paper lanterns for the making of which Gifu is famous. On many of these are coloured illustrations of cormorant fishing. Thus comfortably settled, we were poled into the dark night, lighted only by numerous fire-flies, and across the darker river, under the bridges and downstream, until presently we saw a big light, which on nearer approach proved to be the brightly burning fire in an iron brazier suspended beyond the bows of a fishing-boat. The strong light made the night beyond doubly dark, but lighted

up its immediate surroundings, the boat, the figures and faces of the men and the birds on the water, vividly disclosing a scene most strikingly picturesque. The flat-bottomed boat, about 40 feet long, had four occupants, and was worked close along the shore and in very shallow water. The "boss" standing in the bows, immediately behind the fire, handled twelve birds, the next man in importance in the centre working four; the third uttered sharp cries and made other noises to encourage the birds, while the duty of No. 4 consisted in the management of the boat. The fish, attracted by the strong glare of the fire in the brazier, collected in large number in the water below, and became an easy prey to the birds, who, regardless of the light and falling red-hot ashes, rush and dive in among them without a moment's rest. No less than twelve cormorants were worked by the man in the bows at the same time by means of twelve long strings, of which one end is fastened round the bird's body while the other is held in the hand; as all the cormorants are in the water and fishing at the same time, it seemed not by any means an easy matter to prevent the "reins" from becoming hopelessly entangled, which feat the owner, however, accomplished without much difficulty. Every bird carries a horn ring round the base of his throat, which prevents him swallowing any fish but the very small ones—those useless for market purposes. Whenever a cormorant appeared gorged and distended down to the ring, he was at once hauled up into the boat, his beak opened, and by a little pressure made to empty himself of his prey, when overboard he went again as keen as ever to fill his pouch once more. It was, indeed, a busy scene, and only after three hours' hard and constant work were the birds finally hauled into the boat, and, apparently well pleased with themselves, they perched in a row on the overhanging bows to be taken home. The result was several baskets of fish—"ai"—trout, and other small fry, all very silvery, the largest about four inches long. The money gained can be but little, hardly worth the expense, one would think, of boat, men, the keep of the birds during the winter—nine months, in fact, for they are only used during three—and only on dark nights is the fishing practised here. Within a few miles of Tokyo some fishermen use cormorants, but by day only; the visitors' boat is moved slowly along within easy

distance of the shore, and the birds are worked between the two. The scene, however, is not nearly so picturesque as that of Gifu. The cormorants are caught when young, during their first migration, with wooden decoys and birdlime; go through a long course of training, and often remain on the active list for twelve or fourteen years.

Cormorant fishing was first mentioned, according to Mr. B. H. Chamberlain ("Things Japanese"), in a poem which was itself quoted in a work compiled A.D. 712; and there is a very old picture in the museum at Gifu of no less than fifty boats fishing on the Nagara-gawa at the same time.

## XXXVII

### THE DUCK DECOY AT TOKYO

1902

**I**T was a long and slow drive through the streets of the huge city of Tokyo—streets which in the older parts are extremely narrow and without side-walks, and therefore crowded with people, who even when constantly shouted at are slow to make room, which indeed is not easy for them to do. Where former fires have swept away large areas the new streets are wider, built under Government supervision with houses often constructed of brick, instead of the almost universal and most inflammable wood. These rows of wooden “shanties”—all shops—are quaint and picturesque; open entirely to the front, the interior shaded by hanging strips of coloured cotton, and embellished with grotesque advertisements, often with bright paper lanterns or banners. Sometimes the owners have tried their hands at English, with results often very comical. Thus one often reads: “Peintar,” “Tairor,” “Bread and Cake maker,” “Here curios are soled,” and “Soapsell and Glog-shop,” &c., &c.

The decoy pond is situated in the centre of an extensive park, and is further guarded from every disturbing influence by a dense thicket of bamboos some 50 feet or more in depth. Through this protecting ring of jungle are cut about a dozen narrow but deep “pipes,” leading, not straight but with a twist, from the pond to a wooden screen outside the bamboo fence. In the screen are two tiny peepholes through which the ducks can be watched coming up the pipe; it is further pierced by a large hollow bamboo, the lower end of which almost touches the surface of the water in the pipe. Through this grass seed and

grain are thrown to the ducks by to them invisible hands to attract the decoys first and draw the wild birds after them towards the screen end of the pipe. Here, for the space of about twelve yards, the bamboo jungle has been cleared away from the vicinity of both sides of the narrow pipe, the water in which comes to within 2 feet of the level of the ground, being further screened, however, by an embankment which runs on either side of it the whole length of the cleared ground. At each end of the pond, and overlooking it, is a screen placed on a low hillock, from which, through slits, the ducks on the water could be watched as they lay lazily about, or moved restlessly to and fro, undecided yet whether to follow the decoys, as these boldly enter the mouths of the various pipes. An island occupies the centre of the pond, and was covered on our arrival by dozens of decoys, while the wild birds kept to themselves in parties on the water, and were mostly asleep—teals, mandarin, mallard, &c.

It was an unfortunate day, however, for very few wild ducks were about. A falcon had taken up his quarters in the surrounding woods, and fed regularly and plentifully on the birds of the lake, frightening others away. Since the arrival of this uninvited guest the lake had been almost bare of ducks; he terrorised the whole place, and catches had been very poor. The seemingly natural and simple cure, the shooting of the falcon, was not considered with favour; the keepers said that a shot would frighten away all the ducks, hardly a good reason, one would think, as the robber's death would surely be followed, especially now during the migratory season, by the advent of hundreds of birds certain to make, as before, the pond their resting-place. But now, instead in their usual hundreds, we saw, alas! but a few dozen.

The only decoy pond in Japan, at all events near Tokyo, is one belonging to the Emperor and that which I visited; it is an expensive toy, which, however, affords a good deal of amusement to the guests of a very novel kind. Mornings following stormy nights are likely to show most sport, for then the ducks are hungry and more likely to go into the pipes for the food floating on the water; but during full moon the birds go away to feed elsewhere, and on return are too sleepy and replete to wish for anything but undisturbed rest. Many other things affect the

ducks and their catching; it is like fishing—there is generally something wrong somewhere.

All approaches to the protecting bamboo thicket are thickly covered with pine needles and so are the paths which lead to the screens; no word is spoken, everything is arranged and ordered by sign. The only exception permitted is at the commencement of operations, when the keepers go behind the screens on to the open ground and gently clap their hands, a signal well understood and quickly responded to by the decoys, who at once enter the various pipes to feed on the grain thrown to them.

To every visitor is given a net, made of blue cord, about 4 feet deep by 8 feet wide, and 4 feet in length, which is attached to a fork at the end of a bamboo pole 7 feet long. Armed with this he awaits the signs from the keeper that the wild birds are sufficiently far up the pipe for an attempt to be made at their capture. There is room for three people on the open ground at each side of the ditch, which is about 8 feet wide and 2 deep, the apparent depth being added to by the embankment running along its whole length, so that a person approaching it cannot be seen by the birds until the last moment, or heard, if proper shoes are worn, and no noise is made. The time having come, the keeper enters the cleared ground first, and is at once followed by the visitors. He puts his net into the lake-end of the pipe to close it, and prevent the escape of any duck by swimming. The decoys used to the game do not attempt to leave, but the wild birds fly up in great alarm, rising straight from the water. Now is the time to catch them in the net, held with mouth downward; although very exciting, it is not by any means as easy as it would seem to be. It is very difficult to judge the distance correctly, and, in the excitement, other nets make grabs at what you had considered your own particular bird. When a duck has been caught in the net a sharp twist of the handle will hold it safely in the bag of it until a keeper takes it out. On good days, when the birds are hungry and freely enter the pipes, the general result is very satisfactory, and a visit to one division does not disturb the others, who all have their turn. Very often thousands of ducks rest on the lake, and a most interesting study it is to watch them—one's self unseen—through the different peepholes.



During my visit, alas! but few wild ducks were on the pond. That horrid falcon had frightened hosts of birds away; and in the afternoon when, unfortunately, we had to be there, the ducks which remained were lazy and sleepy, and not by any means anxious for the food so freely offered them in the pipes—nothing would induce them to follow the decoys. Although we had no sport, a visit to this very novel decoy pond proved of great interest.

## XXXVIII

### FLOOD, SALMON, AND STARLINGS

1904

"Wen salmon want a fly he take any fly damn quick. Wen he don't want none, no matter how many you show him, he says go to h——."—Deane Sage's Micmac fishing guide on need for great variety of flies. "Salmon and Trout," by the former.

ONE Sunday evening, early in February, I left for Ireland and seven weeks' salmon fishing—a happy man. Very keen, I was full of hope, even of landing a heavy fish—and they run big on that particular river—the very next afternoon. Nothing had been forgotten, all necessary tackle for fly and minnow was among my baggage—Jock Scotts, Galway goldfinches, Lemon greys, black and blue doctors of various sizes, brown, blue, and golden Devons, and lovely red prawns. But alas! the first glimpse of the Emerald Isle was through sheets of rain—rain which but for short intervals continued to the end of that month. Water was everywhere, the river in high flood, thick, like chocolate in colour, and snow in plenty lay on the mountains, which, as water, would presently come down the river and be added to the heavy drainage from the surrounding inundated country. And how many days would therefore be required, even if no rain fell in the meantime, to reduce the already swollen river to fishing level, was a conundrum not pleasant to contemplate.

It seemed almost hopeless, and was, indeed, most trying to a keen fisherman who had nothing whatever to do but watch the brown flood rush past, and the heavy rain clouds roll up and discharge their contents in a downpour apparently never to end.

Probably never was a glass more closely watched and tapped

more frequently, or river gauge as often examined as ours, until presently that most useful institution disappeared altogether below the surface, only to show its head again several days later. Not until three long weeks had passed did the river very gradually become fishable, but for long after it remained far above its best level. However, patience would not bear too great a strain, so in spite of high and snow-water, east winds and sleet, pretty invitations in the shape of minnow and fly were sent out, only to be disdainfully refused by the fish. The one consolation during all this trying time was that while the flood lasted no net would stand against it, and salmon could come up without hindrance; therefore by the end of February we had every reason to think that a goodly company of fresh-run fish had assembled in our water. From the 8th of February to the 2nd of March no fish touched my hook, but on that day I was the proud possessor of my first, a 14-lb. salmon.

This particular river is known for three things: the great number of kelts, the weight of its fish during the first six weeks or two months of the season, and, thirdly, for their sulkiness and deplorable want of keenness to take minnow or fly; of course, one or more of the hundred odd excuses for salmon not taking could always be made, yet they thoroughly deserved the epithet "sulky" brutes, an expression often heard on the river. They did not rise or show as frequently as salmon do on other rivers; certainly the big fish did not—kelts bounded out of the water occasionally, but the heavy fresh-run salmon showed but rarely. Now and then, however, there was the big roll or heavy splash which is so inspiring to the angler, doubly keen to try the fascinations of his fly or minnow where fish are known to lie. On one occasion our ears were thrilled by a mighty splash—it sounded like that of a 100-pounder at least—but on looking round the bend of the river for signs of the commotion all hope vanished, for the cause was not a big fish but a wretched cow which had fallen in from the high bank and was struggling in the water and disturbing the fish for many yards around. Thus suddenly are hopes raised only to be as suddenly dashed to the ground! The river seemed full of kelts, from those with the slimmest of waists to the well-mended ones, often difficult to tell from a good fish. They took any bait and some were very lively, but their frolics and strength did not

last long. Kelts when hooked were landed as soon as possible after having been recognised, so as not to exhaust them more than necessary, measured, labelled, and returned. Although this has been done during the last three seasons not one of those fish has returned to the river, at all events none appear to have been taken by rod, box, or net, as the reward offered for the label has never been claimed.\*

Towards the end of my stay kelts became less numerous as they slowly descended towards the sea, their convalescent home. Their presence caused many a disappointment; still, I thought it better to have something on now and then than nothing at all.

The thick, coffee-coloured water of a flood probably affects the fish as a dense, yellow-brown fog does a Londoner; unable to see a yard ahead, both are afraid to move or touch anything in the very least suspicious.

An American lately suggested that a small electric battery be attached to the rod and connected by means of a wire in the line with the hook. Should some accident then happen to the rod or the fish prove unmanageable or too heavy for the tackle, the current would be switched on and the fish thereby killed or stunned. Now, with the rod equipped on the plan of that American, my suggestion would be to attach a tiny electric lamp to the head of minnow or fly, and thus in the thick brown flood water render visible and display to the fish the beauties of either lure.

The various pools were first fished over with a fly, unless the water was too thick, or high, or both, and then again with a minnow or "killogh" (rock loach)† on crocodile flight. Thus every choice was given to the fish. The killogh proved the most attractive and killing bait; it could only be got, however, when the water ran low in the mountain burns, "tickled" by boys under the rocks.

\* One was got eleven months later in an adjoining river opening into the same estuary as this one, and had increased 5 inches in length and 10 lbs. 5 oss. in weight.

† John Ridd, in "Lorna Doone," gives a vivid description of the taking of loach in his youth—prodding them in the hill streams with a fork; he also certifies to their great use as a remedy and appetiser in the case of his dyspeptic mother, when prepared as follows: "Loaches baked in the kitchen oven with vinegar, a dozen leaves of bay, and about a dozen peppercorns."

Our water consisted of three distinct reaches, each separated from the next by several miles. It is curious how persistently unlucky one individual can be on a certain stretch and how fortunate always on another, others having the opposite experience; but so it was with me:—

	No. of Fishing days.	No. of Fish.	Weight.
Highest reach ... ..	7	1	14 lbs.
Middle water ... ..	7	4	57½ "
		(on 2 days)	
Lowest ... ..	8	15	255½ "

The last stretch of about one mile was always my favourite, partly, no doubt, because there I killed so many more fish than on the other two, but greatly also on account of its picturesque surroundings and great variety of water. To get there entailed a long car drive, but it was very enjoyable on a good road through pretty country, undulating and well wooded; then, also, I was very keen and had never yet left that water without a fish.

Cheery and amusing people these car-men are, and wonderful fish stories they do tell the driven fisherman—stories not unfrequently invented there and then, which make the time pass pleasantly, and often fulfil another object also—that of taking the passengers' attention away from any little failing of the horse—which horse, in my experience, always seems better at going uphill than down.

There was an excellent creature who beamed with delight at his own stories—and real startlers some of them were—every moment bursting into roars of laughter. An occasional “yes” or “no,” sign of astonishment or admiration, sufficed to keep my friend going.

To raise my hopes of future sport, he, on one occasion, composed a tale about “the largest salmon ever caught in Oireland, your honour.” “I was with Mr. X the other day when he got hold of a grand fellow, and after the biggest fight you ever saw the fish was got near the bank. I had hold of the gaff, but he would not let me touch the fish. ‘Why not?’ says I; ‘no,’ says he, ‘give me the gaff, I want to get him myself entirely.’ Begorra! he missed him and the fish went away—the biggest in Oireland, I tell your honour.” Roars of laughter.

"How do you know that," I meekly asked, "if you lost him?" "Lost him, you mane?" More roars. "No, we got him, the devil, for I jumped into the deep water, got him by the gills, and out on to the bank." Shrieks. This, in the broadest Irish with shouts of laughter interspersed, made a most amusing tale. Greatly curious to know what this, the "biggest fish in Oireland," had weighed, his answer—40 lbs.—astonished me vastly, for nothing short of eighty had seemed to me a fit ending to the story.

He was a jovial jehu. A visit to a beershop before we started may have had something to do with his hilarity; everything was a joke to him; even when he told me of the death of a well-known fisherman his laughter rang out loud and strong enough to startle the mare and rouse her to fresh exertions.

We passed an old castle here and there, generally but a ruin, densely covered with ivy; the large fields were neatly ploughed or covered with pasture and feeding herds of cattle, or numerous ewes, almost every one attended by two lambs. The cottages generally seemed better than usual, the huge stone-faced banks were well kept, and altogether the country had an appearance of decided prosperity. Masses of gorse crowned with golden yellow blossom, and primroses here and there, gave colour, and with the many evergreens and ivy-covered trees relieved the still very wintery aspect of the landscape.

As Irish cars do, we trotted up the hills and walked down them, passing many diminutive carts drawn by donkeys, in which loomed large one or two shawl-enveloped women taking produce to market; if not laden with human freight these primitive conveyances carried a fat pig on its way to breakfast-tables of Great Britain, *viâ* the slaughter-houses of Waterford. On the grass by the roadside fed or lay fortunate donkeys with a day off, or goats chained two and two together, to the great disgust of both. Noisy crows were busy building their nests in the many clumps of beech, Scotch fir, oak, and lime-trees, and collecting old leaves in the meadows to make them comfortable. On this last and favourite stretch of the river we only had the right bank, certainly the best, with the exception of a very limited piece, about the length of a small field. Close to the bank here are some deep pools with very sluggish water, not at all a favourable place for the fly. Told by the warden

that some big fish were known to lie there, especially near some bushes overhanging the water, I fished it down with a Durham ranger, letting the fly sink and come in well towards the bank. Hardly had it passed the first bush when there was a tug, that incomparable sensation, and I was fast in a fish. No doubt, too, it was a big one, for it moved about in a stately fashion up and down, across to the other bank, and back again, pressing very heavily on the rod, and not playing pranks like small fry. He pulled and pulled, gave those horrible jerks and tugs than which nothing is more trying. For a long time we got no view of him; he kept deep down near the bottom, and half an hour passed and my arms were very tired before, at last, we were allowed to get a faint glimpse of his magnificent proportions. After one more procession across the river, the line unreeling slowly, he returned tired, rolling about near the surface, and almost ready to give up the battle. The fish was so heavy and had been on so long, that I became anxious about the hook holding, anxiety only to be relieved when at last the gaff had got a firm hold and lifted him on to the bank. Until then, and indeed not until suspended from the steelyard, had we any idea of his real weight—he pulled down 33½ lbs.—and was a beautifully proportioned fish, and one to be decidedly proud of. A great friend of mine and enthusiastic fisherman at that time always finished his letters to me by strongly advising a “tight line,” and here was a case in point, for when the fish touched the grass and the line slackened, the hook fell out of his mouth!

This fish, apparently, had lain close under the bank, but as a rule they were to be “met” in those smooth, glassy-looking patches about the centre of the river, which proclaim a sandy bed; thence they followed the lure as it crossed, but taking only when it approached the bank. This I witnessed two or three times, and on one occasion the fish was just about to seize the minnow, when, unfortunately, he saw me standing almost above him; he quickly retired to safer quarters.

Full of hope, I fished this short stretch several times afterwards, but although a few fish showed themselves, never would another accept my invitation. When on this water we generally had luncheon at the ivy-covered ruin of a very old castle near an ancient abbey, green with ivy also. A handsome, very solid

stone bridge, built long ago, crossed the river below ; further in the background stood another ruined castle, and beyond that the view was bounded by high mountains, suggestive of grouse. It was all very picturesque and delightful. On these occasions we always had a visitor—a robin—who, without loss of time, appeared from out of the ivy with a twitter, knowing evidently from former experience that the various paper parcels would hold something for him also. He enjoyed his lunch as much as we did ours, but our satisfaction was still further enhanced when able, at the same time, to feast the eye on a salmon as it lay before us on the grass—the reward of our labours in the morning. We then also watched for fish rising, in order to get valuable hints as to their whereabouts. How much more interesting and exciting it is to try for a fish when you know where he lies ; every time the fly or minnow passes over the spot hope is strongest and nerves most keenly strung, ready to detect the slightest touch.

I always felt very restless during lunch, more than half convinced that by not fishing the biggest fish in the river had been lost.

Adjoining the castle is a very deep pool of almost stagnant water, with the reputation of holding many big fish. Owing to the proximity of the wall it is most difficult to fish, and generally passed over. It was a great temptation, however, to try it with a minnow, and by coiling the line on the grass the feat was accomplished one day. A fish did take a heavy hold of the bait, and visions of landing a leviathan passed through my brain—visions, alas ! to collapse immediately, for the bait and the hoped-for giant parted company. The disappointment was great, for, curiously enough, it was the third instance that day of big fish all, one after the other, ejecting the hooks. Probably they all rose short, but in every instance the lure was a killogh on crocodile hooks, a murderous bait, and one apparently impossible to get rid of if once touched. The language at these repeated misfortunes, if perhaps not fit for the pulpit, is perfectly justifiable, and certainly relieves the mind to some extent. However, on the evening of that same day I yet was fortunate enough to land a fish, after passing through a very anxious time, the former mishaps in my mind, until the gaff had done its work. It is astonishing why all the



fish in a river should, at exactly the same moment of the day, come to an agreement to rise short, to lie like stones at the bottom, to refuse all lures, then suddenly and altogether take it into their heads to jump about, rise at a bait, take or disdain it. As Sothorn used to say in "Lord Dundreary," "it is a thing that no fellow can understand."

No doubt the fish are affected by present or prospective changes in the weather, but why, without one exception, over the whole length of the river? We, when old, rheumatic, and with bronchial troubles, are similarly influenced, but why should it affect all these fish just up from the sea, full of youth, health and strength?

Below the castle are two swift water pools, and beyond the bridge is another, grand places for the fly, but strong tackle is necessary with these big fish who make your reel sing and your feet move to keep up with them. Below the last "tail" the river runs more leisurely and is very deep, in pools, on our side under a high, steep, bushy bank. This is a favourite resort for big fish, and apparently they are more ready to take here than elsewhere. I never fished this reach unsuccessfully. It was on this water that I landed another big fish, scaling 30½ lbs., on a killogh this time—the fly cannot be used on account of a long line of trees close to the river. He was a beautiful fish straight from the sea, who fought hard for forty minutes by the watch; pulling, tugging, and rolling about, he caused many anxious moments. When near the bank at last, and ready apparently to meet the gaff, he started off once again across to the other side, which already he had visited several times, but more slowly on this occasion, as if tired but yet anxious once more to see some friend perhaps, or favourite locality. Thoughts like these on such occasions, accompanied by the plaintive wail of the reel, as it slowly revolves, are sad ones, sadness, however, to be rapidly dispelled and changed to those feelings of triumph and pleasure with which the noble fish is received on being safely laid on the grass. Another part of the river, a mile or so higher up, was not a lucky spot for me, although others counted it the best of the whole fishing. I tried it often, but was successful on two days only. The fish were there no doubt, but treated my efforts with contempt, which was very aggravating and tiring on those long and rather monotonous reaches. When

I growled the remark of my attendant was always the same, "Oh! this is a grand part of the water." I could but agree; it was indeed a fine stretch with lots of water, but what availed that to me when the fish would not meet me half-way? We tried them with various flies and baits, but they usually refused all, and after a long, unsuccessful, and therefore tiring day, I felt inclined to follow the example of the fisherman depicted in *Punch* many years ago, and throw all my flies, minnows, and killoghs into the river, and tell the sulky brutes to make their own choice.

Still higher than this, some miles up, was the prettiest part of our fishing, but there even less success attended my efforts, possibly because it was never fished when at its best. The first fish got was landed here but never another, though I tried hard and often. I caught two trout and a large part of a lady's garment, which when first "met" on the gravelly bottom made me believe that at last my luck had turned and I had hold of a fish. The "remnants" were well hooked too, and at last, assisted by the gaff, safely brought to bank.

This was my last triumph in Ireland; alas! the time had come to an end—would that I could have it over again! The result was very satisfactory, on twenty-two fishing days twenty fish were killed; total weight, 327 lbs., average  $16\frac{1}{2}$  lb.; the latter were reduced by four small fish— $9\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $9\frac{1}{2}$ , 9, 7, which were brought up on a short flood. But they were real gentlemen, lively, full of spirits and play, who showed their silvery bodies frequently and behaved altogether as well-brought-up salmon should, intent on the pleasure they thereby afforded the man at the other end of the line; not like the slow-moving heavy-weights who hugged the bottom in their bad temper, and never until almost the last moment displayed their portly form to the anxiously expectant fisherman.

My best day produced four fish— $30\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $9\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $9\frac{1}{2}$ , 9; another—28, 17, and 18, with many kelts, and some of large size; the exact bag being:—

14, 19, 18, 18,  $88\frac{1}{2}$ , 28, 17, 18,  $16\frac{1}{2}$ , 18,  $30\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $9\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $9\frac{1}{2}$ ,  
9,  $10\frac{1}{2}$ , 20, 7, 11,  $19\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $20\frac{1}{2}$ .

Owing to its warm and damp climate Ireland is a favourite winter resort for starlings, and this particular neighbourhood in

the early spring appeared to be the principal, or one of the principal, places of assembly prior to their migration to other parts. It was a most marvellous spectacle to watch these huge masses of starlings, millions and millions of them, as they collected here from their scattered feeding-grounds in the early evening and assembled, not as individuals or all in one enormous mass, but in two or three entirely distinct bodies, like the separate divisions of an army corps. As they settled the ground became literally black with them, but the outlines of the divisions were sharply drawn, and no birds to be seen on the grass in the intervals between them. It was a truly striking picture; there must have been a very strict commander over each well-drilled body. When all had assembled, and daylight began to fade, up the whole army rose, and the columns, not intermingling, took several circular flights, as if at practice for their prospective journey, afterwards alighting on the high trees around, which soon were black with them. Thence once more would they repeat the manoeuvres and, these last evolutions completed, the noise ceased, and the birds settled finally on the heavily laden branches.

It was an extremely interesting spectacle, a striking example of the high intelligence and perfect organisation which prevails among these, to the forester and gardener most unwelcome visitors, when large bodies are collected for some special purpose.

## XXXIX

### A BAD SEASON IN NORWAY

1905

IT is indeed fortunate that I am not superstitious or a believer in omens like some of my friends, for the disappointment awaiting me in Norway would have been doubly severe. According to them I was fully assured of the very best of sport, for several things had happened to me lately, all within a short space of time—things which those of great faith look upon as certain to bring good luck.

Thus lately, in a dream, I had visited a carpenter's shop and there watched the making of my own coffin. Taking naturally great interest in the proceeding, I was much puzzled at the time, and for some period afterwards while not yet fully awake, by the circumstance that the coffin had been divided into two compartments by a cross partition. I never solved the conundrum of how my body was to be fitted into it, but well remember that the carpenter refused to see my point or alter his handiwork at my suggestion.

Another time I had a dream about an old boot, and, when casually mentioning the matter to a companion, was at once told that nothing could be more lucky. This particular boot had belonged to Archbishop Beaton, who was killed at St. Andrews in 1546. Duly authenticated, it had been shown to me shortly before, and I had also visited the spot where the murder was committed. Why, however, that ancient boot should have so impressed itself on my mind is not easy to say. Still, I was ready to take all the good luck it was to bring me.

Then, again, one morning my best London hat was ruined

by the substantial gift of a large bird which happened to be sitting on a tree immediately above my head. This, to me, was most annoying, but many people considered it a good omen. A friend of mine, indeed, before any important race-meeting used to walk slowly up and down under a rookery near the house in the hope of getting a hint about the chances of his selections and the likelihood of their proving remunerative.

Lastly, my favourite game of patience had several times triumphantly succeeded, to my great astonishment, for as a rule it but rarely came out, and was most irritating in consequence.

It was not unnatural, therefore, that for these several and diverse reasons so highly thought of by others, I was led to hope for a really good time with the salmon on a river in Norway which a friend and I had taken. He, two years ago, had been very successful there, and consequently thought well of our prospects now. The last season had been a bad one, owing to want of water, but now a large quantity of snow remained as a reserve to keep the river at a fair fishing level for a considerable time. In a beautiful valley—one of the many charming "dals" of Norway, we therefore took up our quarters in the early part of June, 1905. Confined to narrow limits by long mountain ranges running almost parallel to each other and to the river, our valley down-stream extends into the far distance, where apparently, but apparently only, it is closed by high mountains which, during the first part of our stay, were deeply covered with snow. Above the house again another valley opens into ours, bringing a small but rapid river with it, and here the country is more open, the hills lower but thickly wooded, firs and birches surrounding cultivated clearings, with a saeter here and there, painted red or yellow. The white spire with black roof of a village church peeped over a ridge, sharply outlined against the dark green; needlewood, and here also snow-covered mountains round off the landscape. The view from our windows was very picturesque, especially in a northerly direction. There, between us and the river—narrow space though it is—were small fields of barley, oats, and grass, green as green can be, shooting up rapidly under the influence of occasional showers and sixteen hours' daily sunshine. The wealth and variety of the wild flowers everywhere was truly marvellous; the "grass"

fields resembled huge and rich Turkey carpets, of bright fresh green as a body colour, with patterns thereon in golden-yellow buttercups and marigolds, in creamy white parsleys and marguerites, with large patches of violet pansies and scabious, of poppies scarlet and cornflowers blue, the whole overlaid with a sheen of crimson, thanks to the very abundant growth of sorrel now in flower. The leaves of the latter proved a most wholesome and agreeable spinach-like dish, curiously enough hardly known here or used by the natives. Flowers were everywhere in rich and endless variety of colour among the otherwise universal green of Nature's new spring clothing.

How happy horses and cows must be when, after the long winter's confinement in dark barns with doubtful hay, they are turned out in spring to feed in the deliciously fresh pastures so bountifully provided by Nature! No wonder that ponies now look sleek and cows give largely of their rich milk, thereby providing ample work for the co-operative dairies so universal here. One is only astonished that they do not die of over-feeding from so continual a feast during those summer months when daylight hardly fades.

The colouring of these beautiful, carpet-like fields extending all along the valley, varied as time went on, the places of the earlier flowers being taken by others just as gorgeous, just as abundant, but slightly different in shading perhaps, until one day all were laid low by the scythe and at once hung up on wires to aid the drying. In some of the oat and barley fields grew more wild flowers than corn; most of the pastures were intensely golden from solid masses of marigolds, others blue from thousands of harebells, and so on.

Beyond the small fields near the house runs the river in its stony bed, its banks grass, with many alder clumps. It has at last been explained to me why those particular trees are so often found in these localities—simply because a young alder leaf provides the very best means of taking away the shininess of new gut when the latter is rubbed with the former; indeed, there is a *raison d'être* for all things!

From the other—the right—bank of the river sharply rise the hills opposite, steep mountains indeed, mostly covered with needlewood and lighter birch and poplar, except where large and small clearings have been made, now all flourishing fields of

barley, potatoes, and grass ; there, with a southerly aspect, the sun can thoroughly exert its beneficent influence. Here, on the clearings also, hanging on the steep slopes apparently, are the saeters, built of logs, some coloured dark brown by age and weather, others painted in staring ochre or scarlet, the local favourite colours ; near the living-houses are the store buildings, raised high off the ground on pillars of stone or wood.

The ground towards the south rises more slowly, with birch, winter cherry, and pine on grass land, and the mountains overlooking all are thickly covered with forest, the northerly aspect not favouring so many farmyard clearings. When we came, snow still lay on many of the lower hills, but the continuous almost tropical weather caused it rapidly to find its way into our river, swelling it greatly ; still we hoped that a reserve would be left on the higher ranges. The spate cleared the river of logs, which now with but little assistance could be got down, and we thought that it would further be useful to us in helping many a good fish to reach our pools. Possibly, however, the large mass of snow-water for so long a time in the river put off the fish from ascending ; at all events, salmon were "met" but rarely, the usual excuses on such occasions : cold water, "dusty" water, as the old ghillie called it (dirty), too high a river, too much rain-water in it, thunder in the air, mist on the hills, too bright a sun, the constant rise in the afternoon, the sun's effect on snow—all these reasons and several more were given, yet possibly the first was the real one. Last year, also a bad season, there was no water, now everything was right but there were no fish. A few, very few indeed, did reach our section during June, probably belonging to the Salmon Quarter-master-General's department, sent to arrange quarters for the main body, and five, apparently all, were promptly captured by the skilful rod of my companion, who was well acquainted with all that was worth knowing about the river. Was it because no report could reach the fjords, the intended messengers being dead, that the "run" told off for the river never came ? During the first fortnight, fishing regularly, I, a stranger on this beat, had only one interview, and that of the shortest, with a fish who would have nothing further to do with me. Bad luck certainly was mine, and wretched frauds all those vaunted harbingers of good fortune proved, for the constant wading in

the cold water brought on a very severe attack of sciatica, which laid me up altogether for some time and put a stop to any further wading, and therefore fishing, on this "wading" river. This then was doubly annoying, for only the evening before I was taken ill a report had come up from the house below that five fish had been killed there that day, thus raising hopes that the long-desired run had at last commenced. Again, however, it proved a false alarm. The continued tropical weather was succeeded by three weeks of steady rain, the river rose again, and another small batch of fish, a second billeting party perhaps, came up and three were taken by my partner on that record-making afternoon. But this was the end; the people below left in disgust, and so did we after another blank fortnight, for it was hopeless; the nets even on the fjords had been taken off and stored, the absence of fish made these useless; never was there so bad or so disappointing a season.

We packed up our traps and moved down to the lowest reach of the river, which had been lent to us for ten days and was supposed to be good for sea trout; salmon rarely stopped there but passed rapidly through to the upper waters. Here, where there was no wading, a pleasant surprise awaited me, whether thanks to one, or other, or all of the supposed but discredited heralds of good luck I know not, in any case it made up in a very great measure for all the disappointments which had up to then been dealt out to me.

On this water was a long, deep pool where on very rare occasions a salmon had been known to halt on its way up, but which my friend and I had always drawn blank on our daily visits. When on this very great day my turn came to fish the water, I, hoping to change the luck, put on a minnow and harled about half of the upper part of the pool, with the unsatisfactory result of adding one  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. sea-trout to the bag. Disgusted, the minnow was changed for a small Childer's sea-trout fly and the harling continued, when suddenly the whole apparatus was nearly jerked out of my unsuspecting hand by a big fish which, showing half its massive form, had made a most determined attack on the fly. That it was a heavy fish soon became very evident, and keenly I felt the danger to my light tackle and small grilse rod. As soon as it seemed safe, I left the boat for the shingle, and followed



the fish down carefully, saving every bit of line so as to be ready for any sudden rushes. Well, it was a great fight, my small rod and the big fish, for he made several dashes back into the heavy water, after having been coaxed into the nearer shallows, but my prayer that everything would hold was answered, and at last the gallant fish had to give in, and to my intense relief was cleverly gaffed and brought on to dry land, where he scaled 27½ lbs! That was indeed a triumph; to "meet" a salmon at all in that pool was a rare occurrence, and I don't know who was prouder that day, the ghillie or I. He carried home the fish in his arms like a baby, and no doubt told the story of its capture to all the haymakers on the way, while I in one half-hour had landed a fish, it was my only one, heavier than any got on that river during the season, and on a rod intended for grilse only.

We left Norway soon afterwards; sea-trout even became scarcer and smaller, and beautifully less, and we travelled home in a ship full of fishermen, thoroughly disappointed after the worst season on record.

Apropos of a fish pulling hard, I extract the following from Frank Buckland's "Curiosities of Natural History." In order to judge the pull of a salmon when suddenly frightened, Buckland, having harnessed a "big" fish, got into a tank with him; then he attached one end of a steelyard to the traces and the other to his own waist. The fish, when touched with a twig, pulled in the subsequent rush 23 lbs. the first time, 20 lbs. the second, and 15 lbs. the third. A 9 lbs. salmon weighed but ½ in the water (river).

## XL

### “THE DAYS THAT WERE”

1906

*Mrs. Auchterbody.* “Weel, Sandie, yon was a fine dry day we had last month.”

*Sandie.* “Deed aye, it just put me in mind o’ ane we had when I was a bit laddie, but it was, if anything, fully drier.”—*Punch*, November 14, 1906.

IN my humble opinion the most enjoyable of all sport is to be got in a “wild” country, where hard work is rewarded by a varied bag—the more varied, the greater the enjoyment. Nothing is more delightful to my mind than, in the late autumn, to wander, gun in hand, over moor and heath in some out-of-the-way part of Great Britain, such as on the west coast of Ireland or Scotland, or, better still perhaps, on one of the Hebrides, as I lately found during a delightful visit with ten different kinds of “game,” from goose to Jack snipe to meet me. Still more enjoyable would it have been had snipe been more abundant, and woodcock “in”—a greatly to be desired moment which, unfortunately, it has always been my fate to miss. The cock, alas! in their numbers had passed through a month before, during November’s very cold days and those strong north winds which always bring them from Scandinavia, and take them on the next stage of their migration, Ireland. However, those which remained satisfied me, most of them home-bred probably, few in number certainly, but grand, well-fed birds, thanks to abundant food in the soft moorland of the island.

I confess to an intense enthusiasm for woodcock, and consider them the most sporting birds out—next come grouse and snipe—partly perhaps because I can generally hit them, and then their surroundings on the wild moorland have always a

great fascination for me, harmonising as these do so thoroughly with this bird's plumage and indeed with that of all others except the gulls now met with. Try to find without a dog a dead grey hen, a woodcock, grouse, or snipe dropped among brown bracken, dry grass, moss and lichen, and heather in its autumnal and winter garb, and you will get anxious about your bird which you saw fall long before you at last discover him—so exactly does the colouring and marking of his plumage match that of the bed on which he lies.

Short days are now, alas! and the weather trying and most unfavourable to sport; gales or strong winds attended by hail or rain every day, with the exception of two in three weeks—truly west coast wintry weather, only perhaps "more so." During my visit there was no beginning as there was no end to this wild weather. The sea, thoroughly roused by these constant gales, was very beautiful as it broke in whitest spray on the wild, rocky coast, or rushed in silvery foam over sandy beach. The islands to the east and the mainland beyond were deeply covered with snow, and we hoped that hard frost on the latter might send some cock over to us to our ever soft and rich feeding grounds, but very few came apparently to swell the number of those resident on the island. The boisterous weather greatly interfered with sport, but we—the keeper, boy, spaniel, retriever, and I—were out every and nearly all day. It was not altogether as pleasant as it might have been, but to remain indoors when moor birds were about would surely have been more trying still. We met with geese on fields near the sea, duck, black game, grouse, woodcock, pheasant, partridge, snipe, rabbits, and rock pigeons—truly a delightful selection of candidates for the bag! The pheasants, scattered as they are all over the moor, roost on rocks, for trees are very rare and foxes none; owls (horned) seem to do the same, for on two occasions I nearly trod on one fast asleep in the heather. Most of the cock were flushed from ledges overhung with heather, in the vicinity generally of a burn, now noisy and swollen from heavy rainfall. There, apparently, they pass the day in sleep, until hunger and evening suggest a succulent meal of worms in the bay below. Our spaniel was very keen after woodcock, bustling about untiringly, his stumpy tail never at rest for a moment, but the retriever's fancy inclined more to rabbits, which he seemed to prefer to all else. He was very

quick, however, in finding and retrieving a dead bird, thereby rousing the spaniel's jealousy, which often boded ill to the woodcock's anatomy. When cock arrive from the north, the time varying with the weather, very large bags are made, but when we tried the best—"awful" the keeper called them—places, especially those among the oak scrub near the sea and the dense covers at the house, they were few and far between. They varied much in colouring and size, the smaller appeared darker, the larger more grey, the latter, according to the present belief, being the older birds. Mr. H. G. Davonport, in *The Field* of November 10, 1906, says: "The young birds have the triangular markings on the outer web of the first quill feathers, which disappear gradually and successively from the base until the web is less uniformly margined with very pale yellow. Dissection alone can discriminate between the sexes."

I brought away several dozen first quill feathers and have now a perfect series to illustrate the above. The outer web in the young is marked from base to tip with sharply defined rich brown triangles; these gradually become paler, the dark spaces between smaller in number and narrower, always from the base upward, until only a thin white or very pale yellow edging remains in the old birds.

The keeper—here for many years—thought out everything he wished to say in Gaelic and then gave the best translation he was capable of; far too polite to air his own opinion, he was annoyingly anxious to fall in with everybody else's. He also had a puzzling way when giving the direction he wished us to take. The natural supposition that this would be that of his extended arm and hand was always wrong; the fingers, which one could never see but which were curved at various angles, gave the desired course. It always reminded me of a friend, now dead, alas! provided with a curiously crooked fore-finger, which, broken at cricket, had very badly mended. This he would always use as a pointer, and naturally it was impossible to read his wishes, for the damaged digit pointed all round the compass.

Here, also, one heard the usual remark that woodcock never now were as numerous as in the old days, which indeed seems confirmed by the following extract from Leland's "Collectanea" quoted in Wheater's "History of Sherburn and Cawood." In Cawood Castle took place, on January 16, 1566, "the great

feast of the intronisation of the reverende father in God, George Nevil, Archbishop of York and Chancellour of England in the VI. of the reigne of Kyng Edwards the fourth." Among "the goodly provision made for the same" were four hundred woodcocks. These were "rost" and "baked," the latter to be eaten "with salt and cinnamond." Even in these days of cold chambers and rapid transport, it would probably not be easy to collect four hundred woodcock on a given day.

There were plenty of grouse and black game about—duck, mallard, teal, widgeon and pochard, but few snipe. These had in November been in abundance but were now scarce, the then cold weather having probably suggested an early departure for warmer quarters. Those which remained were greatly scattered and very wild.

"The machine is ready" was the message brought into the gun-room one morning early, and we were soon *en route* to a place some miles away where bernicle geese were said to congregate. Wet and stormy as usual, the island did not by any means look its best; the tiny village seemed totally deserted, the hotel—used by summer visitors but now shut up—looked terribly forlorn; nobody seemed about, the day apparently was too moist even for the natives, the only moving creatures being some highly-bred and very picturesque Highland cattle and handsome sheep with black faces and legs and beautiful silky wool. The bernicles came ashore in considerable numbers to feed on stubble and grass fields near the coast, but not now in the numbers as described by Dr. John Walker in his "Economical History of the Hebrides," 1806. "The crops of S. Uist, Benbecula and N. Uist are sometimes almost entirely destroyed by vast flocks of wild geese which haunt these islands and their neighbourhood. The wild goose never alights in a field of corn, but always in the neighbouring grass field, and from thence walks into the corn. The farmers, therefore, totally surround their cornfields with a heather rope two to three inches thick, laid upon the ground, and this the birds do not pass over, unless much pressed by hunger."

The geese, some thirty or forty, were where we had hoped to find them, feeding on the stubbles. The plan of campaign hastily settled proved successful; after a long stalk behind walls and hillocks, creeps through very "soft" ground, scrambles over slippery rock and through slithery masses of seaweed at low

water, we got a shot or two but only bagged one goose. On another occasion the attempt to circumvent these exceedingly wary birds, which, thanks to hungry islanders, lead a disturbed existence, was unsuccessful; when almost within shot we disturbed an old blackcock, who got up with altogether unnecessary noise and made the geese follow his example and depart out to sea.

All game was "wild" on this wild island, as indeed was the weather also. Hard work alone filled the bag, but I enjoyed it thoroughly for all that and because of that. On return to the house one felt deserving of what was brought home, and looked once more with pleasure and pride at those beautiful birds which had afforded such real sport during the day's wanderings in a wild but most picturesque country.

For the use of future goose hunters I here add Mr. Patrick Bower's recipe for preparing a goose for the table given by "Gowgeen" in one of his charming letters on "Sport in Ireland," published in the *County Gentleman* of February 18, 1904: "Plock the goose, sar, and put it into a big pot of shpring wather, with half a stone of piathies, a hid or two of white cabbage, a shake of pepper and a pinch of salt. Then let an eel loose in the pot; what's the matter with the wild goose is that it's a dhry baste, and wants greasing and the eel does it. Boil it, yer honour, till the mate leaves the bones, and, Glory be to God, the Lord Liftinant will invy ye the steing of it."

## RETROSPECT

**W**HEN on the voyage home from East Africa early in 1906 the many things of great interest I had there seen suggested to me the idea of collecting on paper there and then those sights and scenes and Nature's wonders which after my long years of travel seemed the grandest, most remarkable, and the most beautiful of all the many it had been my great privilege to witness. Such pictures, deeply graven into the tablets of my mind and fixed there indelibly, remained unchanged by time however long, when lighter impressions were dulling fast and fading rapidly.

It was an interesting pastime and the time passed most pleasantly while marshalling in review my frequent wanderings by sea and land, and turning over one by one the numerous leaves which make the book of memory, consisting now of many volumes. The list completed there remained in my mind no doubt but that those named on it were fully entitled to occupy their places of honour; the task had been successful but sad withal, for was it not all concerned with the past and mostly with the long ago?

My intention on this trip had been first to visit the Falls of the Zambezi and then go to East Africa, but fate decided against the former. Arrived near Beira, the weather was stormy and the sea far too high to permit of any approach to land, and after lying off for twenty-four hours with no improvement in the weather, the ship went on to Delagoa Bay. Comparatively easy from Beira in the time permitted me—December 23rd to January 6th—a visit to the Falls now became a heavy task likely to be highly fatiguing; to reach them from Lorenzo Marques, no less than 182 hours—105 of continued travelling—were needed, while from the Zambezi back to Beira meant another eighty.

Most of this would have had to be done during the eight days of Christmas and New Year holidays, when, owing to general rejoicing and untiring attempts at quenching an apparently unquenchable thirst, things and trains were not likely to run smoothly. So the trip was most reluctantly abandoned.

May the space which the Victoria Falls were expected to fill among the elect in Memory's gallery be yet occupied by them and take their place alongside that Canadian-American wonder, the lovely Falls of Niagara!

To pass the time while waiting for the boat a trip to Pretoria during the holidays seemed preferable to so dreadful a scamper, unsatisfactory though it proved, with everything closed except bars for eight whole days and nothing to eat but frozen meat and tinned vegetables—a truly disgraceful want of enterprise! My inquiry as to why the engine never ceased whistling while passing through Portuguese East Africa was met by the statement that only by such hideous noises was it possible to scare away the mosquitoes, which here in their swampy paradise were said to attain the size of locusts and be dangerous to life!

Steaming northward from Lorenzo Marques's busy harbour and bright crimson soil we passed moribund Beira, visited Zanzibar and arrived at Mombasa Island; and very hot and picturesque it is, the door to those wonderful regions inland now opened to the public by England's engineering skill and enterprise. What marvellous changes here in a few years! A comfortable railway—588 miles long—takes one to Victoria Nyanza, where a 600-ton steamer, lighted and ventilated by electricity, awaits the traveller to carry him either across to Entebbe, capital of Uganda, or on a trip round the lake. The "Uganda" Railway, which is nowhere in Uganda, leaves hot Mombasa with its beautifully green mango, wonderful baobab-trees, and lovely crotons for the adjoining mainland and soon ascends the plateau of the interior with altitudes varying between 2 and 8,000 feet; after a run of about 500 miles it descends to the Lake, which lies 3,650 feet above sea-level. The country passed through is infinitely varied: tropical forests with their dense and tangled vegetation, huge swamps, the home of hippos; endless grassy plains, deep valleys and high mountains—everything on the most extensive scale. The natives along the line and crowding the stations offer an interesting study: Suahelis, Kikuyus, Masai,



Wanderobo, Nandi, and Kavirondo, near the Lake. Fashions vary greatly among all the tribes; clothing, exceedingly scanty always, becomes less and more infinitesimal until among the Kavirondo at Kisumu, the terminus of the railway, absolutely none remains. The native market here goes by the name of the "Garden of Eden"—before the fig-leaf period. Everybody walks about as Adam and Eve are supposed to have done before the apple incident.

Beads, blue ones, are the fashion among most of the tribes, worn in strings on neck and arms, with heavy and many coils of brass and iron wire on both extremities, to such an extent often as to permit but slight movement of the elbow. Other very weighty rings are arranged, one within the other of gradually increasing diameter, on a plane and worn round the ladies' necks, resembling the rings encircling the planet Saturn; holes through the lobes of the ear, male and female, are enlarged to an almost incredible extent by means of pegs and rings of wood, gradually increasing in size until nothing but a thin loop of skin remains. In this loop, adorned along the edge with blue beads, are carried by way of ornament objects as large as preserved milk tins, the whole weighted down by rings of wire until it rests upon the shoulder. A Kikuyu youth in order to be in the height of fashion must have his hair arranged in minute curls and these plentifully smeared with castor oil and rubbed over with earth—which everywhere is of a rich crimson. Beads, wire, distended ear-lobes are necessities, and a square piece of cotton or bark cloth worn over the shoulder completes the costume. Women, of course, do all the work, stagger under the heaviest loads, often at the same time suckling a baby, while their lord and master swaggers along in front, carrying nothing but a stick or spear.

The "Garden of Eden," most interesting in its primitive simplicity, is a garden in name only; a few sheds on a sandy plain under an equatorial sun constitute the market, to which natives bring their yams, dhurra, flour, bananas, chillies, sugar-cane, spearheads, wire, and beads. Some cotton sheets with patterns in the then fashionable chocolate colour are exposed for sale, but do not seem to find many purchasers, Nature's simplest clothing being much preferred. The contrast between primitive savagery and high civilisation was indeed most striking as one stepped

from among the naked crowd on to the deck of an electrically lighted and cooled 600-ton steamer!

Terrible havoc has the sleeping-sickness made on the western—Uganda—side of the Lake and on the islands; the fishing population, very dense at one time, has almost entirely disappeared. Brought from the Congo, this dread disease is said to have killed 200,000 of our fellow subjects! The germ is carried by a cousin of the tsetse fly, and the microbe shown to me under the microscope in the Entebbe Laboratory was lively indeed among the blood corpuscles of an infected cat.

Particularly interesting to a sportsman are the plains east of the capital of East Africa—Nairobi. Here on a huge reserve game in incredible numbers and the greatest variety wanders and even closely approaches the railway—giraffe, large herds of zebra, antelope by the hundred and more together and of many kinds, but especially hartebeest and wildebeest, the beautiful Thompson gazelle, the ugly warthog, lions sometimes and ostriches often. These roam about in very large herds and take but little notice of the passing trains. People who have not seen this vast "Zoo," in which all enjoy full liberty, would treat an accurate description as a traveller's tale and dub it simply impossible.

Although lions are still very numerous—100 have been shot during the last two years just outside the above reserve—they do not seem to honour the station masters with their visits quite as often as formerly, nor have they lately taken any travellers out of the sleeping-carriage of a train. All the station masters on this railway are baboos, a species of mankind known to all who have been in India for their intense love of strict official routine, their fondness of long, high-sounding words and curious expressions. Many are the amusing telegrams which have been received from these at headquarters since the opening of the railway, the occasions being a visit from the king of beasts.

The following two are copied from an East African paper:—

1. "Pointsman surrounded by two lions, man up telegraph pole. Please advise."
2. "Lion roaring on platform, does not mind blank cartridge. Please advise."\*

\* Blank cartridge is served out to station masters to frighten away wild animals, ball cartridge being considered too dangerous.

Natives greatly dislike the Indians, originally imported for railway making, but now settled here in great number, and probably with reason, for in all trade transactions the African gets the worst of it. A native's remark, "it comes from Bombay," is equivalent to saying "it is very bad."

Near the north end of Victoria Nyanza the Nile begins in the Ripon Falls. The water rushes down some 20 feet or more in three divisions made by two beautifully green tree-covered islets. Deep blue it comes from the Lake, rushes over the precipice, where in a bed of dazzling white foam and spray the infant Nile is born. Peacefully it flows from beyond the turmoil until lost to view as it curls round the edge of the forest. It makes a fascinating picture with plenty of colour; the deep blue of sky, lake, and rivers, the intense white of the foam, then the rich green in many shades of the forest, on a bright red soil, the whole in the fierce light of an equatorial sun. Some half-naked Busoga natives, square and scanty pieces of bark cloth their only covering and not generally where wanted most, had followed us to the Falls and made the picture complete. They looked puzzled at the interest shown by the white man in "the big waters," but were sufficiently civilised not to refuse the backsheesh offered.

On the down journey by railway we were greatly favoured; early one morning Kilimanjaro showed us his two peaks, snow-covered both, Kibwesi clear of clouds, but Kibo just touching them. Soon all was hidden by mist, but we were delighted, for the great mountain had not permitted us to leave East Africa without wishing us a beautiful farewell.

Such are the latest additions to my gallery of mind pictures; the older occupants—some indeed have been there nearly fifty years—which follow are those which have left the deepest and most lasting impression on the tablets of memory, and these I consider to excel all others in beauty, in grandeur, and in absorbing interest. What indeed can possibly approach for infinite variety of dazzling colouring and glorious splendour those indescribably beautiful sunsets, best seen at sea where nothing hides from the eye any part of the gorgeous display?

All-powerful Nature with the huge forces at her disposal created those stupendous mountain masses, Everest and Kinchinjunga, mightiest mountains on earth, which come before

all else on memory's page. It was early one morning nearly half a century ago when I saw them first from the Bhootan dooars, their icy peaks gilt by the rising sun, towering high above a mass of mist and cloud to a height of almost five and half miles on a background of the purest blue of heaven. Never could that glorious and incomparable scene of Nature's most gigantic and beautiful creation fade from the mind of any one who ever saw it. Nor that other which also impressed me greatly—giant Aconcagua—as for a moment seen when crossing the Andes by the pass of the same name from the Chilian to the Argentine Republic. When near the crest of the pass at a height of 12,500 feet, the top of Aconcagua with an altitude just double suddenly became visible beyond another mountain, a single white and silvery peak rising to a seemingly impossible height into the deep blue sky. After many, many stops to ease his breathing in the rarefied air my mule had at last succeeded in reaching the saddle of the pass just as the sun rose, and everything shone and sparkled in its golden light; we were among the grandest and wildest scenery of mountain, snow, and ice, and beyond all and above all rose Aconcagua brilliantly beautiful in the purest atmosphere.

And next comes "Fuji"—Fuji, beautiful from wherever seen and at whatever time, but most strikingly beautiful in the early morning when the sun first touches the snow-covered top rising high into the clear blue sky above a mass of white clouds suspended like a sheet half-way up the mountain's side. Standing alone on an extensive plain, Fuji, an almost perfect cone, impresses greatly by its noble beauty; once seen, no one can wonder for a moment why Fuji is held sacred, is indeed almost worshipped by the Japanese, is the goal of annual pilgrimages, or why its image appears on very nearly every article made in the country; nothing could adorn more because there is nothing more beautiful. Mount Egmont in New Zealand is perhaps the nearest approach to Fuji in shape and beauty. 8,260 feet high, it also rises from a plain in solitary grandeur; its cone is always covered with snow—the most perfect cone probably in the world.

It is sincerely to be hoped that these marvellous works of Nature may never be defiled by hideous railway and huge hotels which have already destroyed so much beauty in the Alps, or be approached by power-houses and frightful factory chimneys

which are fast ruining the wonderful grandeur of my next picture, the Falls of Niagara, as I saw the original long ago, many years before any of the dollar-making contrivances were even dreamt of.

Man, assisted by Nature, has created three most fascinating and beautiful tableaux on my list, and first and foremost comes Nikko. If asked to name the most beautiful place which I have seen, Nikko would be the answer. The Japanese proverb, "Do not use the word 'magnificent' until you have seen Nikko," has the best of foundations. There is everything of beauty here and nothing without—natural beauty and that wrought by hand. Natural—a wild valley among great rocks and mountains, the latter green with beautiful trees and shrubs, and in springtime gorgeous with huge masses of pink azalea blossom; a rushing torrent fighting its way between boulders from the mountains above—outlet from picturesque Chuzenji Lake—passing presently beneath the famous red lacquer bridge which leads from Nikko village to the still more famous tombs and monasteries hidden among those glorious groves of cryptomerias.

Matchless in growth and solemn grandeur, these beautiful trees guard the unmatched structures within their recesses and watch over the graves of those two great Japanese shoguns, Ieyasu, founder of the Tokugawa dynasty, and his grandson Iemitsu. Nothing could be more appropriate as a final resting-place for these national heroes; they lie in solemn and undisturbed silence, surrounded by everything that is most beautiful in nature, and overlook those glorious works of man, the temples and shrines, the Torii, pagoda, and other structures, which for architecture, most artistic carving, and gorgeous yet never gaudy colouring are the wonder of the world.

The most brilliantly beautiful scene I can recall was staged at the Shoay Dagon, or Golden Pagoda, at Rangoon on a festival day. Probably nowhere else were ever such surpassingly gorgeous and varied colours brought together, the combined effect constantly changing like the patterns of a kaleidoscope as the crowd slowly moved round the huge hand-bell shaped pagoda, the gracefully tapering spire of which rises to a height of 321 feet to be there crowned by the "Htee," resembling an open umbrella, studded with bells and precious stones, worth 600,000 rupees, it is said. To the famous pagoda, renowned throughout

the Bhuddist East, all Rangoon flocked on this day to pay homage to the great apostle, all clad in their best and brightest silk. The pretty little women, most fascinating always, even when smoking their huge cigars, were doubly so now, their rich complexion and elaborately arranged black hair decked with flowers in charming contrast with the bright colouring of their most becoming dress. Whole families came together, men, women, children, and tiny babies, all bringing some little offering, flowers and fruit generally, to place on their favoured shrine—one of the very many erected on the platform, surrounding with minor pagodas innumerable the base of the greatest of all—these gorgeous creatures, happy and laughing ever, formed a dense crowd which resembled nothing more than a huge bed of the brightest flowers in full bloom. Monks with shaven head, soberly clad in yellow robe, moved among the crowd, and a few nuns in white who also had parted with their hair, and now perhaps looked with envy at the abundant tresses of their festive sisters. The heavily gilt pagoda, brilliant in the intense sunlight, the wonderful carving and vivid colouring of the smaller pagodas and images crowding round the golden ones, the many flowers brought as offerings, the scores of burning candles, and above all the indescribable gorgeousness and infinite variety of colours worn by the crowd of visitors, formed a scene of fascinating beauty which can never be forgotten.

A scene which impressed itself deeply on my mind and has hardly faded, although nearly thirty years have passed since it was witnessed, was in the interior of the Mosque of Santa Sophia at Constantinople in 1879. It was towards the end of the Russo-Turkish War; the Russians indeed—picked men of picked corps—were then at St. Stephano, able to look at the Turkish capital, but not to enter it, owing to the presence of our fleet in the Sea of Marmora. At the time of my visit the floor of that wonderful mosque, built in 588 as a church, on the site of several successive churches, but made into a mosque in 1457 by Mohammed, was occupied by no less than five thousand Bulgarian refugees—fed and looked after by the Stafford House Red Cross Committee—all in their national dress, each family on its own little carpet square of many colours, with no space wasted. The effect of these thousands of people huddled together, the bright colouring of every possible shade and variety of clothing and

rugs, covering the entire floor of that huge building, formed a picture which it would indeed be difficult to equal. The vast proportions of the interior, the grand arches, noble dome, the rich decorations, mosaics, and inscriptions could hardly keep the eye away from the multitude of men, women, and children—temporary exiles—which occupied every inch of the floor.

Nature in her most prolific and wasteful mood produced a spectacle difficult to believe possible unless witnessed, and no description, however graphic, could give a true idea of a locust swarm as it passes over a country. Travelling in a train in South Africa, we suddenly entered what had looked in the distance like a very dense black cloud moving just above the ground. The cloud proved alive, myriads and myriads of locusts swarming; they obscured the sun, threatened to fill the carriage, and actually stopped the train, the crushed insects rendering the rails so slippery that the wheels would not "bite." When the swarm had at last passed not a vestige of herbage was to be seen. One cannot help wondering why Nature should be so extravagantly and apparently recklessly wasteful with certain of her creatures called to life in untold millions for no purpose apparently except to annoy mankind. Indeed, it would appear almost as if man were specially brought into the world for the benefit and amusement of these most irritating pests! Locusts in their destroying swarms leave nothing un eaten—everything green is devoured, all crops disappear. Natives retaliate as much as they can by eating as many as possible, nicely frizzled on a hot plate—a very minute consolation after seeing their fields laid bare!

And those many other creatures, in their millions and trillions, of what possible use are they? They apparently do not afford nourishment to other beings. What benefit to anybody or anything are those clouds of midges which suddenly rise born out of the waters of Victoria Nyanza, teeming multitudes which obscure the sun, cover the deck of the steamer inches thick, to die without loss of time there and on the surrounding water? What can be the use of such waste of life, except to annoy passengers and the crew which has to sweep them up?

And those brutes, mosquitoes, gnats, the various kinds of sand and black flies, with what object are they sent into the world

except to irritate noble man and make him use bad language? No self-respecting animal would deign to eat them, nor would it touch, I feel sure, field and other fleas, and those disgusting creatures—ticks or leeches or jiggers!

One tableau remains differing from all the others—a scene so beautiful, engrossing, and solemn, as perhaps to have left the deepest impression of all on my mind.

It was on the borders of Abyssinia—as already described in the “Sketches in the Soudan”—that I was present at the evening (and morning) worship or confession of faith of a tribe of the Beni Amer Arabs who, as nomads, had taken up their temporary quarters in a sereba of mimosa scrub in the then dry bed of a river. Against my will, but for my safety, for there were many lions about, I and my camel had just before sunset been brought among these most hospitable people, and thus became a spectator at a most impressive scene. The sun was about to disappear, beyond the sereba fence nothing met the eye but date- and dome-palms lining the river bank; within were the low palm-leaf huts of the tribe. When the men had assembled on the open space before the sheikh’s hut, the chief in front with the “faki,” his people ranged behind them, the holy man recited the Mohammedan formula of faith and all responded. The surroundings, the knowledge that this same scene had been enacted every evening for centuries with just the same ardour and intense devotion and rapt attention on the part of these nomad worshippers one and all, devotion such as is seen in no other faith, impressed me, the only onlooker, very greatly. In what other religion will the members so strictly and unfailingly carry out the rites prescribed and kneel in public wherever they may be when the time for worship comes and, utterly absorbed, remain unconscious of all surroundings?

Man alone filled one tableau so remarkable, picturesque, and as interesting in every detail as to be absolutely unique. It was the last and probably the greatest spectacle staged by a great man who, when the curtain had fallen on that wonderful show, was shortly to lose not only his country but his life also. It was Lobengula’s great war-dance in 1890, during the visit of the Queen’s messengers to Bulawayo. The “dance,” lasting a week, was the largest that had been—fifteen thousand fighting-men were supposed to be present, as all available warriors had been called



in. Clad in their war-dress, and armed with assegai, shield, and club, they gave a wonderful display, which is fully described in a former article.

Poor Lobengula, ailing at the time, was not able to appear in his war-dress, nor indicate by the throwing of an assegai the direction the next raid was to take, but he showed himself to his warriors smeared with some hideous "medicine," which he and his witch-doctors had prepared in the goat kraal. His remark to us that he did not wish Europeans to come into his country, fearing quarrels with his people, as "the white man will give his soul for gold," proved more prophetic than perhaps he himself then thought, for the Matabele War soon followed, costing many lives, and the grand old man had to fly his country, and died during the flight.



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