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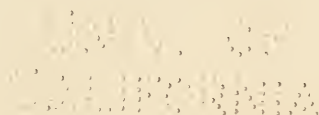
TWO DIANAS IN
SOMALILAND



THE AUTHORESS

TWO DIANAS IN SOMALILAND

THE RECORD OF A SHOOTING
TRIP BY AGNES HERBERT
WITH TWENTY-FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS
REPRODUCED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS



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TO
THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
SHOOT
SOLDIER, SHIKARI, AND SOMETIME
MISOGYNIST

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TWO DIANAS IN SOMALILAND

CHAPTER I

WE SET OUT FOR SOMALILAND

This weaves itself perforce into my business

King Lear

It is not that I imagine the world is panting for another tale about a shoot. I am aware that of the making of sporting books there is no end. Simply—I want to write. And in this unassuming record of a big shoot, engineered and successfully carried through by two women, there may be something of interest; it is surely worth more than a slight endeavour to engage the even passing interest of one person of average intelligence in these days of universal boredom.

I don't know whether the idea of our big shoot first emanated from my cousin or myself. I was not exactly a tenderfoot, neither was she. We had both been an expedition to the Rockies at a time when big game there was not so hard to find, but yet less easy to get at. We did not go to the Rockies with the idea of shooting, our sole *raison d'être* being to show the heathen Chinees how not to cook; but incidentally the charm of the chase captured us, and we exchanged the

gridiron for the gun. So at the end of March 190— we planned a sporting trip to Somaliland—very secretly and to ourselves, for women hate being laughed at quite as much as men do, and that is very much indeed.

My cousin is a wonderful shot, and I am by no means a duffer with a rifle. As to our courage—well, we could only trust we had sufficient to carry us through. We felt we had, and with a woman intuition is everything. If she feels she is not going to fail, you may take it from me she won't. Certainly it is one thing to look a lion in the face from England to gazing at him in Somaliland. But we meant to meet him somehow.

Gradually and very carefully we amassed our stores, and arranged for their meeting us in due course. We collected our kit, medicines, and a thousand and one needful things, and at last felt we had almost everything, and yet as little as possible. Even the little seemed too much as we reflected on the transport difficulty. We sorted our things most carefully—I longed for the floor-space of a cathedral to use as a spreading-out ground—and glued a list of the contents of each packing-case into each lid.

To real sportsmen I shall seem to be leaving the most important point to the last—the rifles, guns, and ammunition. But, you see, I am only a sportswoman by chance, not habit. I know it is the custom with your born sportsman to place his weapons first, minor details last. "Nice customs curtesy to great kings," they say, and so it must be here. For King Circum-

stance has made us the possessors of such wondrous modern rifles, &c., as to leave us no reason to think of endeavouring to supply ourselves with better. We, fortunately, have an uncle who is one of the greatest shikáris of his day, and his day has only just passed, his sun but newly set. A terribly bad mauling from a lion set up troubles in his thigh, and blood poisoning finally ended his active career. He will never hunt again, but he placed at our disposal every beautiful and costly weapon he owned, together with his boundless knowledge. He insisted on our taking many things that would otherwise have been left behind, and his great trust in our powers inspired us with confidence. It is to his help we owe the entire success of our expedition.

It would be an impertinence for a tyro like myself to offer any remarks on the merits or demerits of any rifle. Not only do the fashions change almost as quickly as in millinery, not only do great shikáris advise, advertise, and adventure with any weapon that could possibly be of service to anyone, but my knowledge, even after the experience gained in our long shoot, is confined to the very few firearms we had with us. They might not have met with unqualified approval from all men ; they certainly served us well. After all, that is the main point.

Our battery consisted of :

Three 12-bore rifles.

Two double-barrelled hammerless ejecting .500 Expresses.

One .35 Winchester.

Two small .22 Winchesters.

One single-barrel .350.

One 410 bore collector's gun.

A regular *olla podrida* in rifles.

My uncle selected these from his armoury as being the ones of all others he would feel safest in sending us out with. There may, in the opinion of many, be much more suitable ones for women to use, but, speaking as one who had the using of them, I must say I think the old shikári did the right thing, and if I went again the same rifles would accompany me.

My uncle is a small man, with a shortish arm, and therefore his reach about equalled ours, and his rifles might have been made for us.

We also towed about with us two immensely heavy shot guns. They were a great nuisance, merely adding to the baggage, and we never used them as far as I remember.

As we meant frequently to go about unescorted, a revolver or pistol seemed indispensable in the belt, and under any conditions such a weapon would be handy and give one a sense of security. On the advice of another great sportsman we equipped ourselves with a good shikár pistol apiece, 12-bore; and I used mine on one occasion very effectively at close quarters with an ard-wolf, so can speak to the usefulness and efficiency of the weapon.

It was the "cutting the ivy" season in Suburbia when we drove through it early one afternoon, and in front of every pill-box villa the suburban husband stood on a swaying ladder as he snipped away, all

unmindful of the rampant domesticity of the sparrows. The fourteenth of February had long passed, and the fourteenth is to the birds what Easter Monday is to the lower orders, a general day for getting married.

A few days in town amid the gilty splendour of one of the caravan-serais in Northumberland Avenue were mostly spent in imbibing knowledge. My uncle never wearied of his subject, and it was to our interest to listen carefully. Occasionally he would wax pessimist, and express his doubts of our ability to see the trip through ; but he was kind enough to say he knows no safer shot than myself. "Praise from Cæsar." Though I draw attention to it that shouldn't ! The fragility of my physique bothered him no end. I assured him over and over that my appearance is nothing to go by, and that I am, as a matter of fact, a most wiry person.

This shoot of ours was no hurried affair. We had been meditating it for months, and had, to some extent, arranged all the difficult parts a long time before we got to the actual purchases of stores, and simple things of the kind. We had to obtain special permits to penetrate the Ogaden country and beyond to the Marehan and the Haweea, if we desired to go so far. Since the Treaty with King Menelik in 1897 the Ogaden and onwards is out of the British sphere of influence.

How our permits were obtained I am not at liberty to say ; but without them we should have been forced to prance about on the outskirts of every part where game is abundant. By the fairy aid of these open sesames

we were enabled to traverse the country in almost any part, and would have been passed from Mullah to Sheik, from Sheik to Mullah, had we not taken excellent care to avoid, as far as we could, the settled districts where these gentry reside. At one time all the parts we shot over were free areas, and open to any sportsman who cared to take on the possible dangers of penetrating the far interior of Somaliland, but now the hunting is very limited and prescribed. We were singularly fortunate, and owe our surprising good luck to that much maligned, useful, impossible to do without passport to everything worth having known as "influence."

The tents we meant to use on the shoot were made for us to a pattern supplied. They were fitted with poles of bamboo, of which we had one to spare in case of emergencies. The ropes, by particular request, were of cotton, in contradistinction to hemp, which stretches so abominably.

Two skinning knives were provided, and some little whet-stones, an axe, a bill-hook, two hammers, a screw-driver—my *vade mecum*—nails, and many other needful articles. We trusted to getting a good many things at Berbera, but did not like to leave everything to the last. Our "canned goods" and all necessities in the food line we got at the Army and Navy Stores. Field-glasses, compasses, and a good telescope our generous relative contributed.

They say that the best leather never leaves London, that there only can the best boots be had. This is as may be. Anyway the shooting boots made for

us did us well, and withstood prodigious wear and tear.

The night before our departure we had a "Good-bye" dinner and, as a great treat, were taken to a music-hall. Of course it was not my first visit, but really, if I have any say in the matter again, it will be the last. Some genius—a man, of course—says, somewhere or other, women have no sense of humour—I wonder if he ever saw a crowd of holiday-making trippers exchanging hats—and I am willing to concede he must be right. I watched that show unmoved the while the vast audience rocked with laughter.

The *pièce-de-résistance* of the evening was provided by a "comic" singer, got up like a very-much-the-worse-for-wear curate, who sang to us about a girl with whom he had once been in love. Matters apparently went smoothly enough until one fateful day he discovered his innamorata's nose was false, and, what seemed to trouble him more than all, was stuck on with cement. It came off at some awkward moment. This was meant to be funny. If such an uncommon thing happened that a woman had no nose, and more uncommon still, got so good an imitation as to deceive him as to its genuineness in the first place, it would not be affixed with cement. But allowing such improbabilities to pass in the sacred cause of providing amusement, surely the woman's point of view would give us pause. It would be so awful for her in every way that it would quite swamp any discomfort the man would have to undergo. I felt far more inclined to cry than laugh, and the

transcendent vulgarity of it all made one ashamed of being there.

The next item on the programme was a Human Snake, who promised us faithfully that he would dislocate his neck. He marched on to a gaudy daïs, and after tying himself in sundry knots and things, suddenly jerked, and his neck elongated, swinging loosely from his body. It was a very horrid sight. An attendant stepped forward and told us the Human Snake had kept his promise. The neck was dislocated. My only feeling in the matter was a regret he had not gone a step farther and broken it. All this was because I have no sense of humour. I don't like music-hall entertainments. I would put up with being smoked into a kipper if the performance rewarded one at all. It is so automatic, so sad. There is no joy, or freshness, or life about it. 'Tis a squalid way of earning money.

At last every arrangement was arranged, our clothes for the trip duly packed. Being women, we had naturally given much thought to this part of the affair. We said "Adieu" to our wondering and amazed relatives, who, with many injunctions to us to "write every day," and requests that we should at all times abjure damp beds, saw us off *en route* for Berbera, *via* Aden, by a P. and O. liner.

I think steamer-travelling is most enjoyable—that is, unless one happens to be married, in which case there is no pleasure in it, or in much else for the matter of that. I have always noticed that the selfishness which dominates every man more or less, usually more,

develops on board ship to an abnormal extent. They invariably contrive to get toothache or lumbago just as they cross the gangway to go aboard. This is all preliminary to securing the lower berth with some appearance of equity. What does it matter that the wife detests top berths, not to speak of the loss of dignity she must endure at the idea even of clambering up? Of course the husband does not ask her to take the top berth. No husband can *ask* his wife to make herself genuinely uncomfortable to oblige him. He has to hint. He hints in all kinds of ways—throws things about the cabin, and ejaculates parenthetically, “How am I to climb up there with a tooth aching like mine?” or “I shall be lamed for life with my lumbago if I have to get up to that height.”

Having placed the wife in the position of being an unfeeling brute if she insists on taking the lower berth for herself, there is nothing for it but to go on as though the top berth were the be-all of the voyage and her existence.

“Let me have the top berth, Percy,” she pleads; “you know how I love mountaineering.”

“Oh, very well. You may have it. Don’t take it if you don’t want it, or if you’d rather not. I should hate to seem selfish.”

And so it goes on. Then in the morning, in spite of comic papers to the contrary, the husband has to have first go-in at the looking-glass and the washing apparatus, which makes the wife late for breakfast and everything is cold.

Cecily and I shared a most comfortable cabin amid-

ships, together with a Christian Science lady who lay in her berth most days crooning hymns to herself in between violent paroxysms of *mal-de-mer*. I always understood that in Christian Science you do not have to be ill if you do not want to. This follower of the faith was very bad indeed, and didn't seem to like the condition of things much. We rather thought of questioning her on the apparent discrepancy, but judged it wiser to leave the matter alone. It is as well to keep on good terms with one's cabin mate.

Nothing really exciting occurred on the voyage, but one of the passengers provided a little amusement by her management, or rather mismanagement, of an awkward affair. Almost as soon as we started I noticed we had an unusually pretty stewardess, and that a warrior returning to India appeared to agree with me. He waylaid her at every opportunity, and I often came on them whispering in corners of passages o' nights. Of course it had nothing to do with me what the stewardess did, for I am thankful to say I did not require her tender ministrations on the voyage at all. Well, in the next cabin to ours was a silly little woman—I had known her for years—going out to join her husband, a colonel of Indian Lancers. She made the most never-ending fuss about the noise made by a small baby in the adjoining cabin. One night, very late, Mrs. R. could not, or would not, endure the din any longer, so decided to oust the stewardess from her berth in the ladies' cabin, the stewardess to come to the vacated one next the wailing baby. All this was duly carried into effect, and the

whole ship was in complete silence when the most awful shrieks rent the air. Most of the inhabitants of my corridor turned out, and all made their way to the ladies' cabin, which seemed the centre of the noise. There we found the ridiculous Mrs. R. alone, and in hysterics. After a little, we could see for ourselves there was nothing much the matter. She gasped out that she had evicted the stewardess, and was just falling off to sleep when a tall figure appeared by the berth, clad in pale blue pyjamas—it seemed to vex her so that it was pale blue, and for the life of me I could not see why they were any worse than dark red—and calling her “Mabel, darling!” embraced her rapturously.

“And you know,” said Mrs. R. plaintively, “my name is *not* Mabel! It is Maud.”

In the uproar the intruder had of course escaped, but Mrs. R. unhesitatingly proclaimed him to be Captain H., the officer whom I had noticed at first. We discovered the stewardess sleeping peacefully, or making a very good imitation of it, and she was wakened up and again dislodged, whilst Mrs. R. prepared to put up with the wailing baby for the remains of the night.

Next morning the captain of the ship interviewed the warrior, who absolutely denied having been anywhere near the ladies' cabin at the time mentioned, and aided by a youthful subaltern, who perjured himself like a man, proved a most convincing *alibi*. Matters went on until one day on deck Captain H. walked up to Mrs. R. and reproached her for saying

he was the man who rudely disturbed her slumbers in the wee sma' hours. She, like the inane creature she is, went straight to the skipper and reported that Captain H. was terrorising her. I heard that evening, as a great secret, that the warrior had been requested to leave the ship at Aden. Where the secret came in I don't quite know, for the whole lot of us knew of it soon after.

*Secret de deux,
Secret des dieux ;
Secret de trois,
Secret de tous.*

Do you know that ?

I was not surprised to hear Captain H. casually remark at breakfast next morning that he thought of stopping off at Aden, as he had never been ashore there, and had ideas of exploring the Hinterland some time, and besides it was really almost foolish to pass a place so often and yet know it not at all. I went to his rescue, and said it was a most sound idea. I had always understood it was the proper thing to see Aden once and never again. He looked at me most gratefully, and afterwards showed us much kindness in many small ways.

Mrs. R. preened herself mightily on having unmasked a villain. She assured me the warrior's reputation was damaged for all time. The silly little woman did not seem to grasp the fact that a man's reputation is like a lobster's claw : a new one can be grown every time the old one is smashed. In fact we had a lobster at home in the aquarium, and it hadn't even gone to

the trouble of dropping *one* reputation—I mean claw—but had three at once !

It was one of the quaintest things imaginable to watch the attitude of the various passengers towards the cause of all the trouble. A community of people shut up together on board ship become quite like a small town, of the variety where every one knows everyone else, *and* their business. Previous to the semi-subdued scandal Captain H. had been in great request. He was a fine-looking man, and a long way more versatile than most. Now many of the people who had painstakingly scraped acquaintance with him felt it necessary to look the other way as he passed. Others again—women, of course—tried to secure an introduction from sheer inquisitiveness.

The sole arbiter of what is what, a *multum in parvo* of the correct thing to do, we discovered in a young bride, a perfect tome of learning. I think—I thought so before I met this walking ethic of propriety—there is no doubt Mrs. Grundy is not the old woman she is represented to be, with cap and spectacles, though for years we have pictured her thus. It is all erroneous. Mrs. Grundy is a newly married youthful British matron of the middle class. There is no greater stickler for the proprieties living. Having possessed herself of a certificate that certifies respectability, she likes to know everyone else is hall-marked and not pinchbeck. She proposed to bring the romance of the stewardess and the officer before the notice of the directors of the company, and had every confidence in getting one or two people dismissed over it. All hail

for the proprieties ! This good lady markedly and ostentatiously cut the disgraced warrior, who was her *vis-à-vis* at table, and when I asked her why she considered a man guilty of anything until he had been proved beyond doubt to merit cutting, she looked at me with a supercilious eyebrow raised, and a world of pity for my ignorance in her tone as she answered firmly : “ I must have the moral courage necessary to cut an acquaintance lacking principle.”

“ Wouldn’t it be infinitely more courageous to stick to one ? ” I said, and left her.

We had a very narrow little padre on board too, going out to take on some church billet Mussoorie way. He was bent on collecting, from all of us who were powerless to evade him, enough money to set up a screen of sorts in his new tabernacle. Although he did not approve of the sweepstakes on the day’s run, he sacrificed his feeling sufficiently to accept a free share, and would ask us for subscriptions besides, as we lounged about the deck individually or in small groups, always opening the ball by asking our valueless opinions as to the most suitable subject—biblical, of course—for illustration. He came to me one day and asked me what I thought about the matter. Did I think Moses with his mother would make a good picture for a screen ? I had no views at all, so had to speedily manufacture some. I gave it as my opinion that if a screen picture were a necessity Moses would certainly do as well as anybody else—in fact better. For, after all, Moses was the greatest leader of men the world has ever known. He engineered an

expedition to freedom, and no man can do more than that.

But I begged the padre to give Moses his rightful mother at last. For the mother of Moses was not she who took all the credit for it. The mother of Moses was undoubtedly the Princess, his father some handsome Israelite, and that is why Moses was for ever in heart hankering after his own people, the Israelites. The Princess arranged the little drama of the bullrushes, most sweetly pathetic and tender of stories, arranged too that the baby should be found at the crucial moment, and then gave the little poem to the world to sing through the centuries.

I shocked the parson profoundly, and he never asked me to subscribe again.

He was a narrow, bigoted little creature, and I should think has the church and the screen very much to himself by now. I went to hear him take service in the saloon on Sunday. He was quite the sort of padre that makes one feel farther off from heaven than when one was a boy.

I often wonder why so clever a man as Omar asked: "Why nods the drowsy worshipper outside?" He must have known the inevitable result had the drowsy worshipper gone in.

I fell asleep during the sermon, and only wakened up as it was about ending, just as the padre closed an impassioned harangue with "May we all have new hearts, may we all have pure hearts, may we all have good hearts, may we all have sweet hearts," and the graceless Cecily says that my "Amen" shook the ship,

which was, I need hardly tell you, "a most unmitigated misstatement."

Aden was reached at last—"The coal hole of the East." As a health resort, I cannot conscientiously recommend it. The heat was overwhelming, and the local Hotel Ritz sadly wanting in some things and overdone in others. We found it necessary to spend some days there and many sleepless nights, pursuing during the latter the big game in our bedrooms. "Keatings" was of no use. I believe the local insects were case-hardened veterans, and rather liked the powder than otherwise. What nights we had! But every one was in like case, for from all over the house came the sound of slippers banging and much scuffling, and from the room opposite to mine language consigning all insects, the Aden variety in particular, to some even warmer place.

In some ways the hotel was more than up to date. Nothing so ordinary as a mere common or garden bell in one's room. Instead, a sort of dial, like the face of a clock, with every conceivable want written round it, from a great desire to meet the manager to a wish to call out the local Fire Brigade. You turned on a small steel finger to point at your particular requirement, rang a bell—*et voilà!* It seems mere carping to state that the matter ended with *voilà*. The dials were there, you might ring if you liked—what more do you want? Some day some one will answer. Meanwhile, one can always shout.

We met two other shooting parties at our *auberge*. The first comprised a man and his elderly wife who

were not immediately starting, some of their kit having gone astray. He was a noted shot, and Madam had been some minor trip with him and meant to accompany another. She was an intensely cross-grained person, quite the last woman I should yearn to be cooped up in a tent with for long at a time. Cecily's idea of it was that the shikári husband meant, sooner or later, to put into practice the words of that beautiful song, "Why don't you take her out and lose her?" and stuck to it that we should one day come on head-lines in the *Somaliland Daily Wail* reading something like this :

GREAT SHIKARI IN TEARS.

LOOKING FOR THE LOST ONE.

SOME LIONS BOLT THEIR FOOD.

The good lady regarded us with manifest disapproval. She considered us as two lunatics, bound to meet with disaster and misfortune. Being women alone, we were foredoomed to failure and the most awful things. Our caravan would murder or abandon us. That much was certain. But she would not care to say which. Anyway we should not accomplish anything. She pointed out that a trip of the kind could not by any chance be manœuvred to a successful issue without the guidance of a husband. A husband is an absolute necessity.

I had to confess, shamefacedly enough, that we had not got a husband, not even one husband, to say nothing of one each, and husbands being so scarce these days, and so hard to come by, we should really have to try and manage without. Having by some means or other contrived to annex a husband for her-

self, she evinced a true British matron-like contempt for every other woman not so supremely fortunate.

She talked a great deal about "the haven of a good man's love." One might sail the seas a long time, I think, before one made such a port. Meanwhile the good lady's *own* haven, the elderly shikári, was flirting with the big drum of the celebrated ladies' orchestra at the Aden tea-house.

"All human beans," for this is what our friend got the word to, as she was right in the forefront of the g-dropping craze, "should marry. It is too lonely to live by oneself."

Until one has been married long enough to appreciate the delight and blessedness of solitude this may be true, but wise people don't dogmatise on so big a subject. Even Socrates told us that whether a man marries or whether he doesn't he regrets it. And so it would almost follow that if one never jumped the precipice matrimonial one would always have the lurking haunting fear of having been done out of something good. It may be as well, therefore, to take the header in quite youthful days and—get it over. But as the wise Cecily pertinently remarks, you must first catch your hare!

The other shooting party was that of two officers from India, one of them a distant cousin of mine, who was as much surprised to see me as I was to see him. They were setting off to Berbera as soon as humanly possible, like ourselves.

The younger man, my kinsman, took a great fancy to Cecily. At least I suppose he did, in spite of her

assertions to the contrary, for he stuck to us like a burr. He was really by way of being a nuisance, as we had a great deal to do in the way of satisfying the excise people, procuring permits and myriad other things.

One evening I heard the two warriors talking and the elder said, not dreaming that his voice would carry so clearly : " Look here, if you are not careful, we shall have those two girls trying to tack on to our show. And I won't have it, for they'll be duffers, of course."

I laughed to myself, even though I was annoyed. Men are conceited ever, but this was too much ! To imagine we had gone to all the initial expense and trouble only to join two sportsmen who, true to their masculine nature, would on all occasions take the best of everything and leave us to be contented with any small game we could find !

It is true that being called a girl softened my wrath somewhat. One can't be called a girl at thirty without feeling a glow of pleasure. I am thirty. So is Cecily.

I expect you are smiling ? I know a woman never passes thirty. It is her Rubicon, and she cannot cross it.

My uncle had written ahead for us to Berbera to engage, if possible, his old shikári and head-man, and in addition had sent on copious instructions as to our needs generally. Our trip was supposed to be a secret in Aden, but we were inundated with applications from would-be servants of all kinds. I afterwards discovered that a Somali knows your business almost before you know it yourself, and in this second-sight-like faculty is only exceeded in cleverness by the inhabitants of a little island set in the Irish Sea and sacred to Hall Caine.

CHAPTER II

IN BERBERA

All is uneven,
And everything left at six and seven
Richard II

By this time the weekly steamer had sailed to Berbera, across the Gulf, but we arranged to paddle our own canoes, so to speak, and the two sportsmen, still, I suppose, in fear and trembling lest we should clamour to form a part of their caravan, went shares with us in hiring at an altogether ridiculous sum, almost enough to have purchased a ship of our own, a small steamer to transport us and our numerous belongings across the Gulf.

Here I may as well say that it is possible for two women to successfully carry out a big shoot, for we proved it ourselves, but I do not believe it possible for them to do it *cheaply*. I never felt the entire truth of the well-known axiom, "The woman pays," so completely as on this trip. The women paid with a vengeance—twice as much as a man would have done.

The getting of our things aboard was a scene of panic I shall never forget. It was, of anything I have ever had to do with, the quaintest and most amusing of sights. Each distinct package seemed to fall to the ground at least twice before it was considered to have

earned the right to a passage at all. The men engaged by us to do the transporting of our goods were twins to the porters engaged by our friends, the opposition shoot. They did not appear to reason out that as the mountain of packages had to be got aboard before we could sail, it did not matter whose porter carried which box or kit. No, each porter must stick to the belongings of the individual who hired him to do the job. Naturally, this caused the wildest confusion, and I sat down on a packing case that nobody seemed to care much about and laughed and laughed at the idiocy of it. To see the leader of the opposition shoot gravely detach from my porter a bale of goods to which their label was attached, substituting for it a parcel from our special heap, was to see man at the zenith in the way of management.

It was very early, indeed, when we began operations, but not so early by the time we sailed, accompanied by a rabble of Somalis bent on negotiating the voyage at our expense. It was useless to say they could not come aboard, because come they would, and the villainous-looking skipper seemed to think the more the merrier. Our warrior friends were all for turning off the unpaying guests, but I begged that there should be no more delay, and so, when we were loaded up, like a cheap tripping steamer to Hampton Court, we sailed. It was a truly odious voyage. The wretched little craft rolled and tossed to such an extent I thought she really must founder. I remember devoutly wishing she would.

The leader brought out sketching materials, and proceeded to make a water-colour sketch of the sea.

It was just the same as any other sea, only nastier and more bumpy. We imagined—Cecily and myself—that the boat would do the trip in about sixteen hours. She floundered during twenty-four, and I spent most of the time on a deck-chair, “the world forgetting.” At intervals Somalis would come up from the depths somewhere, cross their hands and pray. I joined them every time in spirit. Cecily told me that the little cabin was too smelly for words, but in an evil minute I consented to be escorted thither for a meal.

“She’s not exactly a Cunarder,” sang out the younger officer, my kinsman, from the bottom of the companion, “but anyway they’ve got us something to eat.”

They had. Half-a-dozen different smells pervaded the horrid little cabin, green cabbage in the ascendant. The place was full of our kit, which seemed to have been fired in anyhow from the fo’castle end. With a silly desire to suppress the evidence of my obvious discomfort, I attacked an overloaded plate of underdone mutton and cabbage. I tried to keep my eyes off it as far as possible; sometimes it seemed multiplied by two, but the greasy gravy had a fatal fascination for me, and at last proved my undoing. The elder warrior supplied a so-called comfort, in the shape of a preventative against sea-sickness, concocted, he said, by his mother, which accelerated matters; and they all kindly dragged me on deck again and left me to myself in my misery. All through the night I stayed on my seat on deck, not daring to face the cabin and that awful smell, which Cecily told me was bilge water.

It was intensely cold, but, fortunately, I had a lot of

wraps. The others lent me theirs too, telling me I should come below, as it was going to be "a dirty night," whatever that might mean. It seemed a never-ending one, and my thankfulness cannot be described when, as the dawn broke, I saw land—Somaliland. We made the coast miles below Berbera, which is really what one might have expected. However, it was a matter of such moment to me that we made it at last that I was not disposed to quibble we had not arrived somewhere else.

I managed to pull myself together sufficiently to see the Golis Range. The others negotiated breakfast. They brought me some tea, made of some of the bilge water I think, and I did not fancy it. Then came Berbera Harbour, with a lighthouse to mark the entrance; next Berbera itself, which was a place I was as intensely glad to be in as I afterwards was to leave it. I should never have believed there were so many flies in the whole world had I not seen them with mine own eyes. In fact, my first impression of Berbera may be summed up in the word "flies." The town seemed to be in two sections, native and European, the former composed of typical Arab houses and numerous huts of primitive and poverty-stricken appearance. The European quarter has large well-built one-storied houses, flat-roofed; and the harbour looked imposing, and accommodates quite large ships.

Submerged in the shimmering ether we could discern, through the parting of the ways of the Maritime Range, the magnificent Golis, about thirty-five miles inland from Berbera as the crow flies.

The same pandemonium attended our disembarking. All our fellow voyagers seemed to have accompanied the trip for no other reason than to act as porters. There were now more porters than packages, and so the men fought for the mastery to the imminent danger of our goods and chattels. Order was restored by our soldier friends, who at last displayed a little talent for administration; and sorting out the porters into some sort of system, soon had them running away, like loaded-up ants, with our packages and kit to the travellers' bungalow in the European square, whither we speedily followed them, and established ourselves. It was quite a comfortable *auberge*, and seemed like heaven after that abominable toy steamer, and we christened it the "Cecil" at once.

Cecily began to sort our things into some degree of sequence. I could not help her. I was all at sea still, and felt every toss of the voyage over. These sort of battles fought o'er again are, to say the least, not pleasant.

We had not arrived so very long before our master of the ceremonies came to discover us, with my uncle's letter clasped in his brown hand. I shall never forget the amazement on the man's face as we introduced ourselves. I could not at first make out what on earth could be the matter, but at last the truth dawned on me. He had not expected to find us of the feminine persuasion.

Our would-be henchman's name was unpronounceable, and sounded more like "Clarence" than anything, so Clarence he remained to the end—a really fine,

CLARENCE



CLARENCE

handsome fellow, not very dark, about the Arab colour, with a mop of dark hair turning slightly grey. His features were of the Arab type, and I should say a strong Arab strain ran in his family, stronger even than in most Somali tribes. I think the Arab tinge exists more or less in every one of them. Anyhow, they are not of negritic descent.

Our man used the Somali "Nabad" as a salutation, instead of the "Salaam aleikum" of the Arabs. The last is the most generally used. We heard it almost invariably in the Ogaden and Marehan countries. Clarence had donned resplendent garb in which to give us greeting, and discarding the ordinary everyday white tobe had dressed himself in the khaili, a tobe dyed in shades of the tricolour, fringed with orange. We never saw him again tricked out like this ; evidently the get-up must have been borrowed for the occasion. He wore a *tusba*, or prayer chaplet, round his neck, and the beads were made from some wood that had a pleasant aroma. A business-like dagger was at the waist ; Peace and War were united.

I noticed what long tapering fingers the Somali had, and quite aristocratic hands, though so brown. He had a very graceful way of standing too. In fact all his movements were lithe and lissome, telling us he was a jungle man. I liked him the instant I set eyes on him, and we were friends from the day we met to the day we parted. Had we been unable to secure his services I do not know where we should have ended, or what the trip might have cost. Everyone in Berbera seemed bent on making us pay for things twice over,

and three times if possible. Clarence's demands were reasonable enough, and he fell in with our wishes most graciously.

I gave instructions for the purchase of camels, fifty at least, for the caravan was a large one. There were not so many animals in the place for sale at once, and of course our soldier friends were on the look out for likely animals also.

During the next few days we busied ourselves in engaging the necessary servants. My uncle had impressed on me the necessity of seeing that the caravan was peopled with men from many tribes, as friction is better than a sort of trust among themselves. Clarence appeared to have no wish to take his own relatives along, as is so often the case, and we had no bother in the matter. But we were dreadfully 'had' over six rough ponies we bought. We gave one hundred and fifty rupees each for them and they were dear at forty. However, much wiser people than Cecily and myself go wrong in buying horses! Later in the trip we acquired a better pony apiece and so pulled through all right.

My cousin has a very excellent appetite, and is rather fond of the flesh-pots generally, and gave as much attention to the engaging of a suitable cook as I did to the purchase of the camels. No lady ever emerged more triumphantly from the local Servants' Registry Office after securing the latest thing in cooks than did Cecily on rushing out of the bungalow at express speed to tell me she had engaged a regular Monsieur Escoffier to accompany us.

What he could not cook was not worth cooking. Altogether we seemed in for a good time as far as meals were concerned.

Meanwhile Clarence had produced from somewhere about forty-five camels, and I judged it about time to launch a little of the knowledge I was supposed to have gathered from my shikári uncle. I told Clarence I would personally see and pass every camel we bought for the trip, and prepared for an inspection in the Square. I suffered the most frightful discomfort, in the most appalling heat, but I did not regret it, as I really do think my action prevented our having any amount of useless camels being thrust upon us.

Assume a virtue if you have it not. The pretence at knowledge took in the Somalis, and I went up some miles in their estimation.

As I say, some of the camels offered were palpably useless, and were very antediluvian indeed. I refused any camel with a sore back, or with any tendency that way, and I watched with what looked like the most critical and knowing interest the manner of kneeling. The animal must kneel with fore and hind legs together, or there is something wrong. I can't tell you what. My uncle merely said, darkly, "something." Of course I found out age by the teeth, an operation attended with much snapping and Somali cuss-words. The directions about teeth had grown very confused in my mind, and all I stuck to was the pith of the narrative, namely, that a camel at eight years old has molars and canines. I forget the earlier ages with attendant incisors. Then another condition plain to be seen was the hump. Even

a tyro like myself could see the immense difference between the round, full hump of a camel in fine condition and that of the poor over-worked creature. As I knew we were paying far too much for the beasts anyway I saw no reason why we should be content to take the lowest for the highest.

Finally I stood possessed of forty-nine camels, try as I would I could not find a fiftieth. I was told this number was amply sufficient to carry our entire outfit, but how they were to do so I really could not conceive. Viewed casually, our possessions now assumed the dimensions of a mountain, and we had to pitch tents in the Square in order to store the goods safely. This necessitated a constant guard.

Everything we brought with us was in apple-pie order owing to the lists so carefully placed in the lid of each box, and gave us no trouble in the dividing up into the usual camel loads. It was our myriad purchases in Berbera that caused the chaos. They were here, there and everywhere, and all concerning them was at six and seven. I detailed some camels to carry our personal kit, food supplies, &c., exclusively; the same men to be always responsible for their safety, and that there should be no mistake about it I took down the branding marks on a piece of paper. Camels seem to be branded on the neck, and most of the marks are different, for I suppose every tribe has its own hall-mark.

Some of the camels brought into Berbera for sale are not intended to be draught animals, being merely for food, and with so much care and extra attention

get very fine and well-developed generally. Camel-meat is to the Somali what we are given to understand turtle soup is to the London alderman. Next in favour comes mutton, but no flesh comes up to camel. The Somali camel-man is exceedingly attentive to his charges, giving them names, and rarely, if ever, ill treating them. As a result the animals are fairly even tempered, for camels, and one may go amongst them with more or less assurance of emerging unbitten. When loading up the man sings away, and the camel must get familiar with the song. It seems to be interminably the same, and goes on and on in dreary monotone until the job is over. I would I knew what it was all about.

Of course it is a fact that a camel can take in a month's supply of water, but it very much depends on the nature of the month how the animal gets on. If he is on pasture, green and succulent, he can go on much longer than a month, but if working hard, continuously, and much loaded, once a week is none too often to water him. They are not strong animals; far from it, and they have a great many complaints and annoyances to contend with in a strenuous life. The most awful, to my mind, is sore back and its consequences. This trouble comes from bad and uneven lading, damp mats, &c., and more often than not the sore is scratched until it gets into a shocking condition. Flies come next, and maggots follow, and then a ghastly Nemesis in the form of the rhinoceros bird which comes for a meal, and with its sharp pointed beak picks up maggots and flesh together. When out

at pasture these birds never leave the browsing camels alone, clinging on to shoulders, haunch, and side, in threes and fours.

We had now in our caravan, not counting Clarence and the cook, two boys (men of at least forty, who always referred to themselves as "boys") to assist the cook, one "makadam," or head camel-man, twenty-four camel men, four syces, and six hunters, to say nothing of a couple of men of all work, who appeared to be going with us for reasons only known to themselves.

In most caravans the head-man and head shikári are separate individuals, but in our show Clarence was to double the parts. It seemed to us the wisest arrangement. He was so excellent a manager, and we knew him to be a mighty hunter.

The chaos of purchases included rice, *harns* or native water-casks, ordinary water barrels calculated to hold about twelve gallons apiece, blankets for the men, *herios*, or camel mats, potatoes, *ghee*, leather loading ropes, numerous native axes, onions, many white tobes for gifts up country, and some *Merikani* tobes (American made cloth) also for presents, or exchange. Tent-pegs, cooking utensils, and crowds of little things which added to the confusion. A big day's work, however, set things right, and meanwhile Cecily had discovered a treasure in the way of a butler. He had lived in the service of a white family at Aden, and so would know our ways.

We had taken out a saddle apiece, as the double-peaked affair used by the Somalis is a very uncomfortable thing indeed.



SOME OF OUR ESCORT

Rice for the men's rations we bought in sacks of some 160 pounds, and two bags could be carried by one camel. Dates, also an indispensable article of diet, are put up in native baskets of sorts, and bought by the *gosra*, about 130 pounds, and two *gosra* can be apportioned to a camel. *Ghee*, the native butter, is a compound of cow's milk, largely used by the Somalis to mix with the rice portion, a large quantity of fat being needful ere the wheels go round smoothly. It is bought in a bag made of a whole goat skin, with an ingenious cork of wood and clay. Each bag, if my memory serves me rightly, holds somewhere about 20 pounds, and every man expects two ounces daily unless he is on a meat diet, when it is possible to economise the rice and dates and *ghee*.

The camel mats, or *herios*, are plaited by the women of Somaliland, and are made from the chewed bark of a tree called Galol. The *harns* for water are also made from plaited bark, in different sizes, and when near a *karia*, it is quite usual to see old women and small children carrying on their backs the heaviest filled *harns*, whilst the men sit about and watch operations. The *harns*, which hold about six gallons of water, are—from the camels' point of view anyway—the best for transport purposes. Six can be carried at once, but a tremendous amount of leakage goes on, and this is very irritating, upsetting calculations so. The water-casks were really better, because they were padlocked, and could also be cleaned out at intervals. But of these only two can go on a camel at one time.

Our own kit was mostly in tin uniform cases, these

being better than wooden boxes on account of damp and rainy weather. Leather, besides being heavy, is so attractive to ants. Our rifles, in flat cases, specially made, were compact and not cumbersome, at least not untowardly cumbersome. Our food stores were in the usual cases, padlocked, and a little of everything was in each box, so that we did not need to raid another before the last opened was half emptied. The ammunition was carried in specially made haversacks, each haversack being marked for its particular rifle, and more spare ammunition was packed away in a convenient box, along with cleaning materials, &c. We made our coats into small pantotechnicons, and the pockets held no end of useful small articles and useful contraptions. My two coats, one warm khaki serge, one thin drill, were both made with recoil pads as fixtures, and this was an excellent idea, as they saved my shoulder many hard knocks.

We heard of a man who was anxious to go out as skinner, but the Opposition, for we had by now christened the rival camp so, snapped him up before we had an opportunity to engage him. On learning of our disappointment they nobly volunteered to waive their claim, but when I saw the trophy in discussion I would not take him into our little lot at any price. A more crafty, murderous-looking individual it would be hard to find.

The Opposition watched us do some of the packing, and were green with envy as they handled our rifles. The elder tried to induce me to sell him my double-barrelled hammerless ejecting '500 Express. I don't

know how I was meant to be able to get along without it, but I suppose he didn't think that mattered.

It was then that Clarence, who had, I believe, been yearning to ask all along, wanted to know if I was any good with a rifle, and the other Mem-sahib could she shoot, and if so how had we learned, for the Somalis are nothing if not direct. They rather remind me of English North-country people with their outspoken inquisitiveness, which is at home always regarded as such charming straightforwardness of character.

I was as modest as I could be under the circumstances, but I had to allay any fears the man might be harbouring. Besides, it is not well to under-estimate oneself, especially to a Somali. Nowadays everywhere it is the thing to remove the bushel from one's light and to make it glare in all men's eyes. My advice to any one who wants to be heard of is—Advertise, advertise, advertise. If you begin by having a great opinion of yourself and talk about it long enough, you generally end by being great in the opinion of everyone else. I told our shikári I had the use of my uncle's fine range at home, and the advantage of what sport there was to be had in England and Scotland. Also that this was not our first expedition. The knowledge of all this and my unbounded confidence, not to say cheek, set all doubts at rest.

Every night I was rendered desperate by the scratching in my room of some little rodent which thundered about the floor as though his feet were shod with iron.

Hurrah ! At last I had him ! He stole my biscuits set for my "chota hazari," and sometimes left me

stranded. They resided in a tin by my bedside. Kismet overtook him, and his nose was in the jaws of a gin. He was killed *instantly*, and the cat dropped in to breakfast.

I helped her to him.

She commenced on his head, and finished with his tail, a sort of cheese straw. This is curious, because a lion, which is also a cat, begins at the other end. Domesticity reverses the order of a good many things.

He left no trace behind him. Unknown (except to me) he lived, and uncoffined (unless a cat may be called a coffin) he died. By the way, *he* was a rat.

One afternoon Cecily and I walked along the sea coast at Berbera, and came on the most remarkable fish, jumping into the sea from the sandy shore. I asked a resident about this, and he said the fish is called "mud-skipper"—a name that seems to have more point about it than most.

So, at last, we reached the day fixed for the starting of the great trek.

CHAPTER III

THE STARTING OF THE GREAT TREK

My necessities are embark'd

Hamlet

Occasion smiles upon a second leave

Hamlet

AT three o'clock in the morning we joined our caravan, all in readiness, in the Square. It was still dark, but we could see the outline of the waiting camels loaded up like pantehnicon vans, and our ponies saddled in expectation of our coming. The Opposition, who had mapped out a different route, beginning by skirting the borders of the now barred reserve for game in the Hargaisa, got up to see us start and wish us "Good hunting." What our men thought of us and the expedition generally I cannot conjecture. Outwardly at least they gave no sign of astonishment. Clarence gave the word to march, and we set out, leaving Berbera behind us, and very glad we were to see the suburbs a thing of the past. The flies and the sand storms there are most hard to bear, and a little longer sojourn would have seen both of us in bad tempers.

We made up our minds from the first to have tents pitched every night under any circumstances, and never do any of that sleeping on the ground business which seems to be an indispensable part of the fun of

big game shooting. We also resolved to share a tent for safety's sake, but after a little, when we had begun to understand there was nothing on earth to be afraid of, we "chucked" this uncomfortable plan and sported a tent apiece.

On clear nights I always left the flap of the tent open. I loved to see the wonderful blue of the sky, so reminiscent of the chromo-lithograph pictures admired so greatly in childhood's days. And I would try and count the myriad stars, and trace a path down the Milky Way. How glorious it was, that first waking in the early, early morning with dark shadows lurking around, the embers of the fires glowing dully, and—just here—a faint breeze blowing in with messages from the distant sea.

The long string of grunting camels ahead looked like some pantomime snake of colossal proportions as it wriggled its way through the low thorn bushes which, here and there, grew stunted and forlorn; camels move with such an undulating gait, and the loads I had trembled about seemed to be a mere bagatelle.

All too soon came the day, and, with the day, the sun in fiery splendour, which speedily reduced us both to the condition of Mr. Mantalini's expressive description of "demn'd, damp, unpleasant bodies." The glitter from the sand made us blink at first, but, like everything else, we got perfectly inured to it, and dark days or wet seemed the darker for its loss.

Jerk! And all the camels stopped and bumped into each other, like a train of loaded trucks after a push

from an engine. The front camel decided he would rest and meditate awhile, so sat down. He had to be taught the error of such ways, and in a volley of furious undertones from his driver he was persuaded to rise.

We passed numerous camels grazing, or trying to, in charge of poor looking, half-fed Somali youths. There is no grazing very near into Berbera, very little outside either unless the animals are taken far afield. Here they were simply spending their energy on trying to pick a bit from an attenuated burnt-up patch of grass that would have been starvation to the average rabbit.

The camel men in charge came over to exchange salaams with ours, and proffer camels' milk, in the filthiest of *horns*, to the "sahibs." We couldn't help laughing. But for our hair we looked undersized sahibs all right, I suppose, but we couldn't face the milk. It would have been almost as disagreeable as that bilge water tea.

We each rode one of our expensive steeds, and I had certainly never ridden worse. I called mine "Sceptre," and "Sceptre" would not answer to the rein at all. I think his jaw was paralysed. He would play follow the leader, so I rode behind Cecily.

The cook or cooks made us some tea, but I don't think the kettle had boiled. Cecily said perhaps it wasn't meant to in Somaliland. I asked her to see that we set the fashion.

We rested during the hottest hours, and then trekked again for a little in the evening. There was no need to form a thorn zareba the first night out, as we were

practically still in Berbera—at least I felt so when I knew we had covered but some fifteen miles since dawn. Perhaps it will be as well here to describe our clothes for the trip. We wore useful khaki jackets, with many capacious pockets, knickerbockers, gaiters, and good shooting boots. At first we elected to don a silly little skirt that came to the knee, rather like the ones you see on bathing suits, but we soon left the things off, or rather they left us, torn to pieces by the thorns.

Mosquitoes do not like me at all in any country, but we had curtains of course, and they served, very badly, to keep out the insects that swarmed all over one.

Next day as we progressed, we saw numerous dik-dik, popping up as suddenly as the gophers do in Canada. They are the tiniest little things, weighing only about four pounds, and are the smallest variety of buck known. The back is much arched, grey brown in colour, with much rufous red on the side. The muzzle is singularly pointed. The little horns measure usually about two and a half inches, but the females are hornless.

The ground we went over was very barren and sandy, rather ugly than otherwise, and there was no cover of any kind. Any thought of stalking the small numbers of gazelle we saw was out of the question. Besides, our main object was to push on as fast as possible to the back of beyond.

In the evenings we always did a few miles, and camped where any wells were to be found. The water was full of leeches, but we carefully boiled all the

drinking water for our personal use. The Somalis seem to thrive on the filthiest liquid.

The cook got a leech of the most tenacious principles on to his wrist, and made the most consummate fuss. A bite from a venomous snake could hardly have occasioned more commotion. I can't imagine what the condition of the man would have been had the leech stayed as long as it intended. I put a little salt on its tail, and settled the matter. By the end of the next short trek we reached the Golis Range, taking them at their narrowest part. The whole place had changed for the better. Clear pools of water glistened bright among a riot of aloes and thorns, and there was also a very feathery looking plant, of which I do not know the name.

For the first time we said to each other, "Let us go out and kill something, or try to." There was always the dread of returning to camp unblooded, so to speak, when Clarence might, or would, or should, or could regard us as two amiable lunatics not fit to be trusted with firearms. This is a woman all over. Try as she will she cannot rise superior to Public Opinion—even the opinion of a crowd of ignorant Somalis! After all, what is it? "The views of the incapable Many as opposed to the discerning Few."

We agreed to separate, tossing up for the privilege of taking Clarence. To my infinite regret I drew him. As a rule when we tossed up we did it again and again until the one who had a preference got what she wanted. Women always toss up like that. Why bother to toss at all? Ah, now you've asked a poser.

But I couldn't get Cecily to try our luck again. She said she was suited all right. The fact being that neither of us yearned to make a possible exhibition before our shikári. There was nothing for it. I took my .500 Express, and with Clarence behind me flung myself into the wilderness in as nonchalant a manner as I could assume. I was really very excited in a quiet sort of way, "for now sits Expectation in the air." It got a trifle dashed after an hour of creeping about with no sort of reward save the frightened rush of the ubiquitous dik-dik.

"Mem-sahib! Mem-sahib!" from the shikári, in excited undertone.

He gripped my arm in silent indication.

"Mem-sahib!" in tones of anguished reproach. "Gerenük!"

We were always Mem-s to Clarence, who perhaps felt, like the lady at Aden, that if we weren't we ought to be.

I looked straight ahead, and from my crouching position could make out nothing alive. I gazed intently again. And, yes, of course, all that I looked at was gerenük, two, three, four of them. In that moment of huge surprise I couldn't even count properly. The intervening bushes screened them more or less, but what a comical appearance they had! how quaintly set their heads! how long their necks! how like giraffes! They moved on, slowly tearing down the thorns as they fed. I commenced to stalk. There was a fine buck with a good head. It was not difficult to distinguish him, as his harem carried no horns.

For twenty minutes or more I crawled along, hoping on, hoping ever, that some chance bit of luck would bring me in fairly clear range, or that the antelope would pause again. Clearly they had not winded me; clearly I was not doing so very badly to be still in their vicinity at all. Now came a bare patch of country to be got over, and I signed to Clarence to remain behind. I was flat on my face, wriggling along the sand. If the antelope were only in the open, and I in the spot where they were screened! The smallest movement now, and . . . I got to within 120 yards of them when something snapped. The herd gathered together and silently trotted off, making a way through the density with surprising ease considering its thick nature. I got up and ran some way to try and cut them off, dropping again instantly as I saw a gap ahead through which it seemed likely their rush would carry them. It was an uncertain and somewhat long shot, but the chances were I should never see the animals again if I did not take even the small opportunity that seemed about to present itself. I had long ago forgotten the very existence of my shikári. The world might have been empty save for myself and four gerenük. Nervousness had left me, doubts of all kinds; nothing remained save the wonder and the interest and the scheming.

It really was more good luck than good management. I afterwards discovered that the gerenük, or Waller's gazelle, is the most difficult antelope to shoot in all Somaliland, mostly from their habit of frequenting the thickest country.

This is where the ignoramus scores. It is well known that the tyro at first is often more successful in his stalks, and kills too, for the matter of that, than your experienced shikári with years of practice and a mine of knowledge to draw on. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread—and win too sometimes.

The herd passed the gap, and, as they did so, slowed up a bit to crush through. The buck presented more than a sporting shot, his lighter side showing up clear against his dark red back. I fired. I heard the "phut" of the bullet, and knew I had not missed. I began to tremble with the after excitements, and rated myself soundly for it. I dashed to the gap. The buck—oh, where was he? Gone on, following his companions, and all were out of sight. He was seriously wounded, there was no doubt, for the blood trail was plain to be seen. Clarence joined me, and off we went hot on the track. After a long chase we came on a thickish bunch of thorns, and my quarry, obviously hard hit, bounded out, and was off again like the wind before I had an opportunity to bring up my rifle. It was a long time before he gave me another, when, catching him in fairly open ground, I dropped him with a successful shot at some 140 yards, and the buck fell as my first prize of the trip.

Clarence's pleasure in my success was really genuine, and I gave him directions to reserve the head and skin, royally presenting him with all the meat. I could not at first make out why he so vigorously refused it. I made up my mind he had some prejudice against this particular variety of antelope. I afterwards found that

no Jew is more particular how his meat is killed than is the Somali. The system of "hallal" is very strictly respected, and it was only occasionally, when I meant the men to have meat, that I was able to stock their jarder.

I tasted some of this *gerenük*, and cooked it myself. Our cook was, indeed, a failure. He was one of the talk-about-himself variety, and from constant assertions that he could cook anything passing well, had come to believe himself a culinary artist.

I roasted a part of the leg of my *gerenük*, and did it in a way we used to adopt in the wilds of Vancouver Island. A hole is made in the ground and filled with small timber and pieces of wood. This is fired, and then, when the embers are glowing, the meat being ready in a deep tin with a tight-fitting lid, you place it on the hot red ashes, and cover the whole with more burning faggots, which are piled on until the meat is considered to be ready. If the Somalis have a quantity of meat to cook, they make a large trench, fill it with firewood, and make a network of stout faggots, on which the meat is placed. It is a sort of grilling process, and very effective. If kept constantly turned, the result is usually quite appetising.

Cecily came into camp with a Speke buck. I examined it with the greatest interest. The coat feels very soft to the touch, and has almost the appearance of having been oiled. Speke's Gazelle are very numerous in the Golis, and are dark in colour, with a tiny black tail. They have a very strange protuberance of skin on the nose, of which I have never discovered the

use. Every extraordinary feature of wild life seems to me to be there for some reason of protection, or escape, or well being. Dear Nature arranges things so to balance accounts a little 'twixt all the jungle folk. In the Speke fraternity there is more equality of the sexes. The does as well as the bucks carry horns. At first I pretended to Cecily that my expedition had been an humiliating and embarrassing failure, that I had signally missed a shot at a *gerenük* that would have delighted the heart of a baby in arms. But she caught sight of my trophy impaled on a thorn bush, and dashed over to see it *instantly*.

About this time we were very much amused to discover we had among our *shikáris* a veritable Baron Munchausen. Of whatever he told us, the contrary was the fact. If he brought news of splendid "*khubbah*," there was no game for miles. If we went spooring, he spooed to the extent of romancing about beasts that could not possibly frequent the region we were in at all. I do not mind a few fibs ; in fact, I rather like them.

" A taste exact for faultless fact
Amounts to a disease,"

and argues such a hopeless want of imagination. But this man was too much altogether. Of course he may have had a somewhat perverted sense of humour.

My uncle had warned me I should find all Somalis frightful liars, and to be prepared for it. Personally, I always like to assume that every man is a Washington until I have proved him to be an Ananias.

We saw—in the distance—numerous aoul, Sømmerr-

ing's Gazelle, and the exquisitely graceful koodoo, the most beautiful animal, to my thinking, that lives in Somaliland. The horns are magnificent, with the most artistic of curves. The females are hornless in this species also. When come upon suddenly, or when frightened, this animal "barks" exactly as our own red deer are wont to do. In colour they are of a greyish hue, and their sides are striped in lines of white.

It was not our intention to stay and stalk the quantities of game about us. Our desire was all to push on to the kingdom of His Majesty King Leo. So for days we went on, halting o' nights now in glorious scenery, and everywhere the game tracks were plentiful. The other side of the Golis we thought really lovely, the trees were so lofty and the jungle so thick. The atmosphere was much damper, and it was not long before we felt the difference in our tents. However, there was one consolation, water was plentiful, and we were so soon to leave that most necessary of all things.

The birds were beautiful, and as tame as the sparrows in Kensington Gardens. One afternoon I walked into a small nullah, where, to my joy, I found some ferns, on which some of the most lovely weaver-finches had built their nests. The small birds are, to my mind, the sweetest in the world. Some were crimson, some were golden, and the metallic lustre of their plumage made them glitter in the sun. There was also a variety of the long-tailed whydah bird, some honey-suckers, and a number of exquisite purple martins. Two of the last flew just behind me, snapping up the

insects I stirred up with my feet. I watched one with a fly in its beak, which it released again and again, always swooping after it and recapturing it, just like a cruel otter with its fish.

I tried to find some of the nests of the little sun-birds. I believe they dome them, but no one quite knows why. It was once thought that it was done to hide the brilliant colours of some feminines from birds of prey, but it is done by some plain ones as well. Some birds lock up their wives in the nests ; they must be a frivolous species !

Many of the honey-suckers are quite gorgeous when looked at closely—especially the green malachite ones, which have a bright metallic appearance. I also watched some little russet finches performing those evolutions associated with the nesting season only. They rose clapping their wings together above them, producing a noise somewhat similar to our own hands being clapped, and when at the top of their ascent they uttered a single note and then shut up as if shot, descending rapidly until close to the ground, when they open their wings again and alight most gently. The single note is the love song, and the other extraordinary performance is the love dance. It must be attractive, as it is done by the male only, and only in the breeding season.

Farther on I got into a perfect little covey of sun-birds flying about and enjoying themselves. Every now and again one would settle on a flowering shrub with crimson blossoms, and dip its curved long beak into the cup and suck out the honey. The male of this

species is ornamented with a long tail, the female being much plainer. In the brute creation it is always so ; the male tries to captivate by ornaments and brilliant colours. We human beings have grown out of that and try other blandishments. But it is curious that the male has still to ask and the female to accept. We haven't changed that. We fight just as bucks and tigers do, and the winner isn't always chosen ; there may be reasons against it. There is just that little uncertainty, that little hardness to please which gives such joy to the pursuit. Well, there are exceptions, for the ladies of the bustard persuasion fight for their lords.

On my way back to camp I saw a buck and Mrs. Buck of the Speke genus. The former stood broadside on, and almost stared me out of countenance at fifty paces. He evidently knew I was unarmed. Why do they always stand broadside on ? I've never seen it explained. I suppose it is partly because he is in a better position for flight.

At this camp we were caught in a continuous downpour which lasted twenty-four hours, intermixed with furious thunderstorms. Cecily's tent (fortunately she was in mine at the time) was struck, producing some curious results. The lightning split the bamboo tent-pole into shreds and threw splinters about that, when collected, made quite a big bundle. The hats and clothes which were hanging on to the pole were found flung in all directions, but nothing was burnt. The lightning disappeared into the loose soil, without appreciably disturbing it.

Then we had a glorious day sandwiched in, but

returned again to the winter of our discontent and Atlantic thunderstorms. It was rather unfortunate to emerge from one rain to enter another. We took the precaution this time to entrench ourselves so that the tents were not flooded, but the poor camels must have had a bad time.

The sun reappeared at last, after a long seclusion, and all our clothes, beds, and chattels had to be dried. Never has old Sol had a warmer welcome. All nature aired itself.

We moved on and now found it needful to form a zareba at night. Into this citadel of thorns and cut bushes the camels were driven and our tents set up. At intervals of a few yards fires blazed, and a steady watch was kept.

We camped in one place for two days in order to fill up every water cask, and here Cecily and I, going out together one morning quite early, had the luck to come on a whole sounder of wart hog. I shall never forget the weird and extraordinary spectacle they presented. A big boar, rather to the front, with gleaming tushes, stepping so proudly and ever and again shaking his weighty head. They all appeared to move with clockwork precision and to move slowly, whereas, as a matter of fact, they were going at a good pace. We dropped, and I took a shot at the coveted prize, and missed! The whole sounder fled in panic, with tails held erect, a very comical sight. We doubled after them through the bush, and bang! I had another try. They were gone, and the whole jungle astir.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100



THE ORYX AT HOME

THE
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NEW YORK

A*

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I bagged a very fine Speke's Gazelle here, but am ashamed to say it was a doe. It is very hard sometimes to differentiate between the sexes in this species.

I was very much looking forward to the opportunity of bagging an oryx, I admire the horns of this antelope so greatly, though I suppose they are not really to be compared in the same breath with those of the koodoo. The oryx is very powerfully made, about the size of a pony, and the horns are long and tapering. They remind me of a vast pair of screws, the "thread" starting from the base and winding round to a few inches off the top when the horn is plain. They are the greatest fighters of all the genus buck, and the bulls are provided by nature, who orders all things well, with almost impenetrable protective horn-proof shields of immensely thick skin which covers the withers. These are much valued by the Somalis for many purposes, notably for the shields carried by them when in full dress. Set up as trophies they take a high polish and come up like tortoise-shell. One or two of mine I had mounted as trays, with protective glass, others as tables. All were exceedingly effective.

By this time we had got to and set out upon, not without some qualms, the waterless Haud, starting for the first march at cock-crow. In some parts it attains a width of over two hundred miles across. It all depends on where you strike it. We did the crossing in ten marches, taking five days over it. All that time we had to rely solely on the supply of water we carried with us, which was an anxious piece of

work. I do not think we ever did so little washing in our lives before ; water was too precious to juggle with then.

Haud is a Somali word signifying the kind of country so named, and may mean jungly ground or prairie-like plains. We crossed a part which reminded us both of the Canadian prairies, dried-up grass as far as the eye could reach. The waterless tract most crossed by travellers and trading caravans is arid and barren, and the paths are not discernible owing to the springy nature of the ground. Parts of the Haud are quite luxuriant, and provide grazing for countless thousands of camels, sheep, and goats. Our route lay over a flat, ugly, and uninteresting expanse. It was no use looking for signs of game. The new grass had not as yet appeared. Even the easily contented camels had to make believe a lot at meal-times.

We were marvellously lucky in our getting over this daunting place. At no time were we overwhelmed with the heat. A quite refreshing breeze blew over us most days, and at night we found it too cold to be pleasant. I called it luck, but Clarence attributed it to the will of Allah.

I got a fine bustard for the pot. A beautiful bird with a dark brown crest, and a coat, like Joseph's, of many colours. I saved some of the feathers, they were so iridescent and beautiful. The bustard tribe in Somaliland appears to be a large one. I noticed three or four distinctly different species, with dissimilar markings. The Ogaden bustard had the prize, I think, in glory of plumage. Even his beak was painted

green, his legs yellow, and all else of him shone resplendent. The cook made a bustard stew, and very good it tasted. We did not need to feel selfish, feasting so royally, for birds are not looked on with any favour by Somalis, though they do not refuse to eat them. I think it is because no bird, even an ostrich, can grow big enough to make the meal seem really worth while to a people who, though willing enough to go on short commons if occasion forces, enjoy nothing less than a leg of mutton per man.

Cecily, lucky person, shot a wart-hog, coming on him just as he was backing in to the little *pied-à-terre* they make for themselves. She did deserve her luck, for as I was out, and not able to help her, she had to dissect her prize alone. Pig is unclean to the Somali. Even the cook, who claimed to be "all same English," was not English enough for this. We kept the tushes, and ate the rest. The meat was the most palatable of any we had tasted so far.

I bagged a wandering aoul, not at all a sporting shot. I got the buck in the near fore, and but for its terrible lameness I should never have come up with it at all. His wound, like Mercutio's, sufficed. One might as well try to win the Derby on a cab-horse as come up with even a wounded buck on any of the steeds we possessed. I ambled along, and so slowly that the buck was outstripping the pony. I slipped off then, and running speedily, came within excellent range and put the poor thing out of his pain. His head was the finest of his kind we obtained.

The horns differ considerably, and I have in my

collection backward and outward turning ones. Aoul is a very common gazelle in all parts of open country, barring South-East Somaliland, and travels about in vast herds. Its extraordinary inquisitiveness makes it fall a very easy victim.

Clarence went out with us in turn. His alternative was a fine upstanding fellow, but after three or four expeditions with him as guide I deposed him from the position of second hunter. He was slow, and lost his presence of mind on the smallest provocation, both of them fatal defects in a big game hunter, where quickness of brain and readiness of resource is a *sine qua non*.

CHAPTER IV

WE MEET KING LEO

My hour is almost come

Hamlet

A lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing, for there is not
a more fearful wild fowl than your lion living

Midsummer Night's Dream

VERY shortly after this we came to a Somali *karia*, or encampment. Its inhabitants were a nomadic crowd, and very friendly, rather too much so, and I had to order Clarence to set a guard over all our things.

Their own tents were poor, made of camel mats that had seen better days. The Somali women were immensely taken with our fair hair, and still more with our hair-pins. Contrary to the accepted custom of lady travellers, we did not suffer the discomfort of wearing our hair in a plait down our backs. We "did" our hair—mysterious rite—as usual. By the time I had finished my call at the camp my golden hair was hanging down my back. I had given every single hair-pin to the Somali ladies, who received them with as much delight as we should a diamond tiara.

Married women in Somaliland wear their hair encased in a bag arrangement. Girls plait theirs. The little ones' heads are shaven, and so, apparently, were the scalps of the very old men. Clarence's hair

was about two inches long when we started, and he had a way of cleaning it reminiscent of a bird taking a sand bath. He rubbed his head with wet ashes, which speedily dried in the sun, and allowed him to shake the dust out—a *nettoyage à sec* process, and very effective. As a rule he wore no head-covering in the hottest sun.

Even the heads of the Somali babies are exposed in all their baldness. I suppose God tempers the rays to the shorn lambs.

The huts are made of a frame of bent poles, over which camel mats and odds and ends in the way of blankets are thrown. The nomadic tribes in their treks follow the grass, and occupy the same zarebas year after year. These they make of thick thorn brushwood, immensely high, two circles, one inside the other. Between the two fences the cattle are penned sometimes, but at night the middle encampment receives most of them, and fires are lighted. All the work of erecting the huts and tending the animals is done by women, and very often the oldest women and the smallest of the children have this office thrust upon them.

You can imagine that a Somali *karia* is rather of the nature of Barnum's, minus the auctioneering and the shouting and bustle—countless people, ground all ploughed with the *sturm und drang* of the restless feet, and smell——!

It is a wonderful thing that human beings can thrive in the condition of dirt and squalor in which these wandering Somalis live. They do, and some of them are very fine-looking men indeed.

The majority of the tribes are nomadic. There are some settled, some traders pure and simple, and some outcaste people, of whom the Midgans seem the most romantic—probably because he still uses bow and arrow, lives a hand to mouth existence, calls no *karia* home, and makes his bed in the open.

Most Somalis wear the long tobe in various degrees of cleanliness. The real dandy affects a garment of dazzling whiteness. Less particular people carry on until the tobe is filthy. I imagine the cloth hails from Manchester. It is cotton sheeting, several feet in length, and put on according to the taste and fancy, artistic, original, or otherwise, of the wearer. It is a graceful costume, Cæsar-like and imposing. At night it is not removed, and seen by the light of the fire each sleeping Somali looks like nothing so much as some great cocoon.

A praying carpet is considered an indispensable part of the Somali equipment. It isn't really a carpet at all, being nothing in the wide world but a piece of tanned hide or skin. Some of our men spent a good deal of time on the mat, prostrating themselves at the most untoward moments. Others again did not seem to have got religion, and never called the thing into use at all. But to every one of them Allah was a something impossible to get along without entirely. If there had been no Allah or Kismet to put all the blame on to when everything went wrong, we should have been in an awkward place indeed.

It was at this encampment I purchased two more ponies, not beautiful to look at but beggars to go.

We tried them first, fearing to be done again, and they seemed willing little fellows, and full of life. Most of the tribes breed ponies on a small or large scale, and as they are never groomed or tidied up at all they cannot help a somewhat unkempt appearance. We bought a few sheep for food, and were presented with a dirty harn full of camels' milk, horrid tasting stuff, which we handed over to the men, and so didn't desert our "Nestlé" for it. Going among the squalid tents in the *karia* we found a woman in a sad state of collapse, although nobody seemed to mind it save ourselves. More of the Kismet business. She had a wee baby, a few hours old, lying on the *herio* beside her. The whole scene was primitive and pathetic to a degree. I am glad to say we improved matters considerably.

Although water was very scarce, we spared enough from our store to tub the quaint little baby, going first back to our tents to procure soap and a few other things. We dressed the mite in a white vest, in which it was completely lost, to the interest and astonishment of a jury of matrons who stood around us, ever and again feeling some part of our clothing, tying and untying our boot laces, and even going the length of putting inquisitive hands into our pockets. For the mother of His Majesty the Baby we opened our first bottle of emergency champagne. A right thinking Somali is dead against strong drink of any kind, spirits being entirely taboo, so we thought it safer and more diplomatic to refer to the champagne as medicine. The bang it opened with astonished the listless crowds,

and the effect as the good wine did its work astonished them still more.

We presented the headman with a tobe, and then took ourselves back to camp, accompanied by a rabble of Somalis who infested our zareba until we struck tents that evening. I had as much of a bath as it was possible to get in a tea-cupful of water. But a visit to a Somali encampment makes you feel a trifle dirty.

Our water supply was on the verge of becoming a worry, so we had to make a detour towards a place where rain was reported to have fallen and the pools could be counted on. Clarence knew all this part of the country well, and was a most reliable guide as well as everything else. His duties were multitudinous, and it was marvellous how deftly he discharged them. He always saw to the lading and unloading, chose the spot for camp, placed the watch o' nights, gave out the stores, and kept his temper through it all. He was a born leader of men, amiable, quick and never sulked ; an admirable thing. Sulkiness is rather a big trait in the Somali character ; it usually springs from wounded vanity.

At the water holes we fell in with some more Somalis, who gave the Baron Munchausen news of lions in the vicinity. By the time our henchman had elaborated the story the lions were practically in our zareba, and we were much discouraged, feeling that, in all human probability, judging by previous results, we were as far off lions as ever.

That night, after a somewhat longer, more tiring trek than usual, for the first time in my life I heard a lion

roar. I say for the first time, because in my superiority I tell you that the grunting, short, peevish crying heard in the great cat house at the Zoo at feeding-time cannot be called roaring, after one has heard the wonderful sound of His Majesty hunting. My heart seemed to stand still with awe as I listened to that never-to-be-forgotten sound. Terrific and majestic, it reverberated through the silence of the night, and seemed to repeat itself in echoes when all was really still.

The dawn is the time when lions roar most. They occasionally give tongue when actually hunting, often after feeding. The sound varies with the age and lung power of the animal, and has many gradations, sometimes sounding as though the pain of doing it at all hurt the throat, sometimes the sound comes in great abrupt coughs, and again one hears even triumphant roars.

We rose early. Indeed, I do not think we slept again after hearing the longed-for serenade, and arranging for all the hunters to accompany us, set off on our new steeds to spoor for lion. After about six miles of roughish going we struck the tracks. We examined them with the greatest interest, and Clarence demonstrated to us the evidence that the spoor was very new indeed, that the lions were two in number and going at a walking pace. I soon learnt when a lion was walking and when he commenced to run. The lion, being a cat, has retractile claws, and therefore when he walks the pugs are even and rounded. The instant he alters the pace and runs, the nail-marks are plain, and the sand is usually slightly furred up by the pad.

High above us, sailing round and round majestically, were many vultures. Sometimes one would swoop low, to rise again. It was plain from the screaming of the birds a kill was at hand. We pushed on, an indescribable excitement gripping me. I regarded every bush furtively. What secrets might it not hold? Abreast of it, passed it. Nothing! I had a taut feeling of strained relief; I glanced at Cecily, but you could not guess her feeling from her face. I felt I should like to walk, to feel *terra firma* beneath my feet, and grasp my rifle instead of reins; but Clarence had said nothing, and plodded along by my side. He was walking, but four hunters were mounted.

In a slightly open space—the whole of the sandy waste was dotted here with bushes taller than a man—we came on what had once been a graceful aoul, mangled and torn. The lions had dined, and that heavily, only the shoulders of the gazelle being left. The sand was tossed up and ploughed into furrows in the death struggle, and from the scene of the last phase wound a lion track going towards a thick bunch of thorn. It seemed likely the lions were lying up in the immediate vicinity. The lion feeds in a very business-like manner, and after a kill gorges himself to repletion, then, not to put too fine a point on it, goes a little way off, is violently and disgustingly sick, after which he returns and gorges some more. Then he sleeps, off and on, for perhaps three days, when he hunts again. When hunting, immense distances are covered, and though he hunts alone, his mate comes up with him

eventually to share the spoil. They seem to have some way of communicating their whereabouts that is quite as effective as our telegraphic system.

I felt it was quite time to quit my saddle, and be clear of the pony, so dismounted and prepared for action, taking my rifle and looking to it. It was only just in time for my peace of mind. In one tense second I realised I had seen two monstrous moving beasts, yellowish and majestic. They were very close, and moved at a slow pace from the bush ahead into a patch of still thicker cover to the left. I remember that though the great moment for which we had planned and longed and striven was really at hand, all my excitement left me, and there was nothing but a cold tingling sensation running about my veins. Clarence in a moment showed the excellent stage-management for which he was famous, and I heard as in a dream the word of command that sent our hunters, the Baron included, dashing after our quarry shouting and yelling and waving spears. Again I caught a glimpse of the now hurrying beasts. How mighty they looked! In form as unlike a prisoned lion as can well be imagined. They hardly seemed related to their cousins at the Zoo. The mane of the wild lion is very much shorter. No wild lion acquires that wealth of hair we admire so much. The strenuous life acts as hair-cutter. And yet the wild beast is much the most beautiful in his virile strength and suggestion of enormous power.

The lions being located, we crept on warily towards the bush, a citadel of khansa and mimosa scrub, a

typical bit of jungle cover. The lions sought it so readily, as they had dined so heavily that they were feeling overdone. The men went around the lair and shouted and beat at the back. Whether the cats were driven forward or not with the din, or whether they had not penetrated far within the retreat at first, I cannot, of course, tell, but I saw from thirty-five yards off, as I stood with my finger on the trigger, ferocious gleaming eyes, and heard ugly short snarls, breaking into throaty suppressed roars every two or three seconds. The jungle cover parted, and with lithe stretched shoulders a lioness shook herself half free of the density, then crouched low again. Down, down, until only the flat of her skull showed, and her small twitching ears. In one more moment she would be on us. I heard Cecily say something. I think it may have been "Fire!" Sighting for as low as I could see on that half arc of yellow I pulled the trigger, and Cecily's rifle cracked simultaneously. The head of the lioness pressed lower, and nothing showed above the ridge of grass and thorn. The lioness must be dead. And yet, could one kill so great a foe so simply? We stood transfixed. The sun blared down, a butterfly flickered across the sand, a cricket chirruped in long-drawn, twisting notes. These trifles stamped themselves on my memory as belonging for ever to the scene, and now I cannot see a butterfly or hear a cricket's roundelay without going back to that day of days and wonder unsurpassed.

Then I did an inanely stupid thing. It was my first lion shoot, and my ignorance and enthusiasm carried

me away. I ran forward to investigate, with my rifle at the trail. I don't excuse such folly, and I got my deserts. Worse remains behind. It was my rule to reload the right barrel immediately after firing, and the left I called my emergency supply. My rule I say, and yet in this most important shoot of all it was so in theory only! I had forgotten everything but the dead lioness. I had forgotten the bush contained another enemy.

A snarling quick roar, and almost before I could do anything but bring up my rifle and fire without the sights, a lion broke from the side of the brake. I heard an exclamation behind me, and my cousin's rifle spoke. The bullet grazed the lion's shoulder only, and lashed him to fury. All I can recollect is seeing the animal's muscles contract as he gathered himself for a springing charge, and instinct told me the precise minute he would take off. My nerves seemed to relax, and I tried to hurl myself to one side. There was no power of hurling left in me, and I simply fell, not backwards nor forwards, but sideways, and that accident or piece of luck saved me. For the great cat had calculated his distance, and had to spring straight forward. He had not bargained for a victim slightly to the right or left. His weight fell on my legs merely, and his claws struck in. Before he had time to turn and rend me, almost instantaneously my cousin fired. I did not know until later that she did so from a distance of some six yards only, having run right up to the scene in her resolve to succour me. The top of the lion's head was blown to smithereens, and the

heavy body sank. I felt a greater weight ; the blood poured from his mouth on to the sand, the jaws yet working convulsively. The whole world seemed to me to be bounded north, south, east, and west by Lion. The carcase rolled a little and then was still. Pinned by the massive haunches I lay in the sand.

Clarence, Cecily, and all the hunters stood around. I noticed how pale she was. Even the tan of her sunburnt face could not conceal the ravages of the last five minutes. The men pulled the heavy carcase away, taking him by the fore-paws, his tail trailing, and exquisite head all so hideously damaged. Only his skin would be available now, still——

I sat up in a minute, feeling indescribably shaky, and measured the lion with my eye. He could be gloriously mounted, and “ He will just do for that space in the billiard room,” my voice tailed off. I don’t remember anything else until I found myself in my tent with my cousin rendering first aid, washing the wounds and dressing them with iodoform. Only one gash was of any moment. It was in the fleshy part of the thigh. We had not sufficient medical skill to play any pranks, so kept to such simple rules as extreme cleanliness, antiseptic treatment, and nourishing food. Indeed, our cook did well for me those days, and made me at intervals the most excellent mutton broth, which he insisted on bringing to me himself, in spite of the obvious annoyance of the butler, who had lived in the service of an English family and so knew what was what.

The days and nights were very long just then.

Clarence came to see me often. His occupation was gone. Cecily did not leave me at all at first. I believe our good fellow wondered if we should ever require him to hunt again. He did not know the proverb, "Once bitten, twice shy," but you could see he felt it.

One evening, when I was convalescent, Clarence brought one of the men to us with inquiries as to the best way to cure him.

"What is the matter?" was naturally the first question, as we were not the human Homoceas our men seemed to take us for.

Our servant had been chewing—must have been—a piece of thorn, and a particularly spiky insidious bit had stuck itself well in the back of his throat, near the left tonsil. It would seem an easy enough thing to pull out, but it was the most difficult of operations. We could not make any very prolonged attempt at dislodgment because every time we tried to touch the bit of thorn the man either shut his mouth with a snap and bit us, or pretended he must be sick forthwith. It was very laughable, but a little worrying. We tried nippers, a vast pair, that filled the mouth to overflowing and hid the offending thorn from sight. We tried blunt scissors, which Cecily said would not cut because they could not, and might be relied on to act the part of nippers. Of course they did cut, when they weren't needed to, the roof of the patient's mouth, and matters grew worse than ever. The light was wholly insufficient, and we could hardly see at all. The candle lamp never shone in the right direction, and we laughed so—the two Somalis were in such deadly



CECILY

earnest. I do not think any harm would have resulted if the thorn had been left where it stuck until the morning. But no! The men said if the thorn were left the throat would swell, and if the throat swelled the patient would choke, and if he choked he would be dead. The cook produced some of the doughy bread he was past-master in concocting, a sticky mass to act as panacea, and our thorn-stuck henchman swallowed a lot to the detriment of his digestion. No use. The thorn would not be levered out. Then—brilliant idea—try a hairpin! Comic papers have it that a woman can go through the world with a hairpin as a tool for everything, and come out victorious. I have never seen one put in the list of a hunter's requirements—a great oversight. Take my word for it, a hair-pin does the work of ten ordinary implements. The rounded end of one hooked round the offending thorn ejected the cause of all the trouble, and peace reigned in the camp.

CHAPTER V

MORE LIONS

☞ Much better than I was. I can stand and walk. I will even pace slowly to my kinsman's

A Winter's Tale

MY leg, with the extra big gash, was a frightful nuisance. It was not much, but was just enough to prevent my going out hunting for some time. I could not run at all; and if you would hunt buck or beast, you must run like Atalanta. From point to point you scamper on occasion, and it is all as glorious as it sounds.

During the period of my rest I prevailed on Cecily to go out as of old, and try her luck. I occupied myself in caring for the trophies we had by now acquired. All the skulls were carefully buried near the largest ant-hill in the vicinity, and were dug up every time we struck camp. The earlier trophies were by now picked almost clean. The masks and skins generally were rubbed with alum, taxidermine, and wood ashes. I was very careful to smooth out any creases, and gave particular attention to the magnificent coat from mine enemy. Even with occasional drenchings the trophies suffered no harm, and we generally in rainy times tried to spare them a covering of waterproof sheeting. In those days of idleness the bored-looking camels had been two short expeditions for water supplies. Cecily

did wonders, bagging a fine oryx after an exciting stalk, a lesser koodoo—a most beautiful creature—and a jackal. It was of the black-backed variety, with silver hairs and flaming yellow sides, and I admired him immensely. He was a monster too, and measured four feet as he lay.

The men were revelling in any amount of meat of my cousin's providing. I think we were more generous in this direction than are many hunters. The caravan is expected to rely on the usual ration of rice and dates—the latter a gummed together mass of fruit, which is eaten by the Somalis in handfuls. They were quite good, for I tasted them frequently.

We bought sheep throughout the trip, either by exchange or for cash; and, as I say, there was a plentiful supply of venison.

As soon as I could ride we marched, and very glad we were to leave the place where circumstances had enforced so long a stay. The camp began to take on the slovenly, dirty ways of the average Somali *karia*. The spirit of idleness sits ill on these natives. They like doing nothing, but doing nothing does not like them, and very speedily they get slothful.

The procedure of our camping arrangements varied but little when things were normal and going smoothly. On selecting the right spot to halt, every man went to his own work, and our tents were up almost as soon as they were taken off the kneeling camels, who flopped down, joyfully obedient at the first sign of a rest, and, being relieved of the loads, were allowed to graze at once. Our butler put out everything we needed, set

up the beds, placed our goods and chattels to hand, and prepared a bath each for us if we happened to be in a place where a bath was not too great a luxury, and a mere sponge if water was absent.

Meanwhile the cook had a fire going, or theoretically he had, though very often it was a long time before it got started. The camel men hacked down thorn bushes, using native axes, and *hangols*, or wooden crooks, for pulling the wood about with. The chant that accompanies all Somali occupations was loud and helpful. Sometimes we took a hand at this zareba building, using an English axe or a bill-hook, and the men would laugh in surprise, and hold the boughs in readiness for us to chop. They liked the English axes. "Best axe I see," the camel-man in chief said. But we would not lend them permanently, because they would have been broken at once. Every mortal thing goes to pieces in the hands of these Somalis; most extraordinary. Only tough native implements could stand against such treatment. Buck were carried slung on Sniders, and bent the weapon into graceful curves. The sights and even the triggers were knocked off. The Somali boys broke all the handles off the pans, and seemed incapable of taking care of anything. Many of the native *harns* gave out at the different wells because of the smashing about they received, and meant our buying more from passing tribes.

At night my shikár pistol, loaded, lay to my hand on a box at my bedside, for what I don't quite know, as I should have disliked immensely to use it. But it seemed the correct thing; the butler expected it. He

always asked me to give him the weapon from my belt about supper time, and I next saw it in readiness for midnight affrays. "Chota-hazari" was served us by the butler calling loudly outside our tents, or by delicately tapping two stones together as an intimation that a cup of tea stood on the ground at the entrance, when it meant making a long arm to reach it. The teacups were not Dresden; they were of thick enamel—we only had one each and two over in case of accidents or visitors—and to appreciate them at their true value we would have needed the mouths of flukes.

Sometimes a case of necessaries required for breakfast would be in our tents doing duty as furniture, and then it was very funny indeed. The cook would come and chant outside that unless he could have the box Mem-sahib no breakfast would see, and if Mem-sahib no breakfast saw she would upbraid the chef because he had not got the box. All this would be woven into a little tune in a mixture of Somali, Hindostanee, and so-called English. Mem-sahib would chant back to the effect that the necessaries would appear all in good time. The cook would retire to stir up the fire and cuff his assistant, a tow-headed "youth," whose *raison d'être* appeared to be the cleaning, or making worse dirty, of the pans, and preparing things for the culinary artist. The tow-headed one was a mere dauber; at least our cook told us so in effect, with great disdain, when I suggested the assistant should be allowed to try his 'prentice hand. That was one day when I got worried about my digestion holding out against

the insidious attacks made on it by the high-class cookery we were supposed to be having.

It was a long time before I got used to the hot nauseating smell of the camels. It was ever present in camp, and when the wind blew into one's tent the indescribable aroma transcended all others. Barring the horrid odour, we had nothing else to complain of in our patient dumb servants. The camels were good tempered beasts, taking them all round ; very different to Indian camels, among whom it would have been impossible to wander so nonchalantly o' nights. All our camels, save one, were of the white variety usually to be found in Berbera. The one exception was a trojan creature, dark and swarthy looking, who hailed from distant Zeila. He was a splendid worker, untiring and ungrumbling, never roaring at loading-up time. But the Gel Ad, or Berbera, camel is considered by experts to be the better animal. We preferred "Zeila" to any animal we had ; we christened him after his home. It is very odd, and may be will be found difficult to understand, as to explain, but in some of the camels' faces we traced the most speaking likenesses to friends and relatives, either through expression, form, or fancy. Anyway, they *were* like many of our acquaintances ; and so, to Cecily and myself, the different camels were thoroughly described and known as "Uncle Robert," "Aunt Helena," or "Mrs. Stacy," and so on and so forth. One haughty white camel, with a lofty sneer of disdain and arrogance about it, was so very like a human beauty of our acquaintance that we smiled every time we looked at

the animal. Our caravan on the march straggled like a flock of geese. Some two or three of the camel-men had to lead the van ; the others lagged behind in a bunch. The hunters took it in turns to ride the spare ponies, and Cecily and I rode the steeds we had purchased at the first Somali *karia* we came upon.

I often wondered what our followers thought of two women being in the position to command attention, deference, and work—the Somali feminine is such a very crushed down creature, and takes a back seat at all times. Even if a superabundance of meat is on hand she is not spared a tit-bit, but is presented with fearsome scraps and entrails, the while the masculine element gorges on the choicest morsels. This is rather different to our home system. I remember an Englishman of my acquaintance telling me once, with no acrimony of tone, nothing but calm acceptance of the inevitable, that he had never tasted the breast of chicken since his marriage five years before ! What a glimpse into a household !

My first excursion was after that oryx I had so set my heart upon, and Clarence, to his joy, accompanied me.

“Much better than I was,” but still not quite fit even yet. I carefully stalked a small herd of oryx, four to be precise, crawling about on hands and knees for upwards of an hour, and when my chance came at last, and a bull (not anything very wonderful I am glad to remember) passed broadside on, well within range, I fired—and missed ! At the very instant a violent stab agony in my damaged leg made me cringe involuntarily. The oryx was gone !

I sat down, and but for the presence of my shikári I am sure I should have cried.

Game was now most plentiful, gerenük, oryx, and aoul being more often in sight than not. Thunderstorms became more frequent, and rain more insistent. Since leaving the place where we sojourned so long we had not known one day in which rain did not fall some time during the twenty-four hours. We had managed fairly well by going out "between whiles," but now there weren't any, and there came a time of no half measures. Steady downpours bothered us no end. I am very used to water, because my habitat in England is in that delectable spot where of all other places nobody dreams of going out minus an umbrella. And I have seen rain in many corners of the world, but never rain like the Somali variety. It is for all the world like holding on to the string of a shower bath—it pours and pours. Of course whilst the rain is on there is no use in endeavouring to spoor, for all traces of game are simply wiped out by the floods of water as a sponge cleans a slate. We could do nothing save remain in our soaked tents and fume. Things were very bad and uncomfortable at this time. For a whole week we never knew what it was to be dry. Every mortal thing we had was drenched, and the poor tents were no more use than brown paper in face of the continued avalanches of water. We used to wring our blankets each night, and but for copious doses of quinine I don't know how I should have pulled through. Cecily pinned her faith on weak whisky-and-water, of which latter commodity there was now no scarcity, and

both our schemes worked admirably, and bar a little rheumatism in my left shoulder I carried on all right. At last—"a fine day ; let us go out and kill something" came and, the conditions being splendid for spooring, we went off bent on an execution—of anything.

Running in and out among some rocks were the quaintest little rabbits, without tails, Manx rabbits, odd stumpy greyish bodies, and an engaging air of indifference to passers-by.

A great yellow-beaked hornbill sat on a tree and made his own peculiar croaking noise. Most wise he looked as he put his grey head to one side and investigated us. Yet his looks bewrayed him ; for when I threw some dates at him to see if he knew how to catch them in his beak, he let them pass him all unheeded. His cousin at the Zoo could teach many things.

After a long ride we left our ponies to be led along behind by a syce, and spooed on foot. Clarence and the two hunters were still riding. We nearly went off our heads with joy and excitement when we suddenly came on a neat little path made by lion. The print was perfect. The most perfect I have ever seen. The soft earth had taken the mould like dough. There were the fore indents, there the cushions of the pad. We knelt down in our eagerness to realise how really soaked everything was. The ground was sodden, and every step oozed water.

We ran on, Clarence and the hunters keeping pace easily with us. There were scrubby bushes all about,

but the pugs threaded in and out, and held plainly on, until they ended in a vast pile of stones and brushwood. An ideal lair. Clearly our quarry was run to earth. With a "whuff" two mighty animals leapt up, over the stones and away, just for all the world like a couple of agile common or garden cats. Cecily and I flew after them. I don't think I ever ran so hard in my life before. I might have been the pursued rather than the pursuer. The ground opened up to great plateau country, and the lion and lioness were cantering close together, almost touching shoulders. Making a detour Clarence and the hunters rounded the great cats up. For a moment it almost seemed that they pulled up dead as the gallant little ponies dashed by them, but a man is fairly safe on a galloping pony. I laid this flattering well-known unction to my soul as I saw the lion go for "The Baron," whilst the lioness simply broke away, and vanished in that marvellous manner of disappearing which lions know the secret of.

With quivering tail extended, and most horrible coughing snarls the lion seemed about to disprove the idea that he was no match for a mounted horseman. But away and away dashed the sporting little pony, and His Majesty turned his terrific attentions to us, and in a whirl of tossed-up mud came to within forty yards of the place where Cecily and I stood in the open, rigid and awaiting the onslaught. Then we let him have it. I saw his tremendous head over my sights as in short bounds he cleared the distance that separated us. I fired simultaneously with my cousin.



A GOOD MANELESS LION

To Mrs
Augusta

I was using the heavy 12-bore, but I kept my fingers on the rear trigger as we advanced cautiously to the dropped lion. He crumpled up like a toy with the mainspring broken, and sank as he finished his last spring with his massive head between his paws—a majestic and magnificent sight.

I measured him previous to the skinning operation and, stretched out, from his nose to the end of his tail he touched seven feet ten and a half inches. Of course this was before *rigor-mortis* had set in, and he may have stretched a little. His mane was shorter than our other damaged lion trophy, and entirely clear from the patches of mange we found on one or two other lions we bagged. But he was infested with ticks. I should think life must have been an irritating affair for him.

We were immensely set up, and only regretted that the lioness had made good her escape. One of the most extraordinary features about lions to me is the way so large an animal can obliterate itself; they simply blend into the landscape. Their brownish-yellow skins, so similar in colour to the burnt grass, and their agile bodies, which can crouch and wriggle like any lizard, play parts in the scheme for invisibility. On one occasion Cecily and I surprised a lion in a small nullah. (We were a trifle astonished ourselves, too, but that is a detail.) We ran in pursuit, being out of range, and though we kept our eyes fixed on him, or thought we did, that lion seemed to disappear as suddenly as though the earth had swallowed him up. Then Clarence pointed out to us a patch of brown

grass, taller than the rest—any amateur like myself would have sworn it was grass. “Libbah,” our man said impressively. And “libbah” it was. We approached and the “grass” with a bound was off! We bagged him in the end, and he was a very old creature indeed. Alone, and almost toothless, his day was almost spent, and he died more royally at our hands than ending as the ignominious prey of some hyæna. He put me in mind of a wonderful lion picture I saw once at the Academy, which portrayed an old, old lion, at twilight, in his own beloved haunts, weak and doddering, yet still a king—too strong even yet to be pulled down by the lurking forms, which with lurid eyes watched the dying lion from the dark thorn background. I think the picture was called “Old Age.”

The strange inborn dread all wild creatures have of man, unknown man, makes even the mightiest lion try for safety. There is, of course, no sort of cowardice in him. In open country he knows the man has all the advantage, but even then he faces the music grandly when cornered. In cover, instinct tells him most of the game lies with himself. The Somalis have a way—I am afraid this is a bit of a chestnut—of riding down lion that is really a clever performance. If some venturesome beast makes a habit of helping himself to a baby camel or two from the *karia* at night, he is a marked beast, and a small army of Somalis prepare to give battle. Riding their quick little tats, and all armed with spears, they drive the lion, with prodigious shouting and yelling, into the open. Here they close around him and harry him

hither and thither, dazing the mazed creature with their cries and hurry. In the end the monarch always abdicates, and some Somali, quicker than his fellows, finishes the business with a drive of his spear. It is not unlike the principle of bull-fighting, except that in the case of the Somalis self-preservation originates the necessity for the battle.

In the lion-world I noticed that the rule of *Place aux dames* did not apply. The male invariably tried to take the shortest route to safety, and madam had to look after herself.

Buck of every variety forms the staple food of lions. I have heard that they have been known to kill wart-hog, but never myself came on any proof of this.

A large trading caravan passed us here *en route* to Berbera. They were taking a heterogeneous collection for sale at the coast town, ostrich feathers, *ghee*, gum-arabic, prayer-mats and skins of all varieties. They sold us some *ghee*, which we were glad to get, as our supply was running low. Their huts were standing when we came on the caravan, and on the march were carried on camels as our tents were. Like turtles, we carried our houses with us wherever we went. We wrote two or three letters, enclosing them in an outer envelope asking that they should be posted. Then we gave them to the head-man of the trading party with a request that he should hand them to the first sahib he saw in Berbera. The letters eventually turned up at their destinations, so some good Samaritan posted them.

That same evening, as Cecily was riding alongside

me, a group of some twenty Somali horsemen rode up to us, and every one of them closed tight around us until all the ponies were wedged like sardines. The whole crowd wished to shake hands and welcome us. The Somali handshake is not a shake strictly speaking. It is a mere pressing of hands and is prefaced usually by the salutation "Aleikum salaam," which you reply to by reversing the order of it, "Salaam aleikum." Then generally the interview, if lagging a little, is materially assisted by "Mot ! Mot ! io Mot !" (Hail ! Hail ! Again Hail !) This is a great feature of the conversation, and, shouted as only a Somali can shout it, is a rousing welcome indeed.

These friends of ours were the outposts of a vast horde of Somalis, for at some wells we saw multitudes of camels standing in a sort of lake, quite a good-sized piece of water, in a grilling sun. The water was turbid and foul, or I should have schemed for a bath out of it. Every one came to call, and to inquire what we were doing. They crowded round the trophies drying, putting their fingers on the skins and then tasting the fingers to see what the result was like. They were a great nuisance, and we had to trek on again to get away from their unwelcome attentions. One of our camels fought another as we loaded up. Never did I see such viciousness. The fur flew, and bites were many, and at last the victor drove the vanquished roaring before it. The camel-man who valeted the conquering hero seemed quite charmed, but as the beaten animal had some nasty bites in the neck, the performance did not seem to us so meritorious. In a

day or two the bites had developed into really open wounds and the men treated them in cruel-to-be-kind fashion by applying red-hot stones, tying this drastic treatment firmly over the sore. Burning seemed to be an all-curing cure, and during most of the weeks a spear was heated with which to raise blisters on one camel or another.

CHAPTER VI

BENIGHTED IN THE JUNGLE

Mercy o' me, what a multitude are here! They grow still,
too ; from all sides they are coming

King Henry VIII

O, I have passed a miserable night,
So full of ugly sights, of ghostly dreams

King Richard III

ONE of our hunters, a melancholy visaged individual, was a very amusing personage to go out with alone. He always acted like the guide of a Cook's personally conducted tour. Not a tree, or twig, or water-hole was left to be seen or not seen by us. All must be brought to the notice of the Mem-sahibs. It reduced the tracking of game to a delicious farce. If we sighted an antelope he would first point it out to me most carefully, telling me about the distance the creature was from us, perhaps saying commandingly, "You shoot um," handing me my own rifle as though he were giving me a valuable present.

Sometimes he even went the length of putting it to my shoulder and cocking it for me, and was a grandmotherly hunter indeed! He spoiled a glorious chance for me one day with his chaperoning me through tactics, actually telling me the precise moment to fire, and when I did, at my own moment, and—

through his rattling me so—missed ignominiously, he whispered to himself, with a whole world of resignation in his tone, “Mem-sahib no shoot, Mem-sahib no shoot !”

Mem-sahib turned round and gave the idiot a bit of her mind. I had had enough of being hurried and flurried by his ways. I learned early on to take no notice of my shikári. Clarence never made the egregious mistake of obtruding himself. Some of the others were not so cautious, and were very quick with their ideas and remarks. It is very easy to rattle a person after a tiring crawl, and throw the whole scheme out of gear to fall about your ears like an evanescent card-house. One asks time to recover breath and balance, taking one's own way. Then on occasion it is necessary to shoot from all sorts of positions, and it is disconcerting to have any one commenting. I prefer to be able to sit down fair and square so that both knees may be elbow rests ; but, alas, not often the opportunity is given in big game shooting to choose your position. You seize the moment, and the moment may find you placed very awkwardly.

We were now again in the most wonderful region for game that the heart of the most grasping sportsman could desire. Herds of buck were met with on every march we made, and galloping forms were outlined on every horizon. If there were more aoul to be seen in the early days of the discovery of Somaliland as a Land of Promise for the hunter, I do not know how the ground supported them. If the larger and more dangerous

fauna has been thinned almost to extinction, it would seem that the lesser has thriven. Fewer lions to find food means more buck to live.

You never find aoul in jungle country, and consequently they are of gazelle the most easily seen. Frequenting the grass plateaus and flat sandy wastes, as they do, whereon a few straggling bushes try to grow, the white hindquarters stand out clear and distinct as a target. When going off, startled, they stretch out, seeming to gain many inches in length, and when wounded an aoul never creeps off to die in impenetrable bush where the hunter has a difficulty in locating the hiding creature. Sensibly he selects the open "bun," and there is despatched the quicker.

On coming to one open space of country I rubbed my eyes to see if I were awake or dreaming. The place swarmed with aoul. It was like some field at home, full of cows before milking time, except that these were very animated creatures, fighting battles together, and making the history for buckland. I lay down in a tuft of grass for an hour or more, watching the pantomime. The aoul were in two great herds, separate and distinct. Each was in the charge of a war-like old buck who had drilled his does into fine order, and vigilantly saw that they kept a fair distance from the rival herd. Sometimes a doe of frivolous propensities would essay to seek fresh fields and pastures new, edging away in the direction of the other harem. Nemesis was after her on the instant, in the person of her outraged lord, who gave chase, and cuffing her about most vigorously, soon showed

her the error of such ways, restoring her to his charmed circle again. On the outskirts of both well guarded harems there were many likely looking young bucks, who were kept at a respectful distance from the does they admired so much by the flying charges and battering onslaughts of each boss buck. To say their lives were strenuous is to convey nothing. They had no time to eat, or rest, or sleep.

Then, by a hideous mischance the two parties of aoul converged, and the strain was at breaking-point. For the system of all things was disturbed, and worse than all, the two old bucks met face to face. Now fight they must for the mastery, or be shamed for ever in the soft eyes of all their feminine kind. At it they went, hammer and tongs, clawing with razor hoofs, circling round each other, clashing, crashing. Meanwhile—but we all know what the mice do when the cat's away! And this golden moment was the young bucks' opportunity. Every Jack found a Jill, and some fortunate ones many Jills, and ran off promptly with their loot. Then when the old bucks had fought till they were dripping with foam and blood-flecked muzzles, the one slightly the stronger would end the fray with a terrific drive, and send his vanquished foe bellowing back to—nothing. The harem had all eloped.

One might lie and watch a herd of aoul for hours, really in full view, and not cause them any great anxiety. We never talked save in whispers, and it was really amazing to see how very indifferent the creatures grew to our presence. If they did take it into their heads to feign alarm, remaining quite still seemed to

restore confidence in us. The old bucks and does were the most suspicious ; the young were far more trusting. Just as it is with we human things. Illusions are smashed in buckland as in England.

The ridiculous inquisitiveness of the aoul makes him easy to stalk. The glinting of a rifle barrel seems to charm him rather than frighten him, as it would one of our Scotch deer. Sense of smell in the buck of the wild is even more marvellously marked than in the case of our home deer, and it must be so when we consider the added dangers. Death lurks on every side, but for one gerunük that falls a victim to King Leo's appetite, I should imagine five aoul run into his very jaws in mistaken endeavour to see how many teeth in working order the fearsome enemy has. Never did I see such an inquisitive genus !

I found one or two newly born kids by watching the mother's movements. I would mark the place in my mind to which she kept trotting away, then go later. It needed so careful a hunt before one would come on the little kid, covered up so ingeniously, in its cradle in a thorn brake. In a very short time though the babies get their jungle legs and can follow the mother at her own pace. I don't know of any very much prettier sight than an aoul nursery full of kids playing. They are such sportive little creatures, just like lambs at home—jumping imaginary obstacles, running races, mimicking their elders in childish battle. Any little alarm, crack of twig, or fearsome rustle sends them all, on the instant, dashing back to the realm of safety by the side of the watchful parent.

As I have said elsewhere, the horns of the aoul differ considerably, and some otherwise well fitted out bucks have no horns at all. These bucks are often as well able to hold their own as their more perfectly equipped (so-called) betters, frequently bossing a herd. Others again have but one horn, and that deformed.

It was near this place of the aoul that a most amusing thing happened. Clarence and I got benighted in the jungle, and didn't get home until morning. I know that this sounds just like the plot for a fashionable problem novel, but there wasn't much problem about it really; it all came about as a very natural consequence, and happened mostly through my enthusiasm over another splendid oryx. I stalked this one for hours and hours, and the mosquitoes and heat seemed but to sting him into keener alertness. I *could* not get within range. I tried on foot, I tried squirming along the ground flat, and then, when there was nothing else for it, I'd mount my little pony once again and furiously dash off in pursuit. When within range I only got the oryx in the leg, a slight wound merely, and I had to try and ride the wounded buck down. A desperate business in this case, for he was not hard hit. I did not like the idea of leaving a hurt creature to die miserably after prolonged torture, so we let him lead us on and on, and it was very nearly dark before I gave that animal the *coup-de-grâce*. By the time we had secured his head, a fine one indeed, his shield and skin, it *was* dark. Night had descended upon the jungle. We fired three times in quick succession, a signal agreed on in case we ever got bushed,

but we knew the wind was blowing away from the very distant camp.

I told Clarence we would get away as far as possible from the dead oryx, or we should find ourselves in for a livelier night than we bargained for, and have a regular at-home day of most unwelcome callers. We led our ponies and pushed and scrubbed our way through dense undergrowth, ominous rents in my poor coat greeting me as the vicious wait-a-bit thorn held me back. We found the darkness impenetrable in parts, and then in kind of drifts it would lighten a little. At last we made out a small patch of clearing, and decided on camping. The first thing to do was to collect wood for a fire, and as this was a difficult job on so dark an evening, Clarence just grabbed what sticks he could, lighted them, and the welcome glare enabled us to amass a great supply of firewood. I worked hard at this, for I had no mind to be among the jungle folk in darkness. We tethered the ponies as near the fire as possible, where we could see them, and I took the precaution to move the oryx head, &c., from my steed, and place them where I could carefully guard them. I did not want to run the risk of losing the trophies. Besides, it was rather rough on the pony to leave him all baited as it were to attract some hungry beast.

I should, I think, have preferred to lose the pony rather than the oryx, but wanted, if possible, to keep both.

Next came our little supper, and this was quite excellently managed. I always carried an enamel cup

and many of Lazenby's soup squares, together with a supply of biscuits. We had water too in a bottle on Clarence's saddle, so, filling the cup carefully, I stuck it into the glowing embers. When it boiled in went my compressed tablet of ox-tail, and, after stirring it all with a stick, I had a supper fit for a queen. I made Clarence a brew of mock-turtle next. He said it was very good, and finished off all the biscuit. He then suggested he should keep guard and I might try to sleep. I said we would divide the night, he playing guardian angel the first half and I taking duty for the rest. I showed him my Waterbury, and explained that when the hands stood both together at twelve he was to call me. He seemed to understand. Then I laid me down, but not to rest. I could not help the fear haunting me that my shikári might nod, and in that moment of unconsciousness what awful thing might not happen! Such strange imaginings trouble a semi-sleeping mind at night that with daylight would cause us no concern at all. I lay and gazed at the stars. Sirius was shining away, and Venus was as beautiful a fraud as ever. I dozed awhile, I suppose, but the strange sounds around me kept my senses more or less awake. The jungle at night! The most eerie thing in the world, with strange short rustlings in the undergrowth, the furtive pad, pad, pad of some soft-footed creature, and ever and again a sound as though some man passed by, laggingly, and dwelling on his steps.

The jungle at night is a world unknown to most shikáris. Even Clarence was not familiar here.

At twelve he called me, furtively pulling my coat

sleeve, and saying, "Wake! wake! wake!" I "awakened," and took the watch. My rifle lay beside me on my right, the oryx trophies on my left. The fire was piled up, shedding shafts of light into the fearsome darkness. The ponies stood dejectedly. This tense silent watching is more of a trial than play-acting sleep. I fixed my eyes on the inky blackness ahead, and it was not long before my fancy peopled the shadows with lurking forms. I chid myself. Suddenly I could make out two blazing lights, gleaming like little lamps. The eyes of some preying animal. I sidled over to the sleeping Clarence, and pushed him. He wakened instantly. I told him of the eyes. "Shebel," he said. A leopard! This *was* nice, but why bother us when the remains of a whole oryx was so close to hand. We sat and waited. The eyes again—sometimes at a lower level than others, as though the beast crouched as he gazed. "Let us fire together," I said.

At my soft "One, two, three," we blazed away at the twin specks of light. A scuffle, then a hideous screaming cry, that echoed again in the stillness. Worse remains behind. The ponies thoroughly upset by the unusual sounds of the jungle at night, and not expecting the enormous report, simply stampeded before we had time to get to them. They made off in mad terror, and there we were in a worse hole than ever. Sleep was out of the question. We made some more soup to pass the hours, julienne and mulligatawny this time, and after that I fell to talking to Clarence about England. He asked many questions that he

evidently badly wanted answered. One was to know if these trophies had some great intrinsic value there that so many people come at such trouble and danger to themselves to get them? He evidently was much puzzled.

At last the dawn came, and at the first hint of it we prepared to move. The scene was of rare beauty. In the dense undergrowth that hid the trees to the height of several feet was a wonder world of mystery. Webs of Arachne's weaving made bars of silver gossamer from bush to bough. 'Twas like a scene from Shakespeare's woodlands. The same thrill and marvel, joy, happiness and pain. For life is not all a song. Fierce burning strife comes oft to mar the stillness, death, too, in cruelest form. In the jungle all is one long struggle for survival; no excuses are made, none wanted, they kill to live, just as we human things kill each other every day; only in civilisation it is done more delicately.

First we investigated the place of the eyes, and there, sure enough, was a blood trail. We followed but a few yards to find a large striped hyæna—a magnificent beast, yellow gray, with black stripes on his shoulders, and beautiful mane and bushy gray tail. He measured from nose to tail four feet eight inches. We skinned and decapitated him, a long and horrid business, and then took up our none too pleasant loads and departed. We passed the remains of the dead oryx, but there was little left of him. The hyænas had been feasting all the night, and now the vultures were picking his bones. It was still darkish as we took our way

campwards, the mad rush of the ponies being clearly visible to us. Through bushes, anyhow, helter skelter they had pelted.

I had to stop and rest frequently, as my load was more than a little heavy, though Clarence carried as much, and more, than he ought. The rifles alone were no light weight, and when it came to the slain animals as well we found them all a bit of a trial.

In some thick grass a great wart-hog rose up before me, and after giving me a look from his tiny fierce eyes, lost himself again. I flung my load down, all but the very necessary rifle, and went after him. He made some ugly rushes in the long grass, but I dodged and chased him to clearer country, until I could get in a shot which, raking him, ended his career as a perfect king of his kind. I did not want to take his tusks merely, as I desired his head to be a complete trophy. But when Clarence strenuously refused to touch the creature I knew I could not then, tired as I was, play butcher myself. So I had to be contented with digging out his huge tusks. And a very messy job it was too.

We took up our loads again, and went back over the ground over which we had chased the oryx the evening before. I was progressing wearily enough when I almost stepped on a yellow snake, with a dark head, lying near a thorn bush. It was only about eighteen inches long, but quite long enough to make me jump some feet, all encumbered as I was. Clarence looked genuinely surprised.

"You not afraid of aliphint," he said, a thing we had

about as much chance of meeting as the man in the moon ; " what for you 'fraid now ? "

I told him women have a long-standing quarrel with serpents : that a serpent once spoiled the happiness of a woman and turned her out of a garden where she fain would be.

" She cousin of yours ? " he asked, with true Somali inquisitiveness.

" Very distant," I answered.

Cecily and a couple of hunters met us quarter way. She told us the ponies rushed into camp in the early morning, as I had thought they would. She had not been unduly anxious about me, knowing I was with Clarence, and guessing we were bushed. They never heard the shots at all.

I did enjoy my breakfast, and never had a cup of tea that tasted half so good.

The thought of all that pork wasting in the near vicinity bothered us no end. Very greedy, I know. But, you see, dainties were not often to be had. We ordered out a couple of ponies, and rode back to the scene of my early morning encounter with the wart-hog to find him, marvel of marvels, intact. Though a thwarted looking vulture of business-like appearance flapped off and sat down in stone's throw. They have a mighty contempt for man, these birds, or else it is they recognise they aren't worth powder and shot.

Cecily evolved the idea of converting half the wart-hog into bacon, putting it into pickle, and promising it would equal the finest home cured. The ham was to be a treat to which we should look forward for weeks.

We pickled it all right, or what seemed like all right to us, rubbing it daily with handfuls of salt as we had seen ham cured at home. And then one day, when a meal was badly wanted, and the larder was empty of all else, we essayed to cut the treasured ham and fry it in slices. Cecily inserted a knife. The resultant odour was appalling. So were the awful little maggots that rose in hundreds. Clearly we didn't know how to pickle ham, or else the ham of wart-hog would not take salt as our pig at home does. We could see the line to where the pickle had penetrated. Below chaos ! Ruefully we had a funeral of our looked-for supper, and fell back on the never-failing " Elizabeth Lazenby."

CHAPTER VII

ANOTHER UNCOMFORTABLE NIGHT

I see a man's life is a tedious one. I have tired myself; and for two nights together have made the ground my bed

Cymbeline

YOU can imagine with what joy I looked forward to a good night's rest after the previous twelve hours' vigil, and therefore it is the more amusing to remember that, as Fate would have it, I had an even more occupied time during the midnight hours than ever. We had started to march, after returning to camp with the wart-hog, as we had news of splendid "khubbah" some miles off, given to us by a Somali who came in riding his unkempt pony. The Somali ponies, by the way, are never shod.

The ground was very bad going, and over one bit of sandy waste I thought we never should get. The camels sank in up to their knees at every forward move, then deeper, and at last so deep—it was almost like an American mud-hole—I began to fear consequences. The absurd creatures made no attempt to extricate themselves, but simply, when they found the place a perfect quagmire, settled down like squashed jellies.

It was too ridiculous for words, and I laughed and laughed. Everybody talked at once, and nobody did

anything. At last we all, even the Somali who brought us the news of the distant game, and who seemed to like us very much, for we never got rid of him again, lent a hand, and began to unload the laden camels, carrying the goods to *terra-firma* some sixty yards away.

The moment the camels considered their loads lightened they condescended to heave themselves up a little. After loading up again we proceeded but a little way, indeed but a few hundred yards, when the whole thing repeated itself. The camels were embedded once more. Cecily and I decided to go on and leave them all to it, and try and get any sport that might be had, ordering the men to release the camels from this new quagmire of theirs, and to afterwards form zareba close to the place, I was really glad to ride away from the whole thing, confusion and everything. The disorganised, unsettled feeling I got reminded me of that which comes to one at home during the annual upheaval known as the spring-cleaning. The green grass was springing up with the recent rains, and our little ponies made light of the muddy going. The spoor of all sorts of game was everywhere apparent, and we were most interested to see traces of ostrich, although we did not that day come across any, indeed they are rather difficult creatures to see.

We separated, as was our wont, Cecily taking Clarence, and I the Baron, whom we had now, in spite of his romancing propensities, promoted to second in command. He had great acumen when he chose to display it, and was no sort of a coward. But

then, in spite of what some travellers say, the average Somali rarely is. They are frightful "buck-sticks," but I never saw any cowardice to disprove their boasting stories.

After leaving the ponies with two syces we went off at right angles, and after a long and heavy walk I came on a bunch of aoul, who winded me and darted away like lightning. Their flight started a great prize, whom I had not noticed before, so much the colour of the reddish-brown earth was he. A dibatag buck. He fled too a little way, but then halted, appearing to think the sudden fright of the aoul unnecessary. I was crouching low behind a small bush, and took most careful aim. Off went the long-necked creature again, its quite lengthy tail held erect. He stood and faced me. He apparently mistrusted the bush, but had some weakness for the spot. It was a very long shot, but I tried it. The bullet found a billet, for I heard it tell, but the buck sprang feet into the air and was off in a moment. I took to my heels and ran like mad. I don't know how I ever imagined I was to overtake the antelope. The Baron tore along behind me. I ran until I was completely winded, but I could see a strong blood-trail, so knew the antelope was hard hit. I ran on again, and we were now in very boggy ground, or rather surrounded by many oozy-looking water holes. It was a very shaky shot I got in next time. The dibatag dashed on for a few paces, and then took a crashing header into—of course—the largest pool in the vicinity. The Baron and I danced about on the edge in great vexation, but I did not mean to lose my splendid prize even

if I had to go in after him myself. Satisfying myself that the water was not deep, I bribed the avaricious Somali to go in and help lift the animal whilst I rendered active assistance on dry land, and this was done. The Baron went in with a very bad grace, at which one cannot be surprised, and after prodigious splashing and any amount of exertion, for the buck was an immense weight, I held the dibatag out of the water whilst the Baron extricated himself, together with many leeches, from the pool. Then we both heaved together, and the buck was mine. The Baron now began to make such a fuss about his loss of blood caused by the leeches who would not let go I told him to go home to camp and put salt on them and then recover, and ordered him meanwhile to send the syce back to me with my pony.

I sat down and admired my dibatag, and was mightily pleased with my luck. For this antelope is very shy and difficult to stalk as a rule. Dibatag is, of course, the native name, but somehow the one most commonly used everywhere. The correct name is Clark's Gazelle. The tail is really quite lengthy, and the one sported by my prize measured twelve-and-a-half inches. His horns were good and touched nine-and-three-quarter inches. Only the bucks carry horns.

The dibatag was so large we had the greatest difficulty in packing him on to the pony as I wanted to do, so we finally skinned him, keeping his head and the feet, which I afterwards had mounted as bell-pulls.

Going back to camp I came on Cecily, who recounted her adventures—not a quarter so interesting as mine,



COOKING OPERATIONS

though, for she had drawn blank. It would be boring for any one to have to wade through stories of stalks that came to nothing.

"What's hit is history, but what's missed is mystery," though, of course, each several excursion teemed with myriad interests for us on the spot.

Sometimes I spooed for hours without getting a shot, involving a great knowledge of the habits of animals, keen eyes and judgment, all of which Clarence possessed in a high degree. Then his ability to speak English, even imperfectly, was such an advantage, and we beguiled many an hour in conversation.

I wonder if we human beings will ever be able to hunt for its own sake, without the desire for its cruel consummation. Much though I love the old primitive instinct of pursuing, I am not able to forgo the shot, and particularly when I want a lovely pair of horns. I suppose we keep the balance, and if we did not kill the lions and leopards would get the upper hand. But often I wished when I was flushed with success, and I saw my beast lying dead, that I had not done it. It seemed so cruel, and all antelope are so very beautiful. Of course, we had to kill for food as well as sport, and I think we spared generously on the whole, for we could have trebled the bag.

I began to feel tired of the actual killing as soon as I had perfect specimens of each sort, and always preferred the nobler sport of more dangerous game. I think if I went again I could in most instances deny myself the shot, and content myself with watching and photographing. As it was, I often lay for an hour and

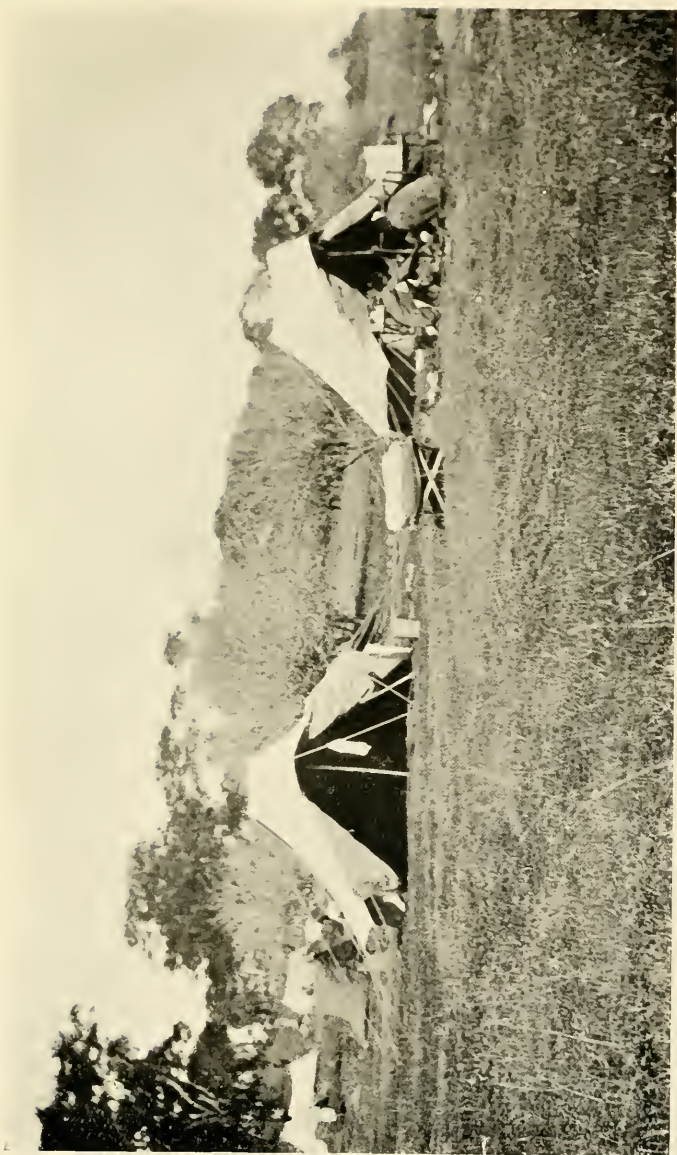
watched game, after crawling to within fifty yards. On one occasion an aoul and I eyed each other at twenty paces, and so motionless was I he could neither make head nor tail of me.

The camp was in a turmoil and every camel-man shouting at the top of his voice—the one thing I do object to in Somalis. Their very whispers almost break your ear-drum, and I suppose a loud voice is the result of many centuries of calling over vast spaces.

Three of the camels, heavily laden, had turned aggressive, bitten several men, and shaken the dust of the place off their feet. Of course, the levanting camels proved to be the ones loaded up with our tents and bedding. They had a very excellent start before anyone thought it necessary to go in pursuit. It was all gross carelessness, as a loaded camel is easy enough to stop if the stopping is done by its own driver.

There was nothing for us to do in the matter, and supper seemed the main object just then. The cook served us up some soup and broiled chops, and we topped up with some delicious jam out of the useful little pots from the A. and N. Stores, holding enough for a not very greedy person. Cecily voted for blackberry, and I sampled the raspberry.

Night fell, and still no returning camels. I rode out a little way, but the going was too impossible in the dark. My pony was a gallant little beast, a bit of a stargazer, but I prefer a horse with his heart in the right place, wherever his looks may be.



OUR TENTS

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I was by this time aching all over, and there was nothing to do but make provision for as comfortable a night as might be. We collected what spare blankets we could, and lay down near one of the fires. Though so weary I could not sleep, and the camp was never silent for a moment. The fires were kept high, and shots fired at intervals to guide the wandering camel-men.

The men lay about or sat about the watch-fires, and in the middle of the night two of them began to fight. In the lurid light the scene was sufficiently realistic to be unpleasant. They began with loud words, progressed to blows, and then advanced to spears. Thinking that rifles would probably be the next resource, I got up and called on the men to desist. They took no more notice of me, naturally, than if I had never spoken. And as the now thoroughly awakened camp appeared to be going to take sides in the business, I got my "express" and shrieked out loudly that I then and there meant to make an end of both the combatants. Although they were not supposed to understand English, they translated enough from my resolute manner and threatening gestures to know that I would put up with no nonsense. They ceased the combat as suddenly as they began it, but not before camel-man No. 1 had jabbed camel-man No. 2 in the fleshy part of his thigh.

I told Clarence to hold No. 1 in durance vile whilst No. 2 had to be attended to with as much care as if we really sympathised with him. All my desire was to be able to shoot both of them on sight. I was so tired I could hardly see, and too aching to do more than

drag myself around. We had to dress the man's wound for fear of consequences, and went on messing away with him until the first signs of dawn saw the return of the prodigals, travel-stained and weary. The camels promptly sank down and began chewing the cud composedly. Really the camel is the most philosophical of all living things!

Next morning I held a court-martial of sorts on the offenders, and threatened them both with the loss of the promised bonus to be given at the end of the trip provided all things pleased us. I also docked them of some pay. This had the desired effect, and battles, except wordy ones, were "off" henceforward.

The wound by rights ought to have been stitched, but we rather shied off doing it. The dressing was pantomime enough; I nearly lost my temper many times. An expedition like ours is a grand field on which to practise repression, and I was for ever trying conclusions with my capabilities in that direction.

Out early near here one morning we came on an astonishing sight—an oryx lying down in a thorn patch, and all around him, like familiars of a witch, crouched jackals, the length of one of their kind apart, watching with never flinching stare the centre of attraction. We cantered up, and the jackals reluctantly made off. One big fellow struck me as unlike his brethren, and a bit of a prize. So, reining in the pony, I jumped to the ground, losing a lot of time in the process, and fired with rather a shaky hand. The result was I hit the loping animal in the leg only,

laming it, causing it to howl terribly, and causing me much shame for my unskilled aim.

I pursued my quarry, because I could not leave it out wounded, and overtook it just as it fled into a lair of thick adad bushes. Dismounting, I let the pony stand, and going to the bushes I stooped down to peer in, laying my rifle on the sand. A flare of green eyes and snarling teeth, a flat yellow head shot out as a snake strikes. My coat sleeve was gripped in a gin of white fangs, but only the incisors cut into my flesh—caught by the left arm in a flash. Before worse could happen I pulled my shikár pistol from my belt, and in the tussle—for we neither of us took things lying down—the weapon went off anyhow. My enemy sank inert, still gripping my sleeve. He was hit mortally, and died in a moment or two. My arm began to smart a trifle, and I had some difficulty in dragging the wolf-creature from its deep-in lair. It was a wolf, not large—no bigger than a jackal, and much smaller than a hyæna. Its coat was marked with brown, and right down the middle of the back was a fine upstanding length of hair that formed a black-tipped mane or ridge. The tail was long and thick, very black on the lower part and very yellow at the upper. The fore feet were five-toed; I counted them carefully.

It was a bit of a struggle to lift the carcase across the pony, and I had to walk, holding it on, to the place where I left Cecily. She was watching over the departed oryx, and vultures sat around her wistfully regarding the feast that might have been. In the side of the dead antelope an arrow still stabbed, and marks

of a whole flight were in evidence all over the glossy coat. Some Midgans hunting without dogs had missed their quarry somehow. Cecily had put the big bull out of his pain, and there we were with an *embarras de richesse* miles from camp and alone. The oryx had very finely turned horns, and it seemed a sin to waste them. We set off to decapitate him with the only implement we had, a very small shikár knife. It took a long time in the doing, and we were so hot and tired and sick by the end of the performance, I thought we must be struck with the sun. The water in our bottles was quite hot.

The instant we left the carcase of the oryx the vultures came from all sides, hanging over it with legs poised to alight, screaming as they flapped along the ground and settled on the bushes around. We took it in turns to ride the spare pony; the other was a beast of burden for our spoils. A flock of quail ran ahead and disappeared beneath the khansa. The walking one walked, and the riding one rode, and at last we had to take our coats off. The heat grew insufferable, the sun blazed a-shimmer through the purple-blue coverlet of the sky. Even the sun loving sun-birds kept in the shade of the bushes. My rifle—best of playthings—took on a pound or two in weight.

Cecily wears perpetually a single-stone diamond ring, given her by a friend now in Purgatory, if everyone gets their deserts, as we are told is the invariable rule. The sun danced on the exquisite stone, and as she moved her hand a glinting light flickered from it on the sand here and there, like a will-o'-the wisp.

Our pony shied—actually pretending to possess nerves—at a porcupine, who suddenly rustled his quills like the upsetting of a box of pens. The oryx head fell off, and the mettlesome steed backed on to it, damaging the horn near the tip against a sharp stone. A small kink, but a pity. Cecily made the pony walk up to our friend of the quills, but as it seemed likely to result in the wolf being chucked off also, we abandoned horse-training notions for the present.

Getting back to camp, we found the men lining up for their devotions, so waited patiently until they were over. Everybody's creed, or form of it, should be respected, because each separate religion, multitudinous though they are, is but one religion, and a part of the vast whole. The seeming difference in all sects are merely the individual temperamental superstitions. It does not matter, therefore, if we worship Allah or Joss, Buddha or Mrs. Eddy. "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." To certain people certain names for religion are necessary—to others the "Religion Universal" serves. Now, our chef belonged to—I am sure—the Peculiar People, and didn't know it, and called himself a Mussulman of the Shafai sect. He must have been peculiar to think he deceived us into believing he was a cook, ever had been, or ever would be. Some people are born cooks, some achieve cooking, and some have cooking thrust upon them. Our satellite was of the latter kind.

We bought a couple of sheep that night from a passing caravan, but told the men they would be the

last we should provide if the animals could not be despatched in a quicker, more humane manner. The "hallal" slash across the throat seems only to be really efficacious if the animal to be killed is in full possession of its senses. They might easily be stunned first. When we killed antelope for meat the shikári always satisfied himself first that the animal was alive before he bothered to give the "hallal." This seems rather an Irishism, but you understand how I mean.

Somali sheep are never shorn, for their wool attains no length. This is another of dear Nature's wise arrangements. I do not like to imagine the condition of any poor sheep in the Somali sun with a coat on like unto the ones grown by our animals at home. The number of sheep in Somaliland is as the sands of the sea. Such vast flocks would be large even in an avowedly sheep-producing country where the rearing of them is reduced to a fine art. The Somali animals thrive and multiply with hardly any attention. They never grow horns, and have the most extraordinary tails, huge lumps of fat, which wax all very fine and large if the pasturage is good, and dwindle at once if the herbage is scanty. Carefully fostered, the sheep raising industry could support the country. The export at present is as nothing to what it might be engineered into.

CHAPTER VIII

A BATTLE ROYAL

Take that to end thy agony

Henry V

Our happiness is at the height

Richard III

THE Somalis, as I have explained before, are almost entirely a nation of nomads, and the only settled villages or townships are those run by Sheiks or Mullahs, or whatever name they elect to be known by. These men are Mahomedans with an eye to business, religious, influential, knowing the value of education, and are often quite learned. We marched into the vicinity of some hundreds of huts, and sent Clarence on ahead to present our compliments to the Mullah and express our desire to call on him. We also sent along a consignment of gifts likely to appeal to a learned man—a Koran, a *tusba*, and a couple of tobies, for even a Mullah has to have clothes, anyway, in Somaliland. I don't know whether our sending presents first was correct, or whether we should have waited for the Mullah to weigh in. We debated the point, and decided any one with an extra sensible mind would think a bird in the hand worth two in the bush any day of the week. This village, if our men's talk

was to be believed, was full of Mullahs, not one Mullah. We concluded that all the wise and religious-minded men must have banded together to live as monks do, save that celibacy was not the fashion.

The Mullah lost no time in sending us return offerings in the shape of three sheep, and *harns* and *harns* of milk. He also asked us to go and see him in his *karia*, as owing to some infirmity he could not wait on us. All this was very correct and nice. I should think this Mullah had been trained in the way he should go.

We put in an appearance that same afternoon, hardly able to push through the crowds that lined up in readiness for our advent. The Mullah received us at the door of his hut, a smiling, urbane personage. I saw no sign of infirmity, but of course I couldn't ask what it was. The Mullah would be about fifty years old, so far as I can judge, and he had the tiniest hands and feet. His face was full of intelligence, his eyes deep set and alert. In colour he was of the Arab shade, and some Somalis are almost black. He was exceedingly gracious, and received our credentials, or passport so to speak, with serene smiles. He barely read them. I suppose he could. All the Mullahs can read Arabic.

Myriads of children—our hosts we concluded—sat and squatted and lay about the earth-floor, two circles of them. Cecily says they went three times round, but no, *two* large circles.

The Mullah asked a great many questions about England—who we were when we were at home? how it was two women could come so far to shoot lion,

and why we wanted to ?—to all of which we replied as clearly and comprehensively as we could through Clarence. Then more personal questions were asked. Were we married ? “Say no, Clarence.” “No,” said the stolid shikári.

The Mullah reflected a little. Didn't we think we ought to be ? A dreadful flick on the raw this. If we married how many husbands are we allowed ? I instructed Clarence to say that is not so much how many you are allowed as how many you can get. Cecily broke in and said that it was enough to puzzle any Mullah, and that Clarence must explain that one husband at a time is what English women are permitted, but it is very difficult in the present overcrowded state of the marriage market to obtain even one's rightful allowance, hence our lonely forlorn condition. The Mullah looked really sorry for us. He said he would like to give us another sheep, and that he did not think he would care to live in England, but he approved of the English he had seen. “Best people I see.” We thanked him, salaamed, and left. We were then followed by a pattering crowd who dodged in front of us, peering into our faces, and when we smiled, smiled back crying “Mot ! Mot ! io Mot !” over and over. It was quite a triumphal progress.

At our own camp we found the place invaded by every invalid of the Mullah settlement waiting in serried rows for us to cure them. Why every English person, or European rather, is supposed to possess this marvellous in-born skill in medicine I cannot tell. Some of the complaints presented I had never heard

of, much less seen, and even our learned tome of a medical work failed to identify many. It was very pathetic, as we were so helpless. The poor things regarded the book as some saviour come to succour them.

There was enough occupation before us to keep a doctor busy for weeks, that much we could see. We only dared venture on the simplest plain-sailing cases, and even if we had used up our entire stock of medicine and remedies required for our own use it would have been a drop in the ocean of trouble here. We gave presents as a consoler to the worst of the invalids, and then, lest they should all return again on the morrow, we folded our tents like the Arabs and silently stole away.

One of our own men required our attention after this. He showed all the symptoms of ptomaine poisoning, and ferreting into the matter I found that—well fed as he was—he had gone after the contents of a tin of beef I had my doubts of, and which I threw away over the zareba fence, and had consumed the stuff. I was exceedingly vexed, because I had told all the men standing about at the time that the tin was bad and would poison any one. Is it not odd that people—especially men—always want and like that which is denied them? If we could only get at the truth of it, I expect we should find that in taking the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden Eve did it at the express wish of Adam who wanted it badly, and had not the moral courage to take it for himself. By the way, it may not be generally known that quite a lot of learned people claim that Eden existed in Somaliland.

To return to the subject in hand again. Just imagine a well-looking-after camel-man deliberately going and making a meal of doubtful meat just because it was forbidden him. Ah, well! is it not said that "the dearest pleasure of the delicately nurtured is a furtive meal of tripe and onions"? Perhaps our follower took the beef as a surreptitious dish of that kind. The analogy may seem a little "out," but it is there if you look for it.

One day, somewhere about this time, I was fortunate enough to witness a great and splendid sight, a battle to the death between two bull oryx. I had been lunching on sandwiches of their kind—alas! their poor brother!—and was resting awhile on the verge of a thick bit of country, a natural clearing with thick thorn cover around. I kept very silent—I was in fact very sleepy—when I heard the war challenge of some genus buck, imperious and ringing, and not far away. It was replied to instantly. Again it sounded louder and nearer. I raised myself and looked about. From out the dense brushwood, but a few hundred yards away, and from opposite sides, sprang a fine up-standing oryx. Crash! And the great bulls were at each other. Clawing with hoofs and teeth and rapier horns. Then backwards they would sidle, and each taking a flying start would come together with a sickening crash, and all the while each tried every possible tactic to drive the merciless horns home. I held my breath with excitement, as in theirs I was permitted to creep almost up to the panting, foam-flecked warriors. I could have shot both, but as I was strong so was I merciful. It

was a great and glorious struggle, and the laurels should be to the victor. For quite a long time it was impossible to tell which was the stronger, but at last the right-hand buck—for, oddly enough, though they circled round each other each always charged from the side from which he commenced to give battle—began to show signs of tremendous stress, and the telling blows of his opponent wore him down more and more. No longer was he able to parry the lunges of his infuriated foe, who, like lightning, took instant advantage of the on-coming weakness of the stricken buck, and rushing in on a flying charge like a whirlwind, inserted his rapier-like horns into his enemy's side and gored him unmercifully.

This is where I came in. I would not shoot the victor, for he had won his battle in fair fight. It was the survival of the fittest. As he shook his dripping horns and looked at me with blood-shot eyes and frothing muzzle, I saw he was a youngster in the height of his prime, and that the stricken buck was old. The victor and I looked at one another, and I threw my rifle up. A charge from a maddened oryx would be no simple thing. But I did not want to take his life unless compelled. A soft, low whinnying noise in the bush: he was off, and I was forgotten. *Cherchez la femme*, even in oryx land! I walked up to the dying buck, and Clarence, who had seen the whole thing also, hurried up and asked me if he might "hallal" quickly and save the meat. A Somali could not be expected to appreciate sentimental reasons, so I did not urge mercy towards the utterly vanquished, mostly



LEAVING CAMP

because the kindest course was to put the beast out of pain. His horns were the horns of a mighty fighter, and his shield bore the cuts and indents of many battles. But his day was over, and his harem passed to a new lord.

The ground was all ploughed up with the scuffle.

The head of the dead oryx was poor. It looked old, and was moreover the worse for strenuous living, being in parts hairless. As I now had better heads, I took his shield merely, as a souvenir of the great fight. It is now a little tea-tray from which I peacefully drink tea.

We struck camp next day, and trekked along the borders of the Ogaden country. That night we had a camel looted. A camel seems a bit of an undertaking to run off with, as more often than not he won't move when you want him to. I suspect there was some collusion on the part of the camel-man in charge, but I never could bring it home to one of them.

Our clothes were now in a shocking state of repair, or disrepair. What with wait-a-bit thorns, drenching rain, torrid sun, wriggling on the ground, kneeling and grovelling about, we were the most awful scarecrows you ever saw. But we were intensely happy. That is the wonder of the wild. One forgets clothes—and that is much for a woman to say—newspapers and letters. What was going on in the world we knew not, nor did we care. I cannot conceive the heart of man desiring more than was ours just then. The glories of the jungle were all for us; every dawn brought something new, and everywhere we could

trace the wonders of the world in which we lived: each morning come on romance in footprints, tragedy in massed spoor, "sermons in stones, and good in everything."

It is not to be thought that all things went smoothly. In a big caravan of the kind such an idyllic condition of things would be well-nigh impossible. There were the most awkward disagreeablenesses and unpleasantnesses of all sorts to bother us. I hate sporting books full of grumbling and tales of discomforts. Nobody asked the sportsman to undertake the job, and nobody cares if he "chucks" it. Therefore why write reams about miseries when there are so many things to make up for them? No life is all *couleur de rose*; but we can make light of the darkness, "walk in its gardens, and forget the rain."

Ostrich spoor was now all about, but they are the most difficult of all things to come on at close quarters. I stalked odd birds, birds in twos, birds in trios for hours, but never came within any sort of range.

All the natural history as told to me in childish days about the ostrich burying its head in the sand and imagining itself hidden I found very much of a nursery romance. The ostrich takes no chances, and, so far from burying its head, has to thank the length of its neck for much of its safety.

After days of wriggling about on the flanks of ostrich, in the front and in the rear, I confided my chagrin to Clarence. He said he had A PLAN. I told him I was delighted to know that, and would he unfold it at once? It seems very ridiculous, but just

because I could not bag an ostrich the bird seemed to me the be-all and end-all of the trip. I am a woman all over, it seems.

Well, Clarence's idea was this: Ostrich never eat at night; therefore, if you persistently chase the *same* ostrich for two or three days consecutively it follows, of course, that the bird must give in sooner or later—sooner, Clarence hoped—from want of food and exhaustion. Or, if a hen ostrich could only be procured—just as though I was not prepared to welcome her—it would not be long before I should have a near view of a cock bird, who would come along with a view to a possible introduction to Miss Ostrich. She was to be tied to a thorn bush behind which I should be ensconced. It did not seem at all a sporting thing to do. Love's young dream should not be made a potent factor in a deadly business of the kind. Love spells life, not death.

The other idea did not commend itself to me either with any gusto. I had no mind myself to go riding after ostrich as though it were a trophy beyond price. Neither did I want to detail any of the men for the job. It was just as well we did not trouble for—such are the chances of hunting, when the position of things may change from success to failure, from failure to success in the blinking of an eyelid—I suddenly came on two birds—two grey hens—one afternoon as I was returning from a fruitless expedition after a lion that must have left the neighbourhood a week before. One hen was picking the new grass that was everywhere springing up, the other was playing sentry. And very

well she did it too, marching up and down with head erect and alert eyes. They had not winded us. We were covered by fairly dense wait-a-bit. The birds, however, were entirely out of range. I was now on foot, and flung myself down, as had Clarence. We then raised ourselves sufficiently to cut as silently as we could a bunch of the awful prickly grass, all mixed with thorn spikes, and though it scratched me like fun, and I heard my poor garments ripping away, I took the screen from Clarence and holding it well in front of me wriggled to the edge of the open country in front of me. I did feel absurd, and how was I to get within range of those knowing birds, all encumbered as I was too, with my weapon and my wait-a-bit? It *was* wait-a-bit! I took half an hour to crawl a few yards. But the birds still went on picking the grass in the peculiar way they have, taking turns at sentry-go. They had great doubts about this small tuft that had grown up in a day, mushroom-like, and it was only when sentry turned and paced the other way I could progress at all. The bird who was doing the eating did not trouble itself so much. At last, wonderful to relate, I really got within range, and then it was a toss up which bird to choose. I really considered it an *embarras de richesse*, and told myself that both belonged to me! Sentry presented the best mark, and as she turned and came towards me I drew a bead on her breast and fired. She fell—plop! But her companion simply took a sort of flying run, very quaint to watch, and vanished in the instant on the horizon. This is, I know, a prodigious fuss about shooting an ostrich; but I found them

harder to come on and account for than the king of beasts himself. Some of my ostrich found its way to the stock-pot, and a portion was roasted. We were quite unable to get our teeth through it. Cecily said I had undoubtedly shot the oldest inhabitant. The stewed ostrich, after being done to rags, was eatable, but no great treat.

The next day I was taking a breathing space in between moments of stalking an aoul with peculiarly turned horns, a regular freak amongst aoul, when I suddenly heard that weirdest of sounds, the hunting call of a hyæna when the sun is high. I got up and gazed about, and at some distance there flashed into my vision a disabled buck, I could not then tell of what variety, haltingly cantering and lurching along. The hyæna was on his track, running low, but covering the distance between them magically quickly. In shorter time than I can write it the hyæna sprang on to the haunches of the spent buck, and down, down it sank, with head thrown back, into a pitiful heap, the fierce wolf-like creature worrying it at once. I threw up my rifle, in the excitement I had been allowed to approach very near, and the hyæna paid toll. He was a mangy brute of the spotted variety, but the strength of his teeth was amazing. He hung on to a piece of the aoul long after death. I kept his head, but the skin was useless. The buck was an old aoul, evidently in shocking condition and run down generally. He was dead, or I would have put him out of his misery. I took the head for the sake of the horns. These measured on the curves seventeen and a half inches.

Just here Clarence when out spooring, came on an ostrich nest just about to hatch out, and nothing would do but we must go then and there to see it. We penetrated some wait-a-bit and then came on the nest with seven eggs therein. Next we hid ourselves, waited awhile, and had the pleasure of seeing the father ostrich return to the domicile. I don't know where the mother could be. We never sighted her. Perhaps she was an ostrich suffragette and had to attend a meeting. We did not want to go too near the nest, or go too often, but we could not help being very much interested. Our consideration was quite unnecessary. The eggs hatched out, the broken eggs told the tale, but some prowling jackal or hungry hyæna had called when the parents were away and annexed the entire seven. Housekeeping in the jungle has its drawbacks. It must be really difficult to raise a family.

It was quite strange that Clarence, who was a born shikári, versed in the ways of the wild, and master of the jungle folk, was not at all what I call a safe shot. I never felt that I could depend on his rifle if we got into a tight hole. My uncle says times must have changed, for in their days together Clarence was very reliable with a rifle. But I don't see why a man, so often out in the jungle, should go off as a shot—rather, one would think, would he improve, like grouse, with keeping.

We did a most amusing stalk one day here. On a Sunday—I know it was a Sunday, because ever since we lost the only almanac we had with us we notched a stick, Crusoe fashion—Cecily and I decided to part

company and go our ways alone, and taking our ponies rode off in opposite directions. After some time I tethered my steed and left him for the syce to attend to, and then I mooned along slowly until I must have traversed a mile or so. I lay down awhile, and then a bunch of aoul crossed my front, a Speke's Gazelle with them but not of them, for he held himself well aloof, and seemed by his very bearing to say he was only with them by accident. The aoul moved on, but the Speke began to feed, and I realised then he carried a head worth having, and I must take it an' I could. I was out of range, and it meant a careful stalk. I hoped he would not notice me if I wriggled to the next clump of wait-a-bit, which showed the crassness of my ignorance! Of course, he knew something was afoot, and I had to lie still for ages ere I deceived him into passivity again. The ground was like a razor's edge; small stones and sharp-edged flints cut into my poor knees, but I crept nearer by twenty paces. The sunlight danced again on his shining coat, and all his thoughts were hemmed in now by a little patch of green grass he had come on. He consumed this while I squirmed from point to point, and then with a whisk of his tail he was off again. A brisk run brought him in view once more, and all this time my presence had never really irked him. Aha! I pretty well had him. A few paces more when, wonder of wonders, he saw some danger signal in quite another quarter and dashed away, this time with no halting. He was gone for ever. I rose and stretched myself, when a distant bush of wait-a-bit yielded up another figure, doing the

same thing. It was Cecily. And we had both been stalking the self-same buck for hours—spoiling the other's chances every time. We laughed and laughed, for who could help it?

On our walk back to camp we found the vacated hole of a wart-hog. They dig these entrenchments for themselves, and back into them so that they face any danger that may come—a most wise and sound policy. The hole only just admits piggy; there is not one inch to spare. Living as they do on roots, it can well be understood that the flesh is really much more appetising than that of the home-grown porker. Their only drawback as a welcome addition to our larder was this refusal of the Somalis to have anything to do with pig. I am quite sure they ran this phase of Mahomedanism for all it was worth, thereby saving themselves labour, for I never could see any very strong leanings towards any other teachings of their religion.

CHAPTER IX

DEATH OF "THE BARON"

My very friend has got his mortal hurt
In my behalf, my reputation stain'd

Romeo and Juliet

A piteous corse, a bloody piteous corse,
Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed in blood,
All in gore blood

Romeo and Juliet

VERY often we made detours from the main caravan, rejoining it at a given spot, and this spirit of "wanderlust" brought us into a nice quandary one fine day. Going by the map and guided by the compass, Clarence was to arrive with the whole outfit at a precise place by nightfall, and we two, tired of the two-and-a-half miles an hour pace, did an excursion on sport intent, taking our own way to meet the caravan. We, with three hunters on the ever-willing ponies, left camp early, and going easily soon put a good distance between ourselves and the slow-coach camels. Dik-dik popped up everywhere, but 'twas no use disturbing the jungle for such small game. Water-holes next loomed ahead, and into the mud the Somalis precipitated themselves to drink and dabble. It was really not fit to swallow, and sudden death would seem to be the probable result. Not at all! It gave a sudden

impetus to our men, who grew quite lively, game for anything, as they chanted invitations to imaginary animals to come and be shot. All the song was of the "Dilly, Dilly, come and get killed" pattern, and was for the most part addressed to a rhinoceros who lived in fancy. "Wiyil, Wiyil, Mem-sahib calls you," was the bed-rock of the anthem, and like our home-made variety one sentence had to go a long way.

We found a track made by tortoises innumerable who evidently marched in solid phalanx to the water-holes. We followed the trail for a long way, but it seemed to be taking us to a Never-never land, so we turned, giving up the idea of discovering the source of the path. But in a tiny lake, as big as a bath and as shallow, we came on three tortoises swimming. They drew in their ugly snake-like heads with a sideway motion beneath their armour-plate residence, and there was nothing left to see but a flat, dirty, yellow carapace. They were quite small, and we pulled one out with a deft noose thrown by the second hunter. Each man took off his turned-up sandals and rested one bare foot at a time on the shelly back, "to make strong the feet." They did this very solemnly, and, of course, in turns, mounting their ponies when the superstitious rite was well over.

We saw a very immature gerenük standing on his hind legs to feed on the young tops of a thorn bush. It went off at a crouching trot, stopping after a short run to turn and stare. It even returned a few paces, with unparalleled impudence, to gaze. It was a youngster of last season. The gerenük mother is not the



LESSER KOODOO

SPEKE'S GAZELLE
SWAYNE'S HARTEBEEST



GERENUK

AOUL GAZELLE

SOME GOOD HEADS

highest type of jungle matron, frequently abandoning a little one to fend for itself weeks before it has been taught the ways of the jungle. And so it is that gerenük fawns are a great mainstay in the lion dietary.

We let our youthful friend investigate us to his liking, after which he trotted off. Gerenük seldom or never gallop, and get up nothing like the speed of an oryx for instance.

We paused for lunch, and some surprised Midgans were located beneath a guda tree. Round about them were many fierce and vengeful-looking dogs. They had a fire over which they were roasting bits of flesh. A few dogs fought and wrangled over mangled remnants of bone, skin, and entrails. The horns and shield of an oryx hung on a khansa bush. The horns were not large, and were those of a cow oryx, killed to make a Midgan holiday, by the aid of the trained dogs, and with a *coup-de-grâce* of arrows. I have never seen the actual hunting, but I understand that these pariah dogs are bred by the Midgans to hunt the oryx, and going out in a pack make straight for the prey on being shown the antelope.

The music of the chase is noteless. The dogs hunt in silence, until they bring the antelope to his last stand, when they give tongue, guiding the tracking Midgans, who steal up, as concealed as may be, and let fly a flight of arrows which either settles the oryx there and then, or paves the way for an easy pull down later. Very often the antelope makes such a glorious stand that a couple of dogs are left on the field of battle for the hyænas. Though the dogs fasten on to their prey and

are fierce beyond relief an oryx at bay is something to be afraid of. His swift forward rush, head down, with horns just fixed at the right angle for impaling an enemy, and sideway strike render him a formidable foe at close quarters.

The Midgans were very friendly. They were very ragged, and the quivers full of poisoned arrows hung on quite bare shoulders. They kindly showed us a track to our betterment, for the going now was stony and difficult. In and out among rocky nullahs were week-old pugs of lion, and farther, where rain had fallen, well defined spoor of more lion, together with massed tracks of oryx and aoul. The spoor of the former is broad in the forefoot, somewhat resembling two pears set together, and the hind foot makes a much longer, narrower impress. We followed the rough track for a mile or more being led to an open "bun," not extensive, where some few bunches of aoul grazed and an odd bull oryx also. We got off our ponies, and making the hunters into syces *pro tem.*, did a stalk on all fours. Cover there was not, and the centre of the "bun" was the centre of attraction to all the buck, the best grass probably growing there. It was completely out of reasonable range. A crackle, a rustle, or possibly a vision gave the alarm, and away went the oryx, out of sight instantly. The aoul fled affrightedly for a hundred yards or so, then brought up in a thick bunch to stare. One, inquisitive beyond belief, trotted towards us, advancing in short bounds in his anxiety to solve the mystery of these new squirming creatures. Head on, the aoul presented the position for the most

reliable shot possible. A child would have brought it off. Cecily dropped the inquirer dead in his tracks.

We were very glad of the meat, and the horns were not amiss. The men would not be able to look forward to a resulting feast, as the "hallal" was left out. However, they had any amount of sun-dried meat to go on with. One pony had to carry the buck, which, after being cleaned, probably weighed less than the Somali who had occupied the saddle previously. Then we made tracks for the rendezvous. Looking behind us we saw a large jackal making off with the left-behind bits of aoul. Another and another came up, and then a set-to fight began as to who should eat the spoils. Whilst the battle raged with fang and claw a tiny jackal stealing up made off at best pace with most of the bone of contention.

At the arranged place of meeting we found no hospitably waiting tents, no cook trying to cook, no camels, no anything, but an arid waste of sand, sparsely dotted with adad bushes and a couple of very stunted guda trees. From the adad comes the gum arabic of Somali trading, a useless commodity to us. But we could see it for ourselves in amber lumps, in the crannies of the thorn.

Half an hour passed. The ponies nibbled the occasional brown spears that masqueraded as grass, and we sat down, and said things. One of the hunters got up a guda tree to help investigations, and we played: "Sister Ann, Sister Ann, do you see anybody coming?" until we were tired of it, and the man not being particularly agile missed his footing and fell with a plop

to the ground. After he realised he still lived we had to listen to his complaints, which embraced everything from petitions to Allah, allusions to Kismet, to ordinary swear words consigning the tree and the bruises to altogether impossible places. It grew bitterly cold. A breeze sprang up and dashed the sand in little sprays about us. Then it got colder still, and darker ; presently night would fall and find us unprepared. We guarded the ponies, and the men with nothing but a couple of shikár knives, cut thorn hurriedly, and we could not cry, "Hold, enough !" until a goodly pile had been collected. We started a fire then and sat about it holding the ponies by us. A comical group. The fire warmed us in front, but oh, the cold where the fire was not. I kept turning round and round like a meat-jack. We sat on like this in great discomfort until twelve o'clock. We had on drill jackets, so were very coldly clad. Then—a shot on the silence, cracking suddenly like ice splitting on a frozen lake. Crack again. We replied ; and after a waste of cartridges on either side a dark mass loomed on our limited horizon, and the camel-men called words of endearment to the lost hunters. We were huffy enough to have dismissed the whole caravan and left ourselves stranded, but feigned to be propitiated by stories of how they lost their way and the compass, for a Somali will lose, as he can break, anything. The sight of our tents being erected and the prospect of bed and warmth mollified us as nothing else could have done, and we turned in as soon as the cook produced some soup. The men had to collect wood in the dark—a thing they

hate. It was all a gross piece of bad management on the part of Clarence. Even Homer nods.

As a result of the exposure Cecily contracted rheumatism of some inflammatory description. We called it rheumatism for want of a better name, but her illness most coincided with something discussed in our medical work—our *vade mecum*—and most unfortunately the page was lost and the name of the complaint, as luck would have it, was on it.

We decided it must be rheumatism and treated it accordingly. The right arm was rendered quite useless, and it was agony for the poor girl to do more than crawl about. It was a most irritating affair for her and ever so disappointing. The best sport of the trip was now at hand. We were in the rhino country, and at breakfast next morning a Somali hunter rode in—it is marvellous the way in which these people track caravans and then seem to drop in from nowhere—and he brought news, great news for us. Clarence introduced the man, a fine upstanding Berserk, who gazed in bewilderment at the new type of sporting sahib. A rhinoceros was in the vicinity, that much we elicited, that much, and enough too. A flowing tobe was the reward for these tidings of great joy.

Leaving Clarence to glean all particulars, I rushed to Cecily's tent to see if she would require me to remain in camp with her. She said, nobly, "Of course not." Truth to tell, I don't think I could have done it had she asked me to.

I was so overjoyed and excited that I saw to the condition of my rifle ten times over.

The only animal a Somali really fears is the rhinoceros. His charge, though so blundering, is so terrific ; and though he has not the cunning of the elephant, in fact hardly any finesse at all, the native mind knows it is safer to take no chances. I learnt by after experience that a rhinoceros is, indeed, a very big thing to tackle ; that his immense bulk is no deterrent to nimbleness, that his lumbering, bull-like charge is not the most he can do, for if needs be he can turn and double with agility.

As soon as possible after hearing the great news we prepared to try our luck. The country here was of the densest description, and Clarence's idea was to make a detour south, by way of some water-holes, where we might come on tracks of more rhino. He said the one we had heard of would probably by now be far away, and, as we were right in the Ogaden, there was every possibility of our picking up fresh rhino spoor for ourselves almost immediately. We got ready quite a little expedition, and I detailed a camel to carry my requirements in case we thought it better to stay out all night, and with Clarence, the Baron, a syce, and two camel men my retinue was sufficiently imposing. Danger from the Ogaden Somalis never presented itself to me as a very real thing, in spite of certain lurid tales we had heard and read. Although we penetrated the country from end to end, the few tribes we met gave us no anxiety save that of the off-chance that we might catch some disease from them. They are very prone to small-pox, and go on walking about with it, giving it to all and sundry, when most people would be isolated.

But to return to that joint of mutton we sat down to. I took a whole armoury along with me, but had quite selected my 12-bore as the rifle for the job. I said good-bye to poor disappointed Cecily, thinking how lucky I was to be well and able to set off on this the greatest adventure of all my life. I little thought I was nearing one of its tragedies. As I rode along I felt light-hearted enough to sing. Even the woeful going and the consequent delays did not seriously vex me. The sandy plateaus presently changed to the most impossible thorn, and it became apparent we could get the encumbered camel no farther. The creature could not struggle on through such dense jungle, neither could the ponies. I would hear of no going back, and there was no going round, so I instructed the small caravan to await my reappearance under pain of all sorts of penalties whilst "the Baron," myself, and Clarence pushed and crawled our way in a direction where we confidently hoped to come on rhino.

I simply held my breath, took a header into the sea of bush before us, and with the ubiquitous Clarence ever and anon carving out a rough path for me with his hunting knife, held on the way.

The heat was appalling. I can truthfully say I never was so hot in all my life. After about an hour of this, we all suddenly came upon a distinct passage through the jungle, running at right angles, a passage that could hardly be called one, still the way was easier, and it was apparent that, though the brushwood had closed together again more or less, some mighty creatures had passed along. But which way? Spooring

was impossible, the broken thorns could not solve the puzzle. We must chance it. Clarence was for the left. I advocated the right. Something made me choose so ; but oh, how devoutly afterwards I wished I had taken the man's way and not mine own. It was not easy going now, but child's play to what we endured at first. On and on, very, very slowly ; and at last the heavy country broke up somewhat and we could see the sandy ground in patches once more. A space and then—rhino spoor ! New, never-to-be-forgotten, I stooped down and examined it carefully. It was very distinct considering the dry nature of the ground. I ascribed this to his immense weight. I measured the imprint, and found it came out at nine and three-quarters long by eight and three-quarter inches broad. A rhino causes no havoc to the thorn bushes as he travels bar the injury of his passage. Unlike the elephant, he does not stop and eat all along the way. He waits until settled in some cherished feeding ground.

By the time we had done another hour, the spoor still holding on, the country was comparatively clear. I was so fatigued and winded I lay down and hardly knew what to do with myself. I sent Clarence and the Baron on a bit to prospect, and had really nearly forgotten their existence in exhausted sleep when they appeared again all tingling with excitement and eagerness, and with many signs and mysterious facial contortions explained the rhino was not far off. A wave of the hand to a far away fastness of thicket showed me its lair, and as we crept closer a pensive

munching sound betrayed the occupation of our prey.

Aching all over, I silently crept on. In the stillness I could more plainly hear the crunching of the thorns as they made a meal for the great pachyderm. But I *saw* nothing, and how I was to penetrate the wait-a-bit with any degree of safety I could not see. Few people would care to meet a rhinoceros at such disadvantage, and I had to add to other drawbacks the fact that I had for safety's sake to let the hammers of my rifle down ere negotiating such dense undergrowth. It would be highly dangerous to proceed with the rifle cocked, but I wanted it very much cocked indeed on my first introduction to so vast and important an animal. The thing was to circumvent the wood—if I may call the place by so home-like a word—and on reaching one spot where the thorn grew sparser, I decided to penetrate here. I could not bear to leave it longer, and could not wait all day ; besides, I prefer to meet a rhino in some place where there is a pretence at cover anyway to trying conclusions with him in a patch of conspicuously open ground.

My men showed no sign of fear, and following me came on as carefully and steadily as ever. Both were armed, inadequately it is to be feared, but the onus of the business was to fall, presumably, on me. At last ! In one dazzling minute of surprise I saw the huge lumbering bulk we know as the rhinoceros. I have a bowing acquaintance with his relatives in many zoos, yet he seemed to me a stranger. Surely they never were so colossal, so mighty, so altogether awe-inspiring.

My hands trembled violently. I was for the moment unsteady. It all seemed so impossible I could kill the wondrous brute.

The cocking of the hammers seemed to echo through the jungle. To let him hear us now would present difficulties unthinkable. Beads of perspiration rolled down my forehead, and my heart beat so loudly that I wondered if Clarence heard it. This would never do, so rating myself to myself—a method that never fails to pull me together—I took long, steady, and careful aim at the pachyderm's shoulder. The frontal shot is never of the slightest use, and I could not get in a heart one. I know now I had no business to fire at all, but my keenness was great, my ignorance greater, and Clarence had not protested once.

I fired ! Instantly a noise like the letting off steam of a C.P.R. engine, twice as noisy as any other. The rhino sniffed the air with his huge muzzle, and I could clearly see his prehensile upper lip. In a moment he seemed on us—through us ; we scattered as he came. Then I saw what a truly awful business we were in for, and, recognising there must be no delay in getting the sights on him again, I dashed after the animal, who was now about to double on his tracks, and I crawled into the insignificant shelter of a thorn bush to await developments.

The rhino had not as yet realised what was the matter, or quite gathered who his foes were. I fired again, another shoulder shot. This bullet "told" heavily, and the maddened creature, smarting and furious, passed me like the wind and charged like a

Juggernaut right over the Baron, who, in meaning to evade the rush, fell into it through the unexpected agility of the brute. A most awful stifled shriek arose as my poor fellow went down. Frightened as I was, I felt I should be everlastingly branded to myself as a coward if I made no attempt to save the man, although I understood how altogether impossible salvation was just then. The pachyderm was giving the prostrate body a number of vicious rams with his horn. I advanced quite close, and the rhino, seeing me, blunderingly charged, passing so near I got the very breath from his nostrils. I luckily managed to get in a heart shot, and yet another. The animal lurched on, and then fell, as a loaded furniture van might, with a terrific crash. But it was not entirely accounted for even yet, and continued to emit little squeals and plough the ground up all about it. Still, I knew it would rise no more, and I gave my rifle to Clarence with a sign to him to do the happy despatch. I went to the fallen Baron, and even now cannot write of the dreadful nature of his wounds without a shudder at the manner of so hideous a death. I was overwhelmed, but Clarence was still imperturbable as he looked back from the great mass that now lay as inert as my poor follower.

There was no use trying anything ; the Baron was dead. I did my best to hide my stress of mind from the calm shikári, and endeavoured to think what it was best to do. I wanted to have the body taken back to camp and bury it decently, but, after all, it was a silly idea enough, and a mere relic of home associa-

tions. The man had to *be* buried, so why not do it where he fell? Then the rhinoceros, with all its value in hide and horn, lay there to be dealt with. The only way seemed to be to return to the spot where we left the camel, let Clarence lead two men to the scene of the *débâcle*, and then I would proceed to camp and order out further assistance.

We covered the poor Baron with cut thorns, which seemed a slight barrier of protection for his body; and the thought of the inroads of some beasts of prey made me hurry and almost run back through the awful way we had come so short a time ago. Our passage had cleared it a very little, and my mind was so much occupied with the catastrophe that it did not seem very long before we reached the philosophic camel and the help of which we stood in need.

One camel-man I instructed to return to camp with his charge; the other and my syce I detailed to go back with Clarence to attend to the Baron and the rhino. I got on my own pony, leading the others, and going as hard as I could under such harassing conditions, I returned an hour or so after with a few men, whom I led to the edge of the thick jungle into which I heartily wished I had never penetrated, and explained to the leader the exact location of the scene of the disaster. I arranged that a rifle should be fired three times to acquaint me of his meeting with Clarence at the awful spot. For myself, I was too utterly done to take on the journey down that path again. I sat and waited for the signal, and felt a little easier in my mind as I heard the welcome one, two, three.

I wearily returned to camp, and having fully explained to Cecily the extent of the disaster, lay on my bed, face down, for ages. The death of the poor hunter could not, strictly speaking, be ascribed to me. I might so easily have been the victim myself, but the horror of it all and the pity of it bothered me as I suppose it would not have done a real sportsman. For, in retailing it now to my uncle, he pooh-poohs my trouble and says it is the fortune of big game hunting. "You hunt big game, big game hunt you," as the case may be.

Cecily tried in her loving way to comfort me, and the cook made me a soporific in the shape of tea, and the kettle had really boiled. I was very glad to see Clarence back before the light gave out, and hear that the Baron had been buried deeply and far out of the reach of hungry jackals and hyænas.

I spent a fearful night of regrets and recriminations. When pain is acute it is as well to let it bite deep, because the reaction is greater in proportion to the pain. I'm not sure that the old adage about crying over spilt milk isn't a fraud. It does a woman good to cry, so I wept and wept.

Next morning I thoroughly overhauled my prize so dearly bought. The spoil must have taken some carrying. The head, which I kept entire—I mean without despoiling it of horns—was not so large as I somehow expected from an animal of his bulk. Still, it was big enough in all conscience. The skin appeared like some freshly-peeled fruit, and was of great thickness, though it afterwards shrank in the drying a little.

After the epidermis is removed, the hide, when polished, comes up like clouded amber, and makes the most exquisite top for a table, of which the four feet form the base. In my worry at the time I neglected to measure the rhinoceros as he lay, but in any case we were quite unable to move him. I afterwards took the dimensions of the horns, and the length of the anterior was sixteen inches, the posterior being at seven. I could not settle in that camp again, nor hunt with any happiness. As soon as Cecily was well enough to trek we struck camp, and held on in the direction of Galadi, wherever that might be.

CHAPTER X

WE MEET "THE OPPOSITION"

Therefore be merry, coz ; since sudden sorrow
Serves to say thus—some good thing comes to-morrow

King Henry VI

IT was impossible to feel down-hearted for long, and my spirits began to rise again. Even the heat did not affect us as much as one might have thought. Of course we were burnt as mahogany brown as it is possible for a white woman to be, and I think very little marked us out from our Somalis in point of colour. Our very fair hair looked quite odd in contrast.

Our hunters reported one morning that in spooring for leopard they had come on the tracks of a large caravan, and overtaking some part of it gathered that the outfit belonged to some English officer on sport bent. Every Englishman is an officer to the Somalis. It is really rather funny. It is quite like the way every American is—to the Englishman—a martial colonel. I was intensely sorry to know we were so near to other hunters. It was very selfish too, for the country was big enough, in all conscience, to hold us all. But I *was* sorry, and there's an end of it. Cecily said perhaps it was all a mistake, because how could anyone be hunting in the forbidden ground of the Ogaden

unless they were as signally favoured as ourselves? I suggested that they might be, because we did not surely suppose we were the only people with relatives able to pull the strings. We were both a bit "shirty" because we were vexed to know we had not got the Ogaden to ourselves. A nice sporting spirit, wasn't it?

We were at lunch, battling with an altogether impossible curry Cecily had perpetrated, for she always said you can curry anything, even old boots, at a push, and they would be rendered appetising. Oryx beat her efforts culinary, and she had to admit at last that curry powder and oryx meat should be strangers.

As she had had all the trouble of stirring the concoction over a grilling fire on a grilling day I struggled on as long as I possibly could in order that the amateur chef's feelings should not be hurt, but confessed myself beaten in the end and very hungry, so we fell to opening a tin of meat.

"I fear no beef that's canned by Armour," sang Cecily, coming events not having cast any shadows before.

"Salaam, ladies!" said an English voice close at hand.

It was the leader of the opposition shoot. The younger, my kinsman, was quarrelling with a syce about the proper way to hold a pony. I don't know if we were glad to see them or not. Anyway we had to pretend to be, besides making the usual ridiculous remarks about the smallness of the world, and how odd it was we should have come across each other again.



THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION SHOOT

It would have been inhospitable to offer any of the curry, so we begged them to sample the tinned beef. Our butler waited on us, and drenched the four of us in a successful attempt to open a champagne bottle. Oh yes, we gave them champagne, to make up for other deficiencies. I told them if they would wait for dinner they should have a Carlton-like meal. After lunch they would see our skins and heads, so we excavated the skulls, and displayed all we had for admiration. We tried not to feel superior, but it was rather difficult when we heard they had not as yet got a shot even at a rhino. I lay low about the price we paid for ours! We evidently went up a little in their estimation, because they invited us to take part in a big shoot next day, and seemed really anxious we should accept. We said we were about to trek in an opposite direction, but I was rather taken aback when the elder warrior asked me how I knew which direction the proposed shoot was to take? They invited us to go over and see their trophies, but we did not mean to give them one single chance to crow, and instantly on their departure struck camp and moved on towards a large Somali encampment which had recently suffered many grievous losses from the depredations of leopards.

We were anxious to see the spoor for ourselves. A great many of the leopards reported are nothing in the wide world but hyæna in spite of the fact that the leopard, being a cat, does not, in quiescence, show his claws in the pug marks, and the hyæna, being a dog, does; besides, the *shape* of the pad is entirely

different. The hyæna has a triangle-shaped back pad, with two large side toes and two smaller centre ones, whilst the pug of the leopard is similar to that of lion but proportionately smaller. In spite of these mistakes on the part of some unlettered Somali, almost every black man spoors in a way no white man ever can hope to do. The former can follow tracks of game over ground that tells us nothing. Stony ground, wet ground, loose ground, dry ground, all alike give up secrets to him whereof we cannot hear the faintest whispers. The whole jungle is an open book to the black shikári, and compared to him the cleverest chiel among us is but a tyro.

We camped some two miles from the *karia*, and barely arrived when the head-man arrived to say "Salaam." He brought with him all his sisters and his cousins and his aunts. A very plain lot they looked too, although Clarence whispered to me that in Somaliland one of the women was rated as a great beauty. I don't know how he knew, unless the local *M. A. P.* said so. After a closer inspection of the lady I came to the conclusion that, for a beauty, she really was not bad looking.

They were very prying though, and really dangerous to have round, as one could not be everywhere at once. They all had advanced kleptomania. My tent was overflowing with them, though I had given orders to keep the place clear, and somebody annexed my sponge, hair-brush, and even a tooth-brush vanished from Cecily's tent, though we never saw any one penetrate it. I don't know what use the tooth-brush would

be. The Somalis do not neglect their teeth, far from it, but they use for cleaning purposes a soft stick, rubbing and polishing away at all sorts of odd moments. The result is of dazzling whiteness.

It was unnecessary also for them to help themselves as we were more than generous, and in response to their unblushing demands for presents we gave them at least four tobes, a turban or two, and an umbrella without a handle, which the proud proprietor unfurled and at once subsided beneath.

When Cecily in the warmth of her heart began to bestow things we really had need of ourselves I begged her to curb her Santa Claus-like ideas, and let us try and get to the leopard subject. But they were not to be switched off so easily. The head-man yearned for a rifle, and seemed to think we were the very people to satisfy him, and I don't wonder, when we had been playing universal provider to them for half an hour. There is nothing on earth a black man longs for so earnestly as a rifle of his own. It does not matter if it is a mere piece of gas piping with sights set on it, so that he may call it rifle. A vast amount of rubbish is palmed off by rascally traders, who get the arms through in spite of regulations and precautions. The maker is nothing, the skill of the user nothing, the mere name rifle is everything ; and the fact that a native was not—it may still be so, I don't know—allowed to own such a treasure made the prospect more enchanting than ever. I refused the head-man's request, so trifling as it was too, as firmly and politely as possible, and offered him a pen-knife instead. He took one

somewhat superciliously, and went off with it with both blades open. We had not once got to the main point, the leopard, whose existence was supposed to be a daily menace to their *karia*. I bade Clarence go after our guest, and extract particulars.

After a little time a convoy appeared with return gifts, a couple of goats, and dirty *harns* without number full of camels' milk. I thought at one time the extreme uncleanliness of the *harns* accounted for the unpleasant taste of the milk, but I liked it no better when I sampled it from a can of my own providing.

The leopard, for this time rumour had not lied, had made serious depredations, and carried off nightly goats, sheep, and even a baby camel. It jumped the zareba wall with ease apparently. We decided to have

"machan," or rather a small enclosure, built, and sit up for the thief. I never see much fun in this sitting up business. It is so often all waiting and no coming. We set some of the men to construct the shelters, and arranged them some six hundred yards away from the Somali encampment on the side where the leopard had most often made an entry. We decided to have a small zareba each, two hundred yards apart, and took up our residence for the night about 6 P.M. Cecily had Clarence with her; I had mine to myself. I was most uncomfortably crowded as it was, but Cecily had a little more space in her prison.

We tied up a goat between us, and settled down to dreary hours of silent watching. Though we kept quiet, the Somalis never gave over singing and shouting for a moment. I wondered at a leopard going near

the place at all. But it may have used the din to its own advantage.

The night grew very dark, and for a wonder, as the midnight hours drew near, it got intensely cold. The mosquitoes did not bother me in the least, though they were present in hundreds. I was completely fastened in, and only had a peep hole for my rifle which covered the goat.

I heard a lion roar once, and after a little came a strange lowing sound, most weird and eldritch. I had never known it before, but I judged a leopard was hunting. My senses being completely awake, I peered through the darkness at the goat. It was most ridiculous. It was impossible even to *see* it. The whole place was in inky darkness. I waited, shivering, and next moment I distinctly heard the crunching of bones and the tearing of flesh. The leopard, or hyæna, had come without a sound. I could not fire when I could see absolutely nothing to fire at. Bang! came from Cecily's zareba, and was followed by a choking gurgle.

"I've got him, don't you think?" called out Cicely from her enclosure.

We dared not venture out, and remained there until in the early hours some of our men arrived to let us free. But as it grew light I could see the shadowy form of a great leopard lying prone on his victim. We investigated as soon as possible, and found that Cecily had got him through the head. This was, of course, a mere fluke, for she says she only fired after she and Clarence had sighted and just as the darkness seemed to lift in the very slightest. She did not see

the arrival of the beast either, though she says from her zareba his form was at times dimly apparent. For myself, I never saw our prize in life at all.

He was a glorious trophy, and with perfectly undamaged skin measured, before skinning, seven feet, and after, seven feet six inches. Then from out of the Somali *karia* strolled the head-man, not obliged at all, still clamouring for some further souvenir ! I bade Clarence endeavour to explain that the boot was on the other leg now, which the shikári literally and faithfully did, as I heard boots and legs, inextricably muddled with Somali cuss words, being heatedly discussed. Then back to camp and breakfast.

Sometimes at night, before turning in we would go and sit around the blazing fires and try to talk to the men. We really wanted to find out more about them, where they came from, what they had done, and what they would like to do, but on our approach the chanting and the chatter ceased almost invariably and all the naturalness would vanish. I do not think they had any sense of humour. They laughed and were happy enough, but situations that would have taxed the risible faculties of a white man left them solemn and unmoved.

Almost every one of our men, if you could extract his real name instead of his nick-name, had been christened Mahomed. What a lot of Mahomeds there must be ! I suppose it is like the glut of Jameses and Johns with us. They are tremendous aristocrats, these Somalis ; immensely proud of their descent and origin, and even the most unlettered, though he cannot read



DEAD ORYX

or write, can give you the names of his grandfathers, great-grandfathers, and all the other greats, until you know you must be going back to grope in the mists of centuries.

When we were tracking one morning about this time, on the spoor of a very small-footed lion, we came on a bit of ridge country, and for some hundred yards or so a small thorn fence had been erected, *chevaux-de-frise* like, the thorn having been cut and brought there. At intervals tiny gaps were left, and inset, right on the sand of the ridge, stood the most primitive gins to catch—Clarence said—dik-dik. The Midgans set them. It would need to be a very unsophisticated little antelope indeed to run its head into so palpable a noose. They were like the ones you set at home for rabbits, but made of string instead of wire held up in an apology for a circle by plainly-to-be-seen props of thorn twigs. On the sides of the thorn walls forming the passages, bits of uninviting scraps of dik-dik heads and tails were impaled—to attract and allure their kind our shikári said. I should have thought the evidence of what awaited them would have had a deterring effect on any roaming dik-kik, and serve merely to attract jackals and foxes. But Clarence said the small antelope are often caught in this way for the pot.

That night a vast bat visited our tent, flying round the candle lamp and dashing himself against it. We called to Clarence to come and evict it, not meaning him to kill it, but he flew at the creature forthwith, a *hangol* in his hand, smashing the winged thing in a

heap to the ground. The wings hung limply around the mouse body, and myriads of fleas scattered from it. It was larger than our English bats, and the top of the head was raised in a sort of crown-like lump.

As we sat breakfasting, the camel-man in charge of the grazing camels ran into the zareba and did a lot of excited jabbering. Then most of the men made off outside. I called to know what was the matter, and the butler said one of the camels had fallen into a pit and could not get out. Presently we went off to see how affairs stood, and were exceedingly put about to find Zeila, our big brown camel, had somehow or other fallen into a long disused elephant trap which are still to be found in parts of the Ogaden. They were quite deep, and the intention was that an elephant would tumble in at night and find itself unable to get out like our Zeila, whose hump was about level with the top of the hole.

Every order the camel-man gave he countermanded as soon as it was about to be put into execution, and all they had as a means of retrieving our camel was one leather lading rope. We sent back to camp for more, and sat on the edge of the trap and waited. The other camels grazed about us, and Zeila was very quiet indeed, only occasionally breaking into groans. The poor beast was ominously down in the fore-quarters, and we thought must be kneeling. When the ropes arrived the difficulty was how to pass them around the camel, and if we did get them round how to prevent the leather thongs from cutting into the flesh. A rather sporting hunter volunteered to join

Zeila in the trap, a tight fit already, and endeavour to place the ropes. First we wound grass around the rope up to a certain distance making a pad, and then the hunter climbed down. Had the camel done any lashing about or moving the man would have been awkwardly placed. The ropes were successfully passed around the body, made into nooses, the intrepid hunter, wreathed in smiles at our congratulations, emerged sandy but successful, and we all did a tug of war, heaving poor Zeila to the surface, a struggling mass. Once on *terra firma* at the top it sank groaning pitifully. The camel man examined it, "Bruk! bruk!" he said, ruefully regarding the right fore-leg.

He evidently was right. The poor creature had broken the leg in the fall. Here was a calamity! The head camel man said it could not be mended, and Zeila was no more use to us. I asked Clarence if he thought so fine a camel would be given a home at the *karia* of the leopard adventure if I offered to hand it over. He laughed and said a broken-legged camel is no use anywhere, and if I offered the animal the Somalis would accept it gladly and then eat it, and didn't I think it better our own men should get the benefit of the meat? I had never thought of our turning cannibal and eating each other this wise, but I believe all the men were looking forward to a Zeila chop. With great reluctance I said I supposed the poor camel must be killed, that it must be shot first through the head, and then that "hallal" business could follow immediately. Clarence swore by Allah he would do the killing humanely, a word the Somali

does not understand at all. The rest of the day the men spent in gorging.

When we went out late in the afternoon by the place of the catastrophe, where the vultures were feasting on dragged-away bits of camel bones, we caught some exquisite butterflies who sat on the now putrid carcase, gorged into quiescence. It seems an odd juxtaposition, butterflies and bad flesh, but there they were in unison. Cecily is an ardent entomologist, and collected. I let her do the securing the specimens because she understands how to kill them neatly, pressing the thorax without damaging the glory of the wings. I never could gain the knowledge. My fingers seemed all thumbs at it.

We purchased two new camels from the neighbouring *karia*, needing a full complement on account of the water-carrying nuisance. I gave the head-man an order on our banker at Berbera with which he was as pleased as though it were cash, but the next trading trip would take him to the coast-town. These jungle Somalis have some delightfully pre-historic traits. Belief is one of them. An Englishman's bond is as good as his word, and that is something; it isn't always in civilisation.

CHAPTER XI

AN OASIS IN THE DESERT

Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me

Comedy of Errors

Things without all remedy

Should be without regard, what's done is done

Macbeth

What's gone and what's past help

Should be past grief

Winter's Tale

WE were now having a great time trying to cure the skin of the rhino. I was so afraid something would go wrong with it that I was for ever messing away. Clarence would have it that the wrong thing had been done from the first. He was rather pessimistic these days, mainly, I think, because he had a gathered hand and it pained very considerably.

The skins generally were menaced by the deadly beetle grub, and we had to resort to all sorts of drastic measures. Saltpetre I found of great use here, and we used it freely. The heads of rhino are very difficult to dry, as can well be imagined, and our trophy looked a hopeless mess. It was difficult to believe it would ever rise in glory, Phoenix-like, from the ashes, to be a thing of joy to anyone. Such great heads swarm with maggots in no time unless carefully watched. The

monster we were tackling was no exception to the rule, and manufactured the enemy on the "whilst you wait" principle.

It now became a matter for our deep consideration as to how far our trip should extend.

We had known before we started that Somaliland is no longer the old time sportsman's paradise. The shikár obtainable is not what it was, and every year lessens the chances. The truth is the country is fairly shot out.

Fifteen years ago the most excellent shooting was to be had all over; now, unless one penetrates right into the interior where a certain amount of danger from warlike tribes must be looked for, there is not much hope of a truly great and representative bag. The reserving of the Hargeisa and Mirso as entirely protected regions has also necessarily restricted the game area. The day of the sportsman in all Africa was in that Golden Age when he, all untrammelled, might stalk the more important fauna, to say nothing of the lesser, as he listed. Now he pays heavy toll, varying with the scarcity of the quarry, and the licences are not the least part of the expenses. Of course the needful preservation of big game should, and inevitably must, lead to good results, since to husband the resources of anything is to accumulate in the long run. But the idea of artificial preservation and legislation seems to knock some of the elemental romance out of hunting. Anything cut and dried seems out of place in sport of big game variety, and brings it down to the nearer level of shooting pheasants that know you

by sight, and which have been on terms of friendship with their slaughterers. The Ogaden country, in parts, like the curate's egg, still possesses potentialities not to be sneered at, and if one is willing to penetrate the interior, getting clear away from the beaten track, the possibilities become certainties.

To go onwards through the Mijertain meant striking into, or crossing the "Mary Ann Desert," as Cecily persisted in styling the Marehan. This was a somewhat daunting enterprise, but to put against any drawbacks there was the attraction and magnet of unlimited sport at the other side. We consulted our maps, and understood them sufficiently to plan a route and leave the rest to Providence, which useful commodity or personage we confidently hoped would be good enough to see us through.

We told Clarence and the caravan generally in an off-hand manner, very confidently, that we proposed trekking eventually to Joh in the Haweea country, but I cannot say they received the news in the same spirit of easy confidence. Clarence was and looked taken aback. He murmured something about its being a great journey, days and days, that he had never penetrated so far before. Even our shikári uncle had stopped at the Bun Arnwein. This rather settled the matter. Oh, to go one better than our relative !

We mapped our homeward route so that it permitted of a day or more on the Bun Toyo with the new grass all a-blowing and a-growing to tempt out buck in dozens, even though it all meant going over much of our old shooting ground. We had not yet got a "sig,"

Swayne's hartebeest, among our trophies. We also intended to pass through a new—to us—part of the Golis, and try our luck there.

This Ogaden country is a God-forsaken spot, and the eye aches at last with the dull brown of everything. Even the haze of the early morning is khaki-tinted. As for ourselves, we matched the landscape. Our hands were sienna-coloured, and our complexions——, but maybe the very word is out of place in connection with our sun-dried faces.

Cecily was very bent on shooting a rhino on her own, saying she would not count the one that fell to my rifle as anything to do with her. I offered half share in it enthusiastically, for I had no desire to meet another. I had killed one, to say nothing of the Baron, and was more than sated. Cecily, however, would not be put off with any sophistry on my part, so we had the order on hand.

At last we came on the oasis called Galadi, a very remarkable place, set like a jewel in a rim of iron. We could hardly believe our eyes. It was such a faceted gem. No more dingy brown landscape, but a peaceful sylvan scene of great trees, real turf, and a wealth of green vegetation. This patch of emerald extended for a mile or more and seemed like a little Heaven. I was very interested in the wells we came on here and there. They were of immense antiquity, very deep, cut in the solid rock. We could not but be impressed with the industry of the long dead hewers. Naturally in some places, though the wells are deep, the work of excavation is rendered less difficult by the nature of the

ground cut through, which is in most parts of red earth. There are always steps cut all the way down, on which the Somalis balance themselves with the greatest *sang-froid*, doing the necessary conjuring trick with the buckets from hand to hand the while. They are made from the ubiquitous leather—in no country, I imagine, can leather be more pressed into service—and a number of Somalis often descend a deep well at one time, passing up the full buckets in continuous chain, receiving back the returning empty ones as the other leaves the hand. All the time the ever helpful songs are sung.

When a large number of camels have to be watered it means spending the best part of a day down the wells, which are often very foul, and full of noxious gases. Troughs for the cattle are made by the wells as a rule, again of the ever helpful leather, or hollowed by hand, and lined with some sort of clay. We used the ordinary English method, much simpler, of procuring water, and a bucket and rope seemed to be as effectual and as expeditious, with certainly less waste than the Somali system.

We had hoped to have a splendid bath at Galadi, and a real good drink, but on trying well after well we found the water absolutely poisonous, and highly dangerous. The liquid was putrid. The birds of the air in their thousands made the place their own, and the smell when we disturbed the surface of the wells was simply abominable. Our men drank freely, but Cecily and I worried along on the short commons of our last water barrel. All the animals were watered,

and it did not surprise me in the least when one of the camels shortly afterwards without a word of warning, sat down, and promptly died. Clarence said it died because its time to die had come, but I averred, and held to it, that even a camel cannot always swallow drainage with impunity, even if it can philosophically. Such big words baffled the shikári, and I left him pondering.

We were camped in a beautiful glade, the armo creeper, bright green, with large leaves, grew festooned on lofty guda trees, and the fairy web of the Hangeyu spider hung in golden threads from leaf to leaf. The camels were rejoicing in splendid grazing, and would be all the better for the change. It is always very rough on camels, I think, having to provide for themselves, after bringing them in so late at night, after a march, as one is so often compelled to do. If reasonable care is not taken of them they will cave in, and there's the end. Grazing through the hot hours, as is the inevitable custom, does not permit of enough food being taken in, especially when the grass is more often than not conspicuous merely by its absence. They fed now in charge of the camel-men, wandering whither-soever, in reason, they listed. On trek camels are tied together in good going. In bad I 'always ordered them to go separately, because I observed how cruelly jerked the tail often was.

Here we had an apiary of wild bees. They are expected to live on flowers in Somaliland as elsewhere, I presume, but the flowers were not. And the insects, naturally, were a bit peckish and invaded my tent after

a pot of marmalade. They ate away to their hearts content, for no human being thought of going in and interfering; but the brainy Clarence put some sugar in their official residence and the counter attraction caused them to return.

There was a strong moon now, so magical that it set all the jackals for miles around a-baying and a-barking, and nearly distracted us whose vocal chords were not so susceptible. What this mysterious influence on the canine genus is no man can tell, but it had the effect of making me rouse some of the men to eject rocks at the offenders. The worship of Astarte was all very well in olden days, but the manner of it in Somaliland was intolerable.

A quaint insect made a loud tapping noise in the roof of my tent—probably his love signal. I tried to see him, but he hid from the light. Altogether I had a wakeful time.

I watched some weavers building next morning as I strolled about, the while the parody of a cook struggled with the kettle which seemed unable to boil. It really was very wonderful and astonishing. They snip off the threads of grass with their beaks, and actually tie knots, half-hitches. It was rather late for building, but the cock birds of this species, sensible little things, sometimes make nests for roosting purposes.

Whydah birds were flying about in large numbers. They have crimson bodies, black wings and tails about two feet long, which hamper them so in flight they can only lollop along. I pursued one, and could have caught it had I wished. They are finches, and

so always to be found in damp green places. I saw a merry little sand-piper in grey, with no tail at all, but wagging as though he had one. He had rather a long beak and was very tame, eating the crumbs I threw him within a yard of my feet. Two birds that looked like sand-grouse crossed to the wells. The whole oasis was a paradise for birds.

Dik-dik was now our staple food, and very palatable we found it. We had it cooked up every imaginable way. The cook was a sombre individual, but in moments of roasting he could joke with ease. We had but little fat to cook with, as antelope have none on them to speak of. We put our meat on stones in the pot with a little water, and we grilled on a gridiron, or we boiled it. We made bread easily, but as a long course of baking powder is bad for one we made our yeast from hops, of which we had some packets with us. It was much nicer than dough bread, all sour.

The butler who had lived with the English family had an insinuating smile, and a vocabulary of English words, a moiety of which he had grasped the meaning of. He had no fairy footsteps nor airy nothingness, so valued in an attendant of his variety at home. On the contrary, he hit the ground with heavy beats in plantigrade fashion.

We felt quite regretful to leave this fairy place and turn back to the blistering hot red sand. But time was flying, and we were rather out of the way of big game here.

We struck camp and marched, seeing dibitag and oryx, which we vainly stalked, and as we progressed

we passed through extraordinary changes. Every two or three miles or so we came on similar oases to Galadi and then, in between, burnt up patches of familiar country. In one of these green gardens Cecily bagged a lesser koodoo, somewhat rare in these parts, and an exceedingly beautiful trophy.

Nearing another oasis, some two miles in extent, Clarence manifested the greatest desire for me to penetrate the place with him and see something that was bound to interest me. He was like a woman with a secret, longing to tell, telling a little, then feeling if he showed his hand entirely I might not trouble to go at all. Whatever could the mystery be? Animal, vegetable, or mineral? "Curiouser and curiouser." None of these things! So, following the shikári, his face all alight with eager interest and desire to surprise me, we pushed our way through the density of the foliage until we reached about the centre of the place. It was a Titania's bower, carpeted with green and shaded by lofty trees. I sat down and gazed upon the wonders of it, though it would have taken me hours to take in the many beauties in detail. They were so infinite in variety, the etchings, the colour and the rainbow effects as the sun glinted through the lustrous fresh verdure. I sat on and marvelled. To think that outside of this there existed only a waste of red sand, ugly and monotonous, and here—but it is ridiculous on my part to try and describe it. I should like some Shakespeare to see it and try his art.

This did not please Clarence at all, who has no love for the beauties of nature. We must push on. Then,

of a sudden, he turned and running to a tree, proudly patted its trunk. I looked and there I saw in indistinct letters—my uncle's initials. Clarence had evidently seen the deed of vandalism committed. I could not have believed my relative would do such a thing had I not seen the result with my own eyes. Not that I mean to say my uncle is anything but truly British to the backbone, but I thought he would have been the man to rise above the habits of his countrymen. I never looked on the stern old shikári as a man likely to give the lighter side of life the upper hand. *Ex pede Herculem !*

We turned to get back to the caravan, taking a different route and found it stiffish going. In a little shady dingle I came on the remains of a jungle king dead and turned to dust. The oasis had been his sepulchre these many years, and there was little of him left to tell us of long passed monarchy. His skull, which I looked at, was practically eaten away, and was not worth taking.

A venomous snake struck at me here, but was turned by the top of my shooting boot. It was a near shave, and I was off and out of the place in quick time after that.

I missed a fine lion in this thick forest that evening, and followed him in fear and trembling without getting him. On the way back to camp however, disconsolate, I bagged a small oryx for the pot, which turned a somersault like a hare does when shot in the head. I thought I had lost him when I saw him leap about seven feet into the air, and then again and again until I despatched him.

On another early morning here, having only a collector's gun with me, I put a charge into an old wart-hog, but failed to do more than prick him into a great annoyance and send him off into the wilderness without getting him. I was vexed with myself for hurting him.

Just here, too, we came on a kill which had been a jungle tragedy indeed : the spoor of two oryx all about the outskirts of a green oasis, where succulent bushes flourished, and confused pugs of a large lion. The pugs had no beginning, only an ending, and a return path. Therefore the devastator leaped from out his lair and struck down his prey all suddenly. We measured the spring from where it is certain the great cat must have taken off to the spot where lay the half-consumed oryx, lying as he fell, and it came out at nineteen feet.

Somalis are exceedingly fond of giving nicknames to one another, more or less personal, and the European does not escape his satire in this direction. All the men in our caravan answered to names of the most irritatingly personal variety, though they all took the for the most part rude attention to some unfortunate peculiarity quite good humouredly. I asked Clarence one day, as we were sitting under a shady guda tree waiting for what might chance to cross our line of fire, what the men had been pleased to christen me. He assented diffidently to the assumption that I had a nickname, but gave me to understand he would rather not mention it, if indeed he had not forgotten it, and a lapse of memory seemed imminent. This

piqued my curiosity naturally, and I gave him no peace until I extracted what I wanted to know more than anything else just then. Prepared for any mortal thing, for the Somali nicknames are nothing if not deadly descriptive, I learned I was called by the men "Daga-yera," small ears. This was not so bad, and at least not uncomplimentary. Clarence looked at me keenly to see if he noted any signs of offence but I was smiling broadly, so he smiled too. I told him that with us small ears are not considered a drawback, whatever they may be in Somaliland.

Almost on every march we came on graves, some together, here and there one alone, marking the spot where some traveller had fallen by the way. An important head-man, or chief, has a perfect stockade of thorn bushes and stones piled atop of him to keep off the jackals and hyænas. The women, however, less important in death as in life, have merely thorn piled casually on their tombs with some such relic as a bit of an old shield or worse for wear harn strung aloft to act as a deterrent to the scratchings of wild beasts. When we passed by graves the men would cross their hands and say a prayer, whether for themselves or for the dead I do not know. They would be solemn for a moment, brooding, and then set off a-chanting again. They are a strange romantic people, whose sun ever follows on the silver mist of rain.

A perfect avalanche of water fell after this for two whole days and kept us in our drenched tents. And again everything was wet through. Rain is a very real terror to the poor camper out. Fires are off and

many little comforts, that passed unnoticed before, go with them. We had our spirit lamp, and had economised with it all along, only using it on hopeless occasions like the present. Cecily again fled to her warm whisky and water cure, and I drank ammoniated quinine until my brain reeled. My tent, after a night of deluge which more resembles the bursting of a reservoir than anything else I can think of, collapsed altogether, and was a perfect wreck. Since mine own doors refused to entertain me I migrated to Cecily's, after digging out my belongings from the *débris*, and, packed like sardines, we had to go on until I got my flattened home set to rights, which I did after a lot of trouble.

Two black-backed jackals came close around the tents several times during the torrential rains. I think they winded the rhino, who was by now exceedingly "niffy." About six one evening, when the rain ceased for a short five minutes, I had a shot at one venture-some jackal and caught him in the shoulder. I had to rush after him and follow quite a long way before I got within range again, when I finished the job with a long shot. Clarence and one of the hunters brought his skin and head to camp. I admire the black-backed jackal, next to the koodoo, more than any other trophy to be found in Somaliland. It is quite unique in colouring. A veritable admixture of the *beaux arts* and the bizarre.

A fine day again, and with everything steaming like boiling water we trekked on. Two or three of the camels were suffering terribly from sore backs, and had to be

placed *hors de combat* and unloaded, thus disorganising everything. We can take the average load at 250 pounds, though it frequently exceeds this, because naturally loads vary with the nature of the things to be carried, bulky or compact, easy or difficult. On being required to walk, one sick animal refused to budge another inch. It is very hard to judge the extent of the illness of a camel. They do not act any differently, ill or well, as far as my small experience goes. Clarence and the head camel-man made certain that the creature was sick unto death, and finally it had to be shot. It would not walk, we could not tow it, and humanity forbade our leaving it to fend for itself. All the camels were bothered no end by a small fly, a species of gad-fly, I think, not very large, but most mischievous.

One or two of the animals were so overcome with the attentions of these pests of insects they took to rolling, which, all encumbered as the camels were, could not but be exceedingly detrimental to the load. These troubles continued for some days, and the camel we lost may have been too badly bitten to go on. This fly is a cause of great loss to the Somali herds. Another joined the attack, a fearsome creature too—much larger again—and he seemed to prefer people to camels. We, Cecily and myself, kept him off by bathing the exposed parts of our skin in solution of carbolic, and this seemed to him an anathema-maranatha and was to us a god-send. We only wished we had sufficient to tub all the camels. I think our precautions against these annoying flies helped to keep

off the fearful ticks also. Our ponies were much affected by them, and the camels, poor things, lived in a chronic state of providing nourishment for the hateful little insects, which grew and fattened by what they fed on. Some of the antelopes we shot had these ticks very badly too, and in one or two cases the skin was marred thereby, being pitted with small pin-head spots all over the even surface.

There was now such an abundance of water we decided to camp for a day and have a washing of ourselves and our clothes. It was not clear water as we use the word, but limpidly translucent compared to most of the water holes we had struck lately. Game was plentiful again, but very, very shy.

We went out at dawn and saw spoor of many varieties of game and rhino ; of the last a perfect maze of tracks. I had privately no intention, however I may have play-acted to Cecily with a view of keeping up appearances, of being in at another battue ; but Fate, that tricky dame, ordained otherwise. As we were spooring for leopard, and hard on him, we suddenly came on a vast rhino calmly lying down by a patch of guda thorn. The idea of another fracas with an infuriated animal of the genus was too much for me, and I shamelessly turned on my heel, taking the precaution, however, to grab my rifle from my hunter as I passed him.

I put myself behind a little adad tree, and turned to see what was going on. The great lumbering bulk stood up, winded us, saw us too, I should think, and sniffed the air. There was very poor cover imme-

diately around the pachyderm, but a thick belt of khansa and mimosa jungle lay to our left and the country behind us was fairly thick.

All this unexpected treat was joy untold to Cecily, I suppose ; it was absolute horror to me. If she could have had the affair all to herself it wouldn't have mattered, but how are you to know which hunter the rhino may select to chase ? His sight is so poor, his charge goes this way or that, and has, in my experience, next to nothing to do with the way of the wind ; and all this makes it quite impossible to reduce the possibilities of his onslaught to a mathematical calculation beforehand. Another moment and the huge animal was rushing straight at my poor bit of thorn bush, a mere broken reed of a shelter. What was I to do ? Anger the brute with a useless frontal shot, or fly on the wings of terror ? The wings of terror had it. I abandoned my untenable position, and gained another very little better. I let the rhino have the right barrel just as I installed myself, and looked for Cecily to finish the affair. She was doing a scientific stalk on the flank.

The rhino was now spinning about and knocking up the dust in clouds. I played Brer Rabbit and "lay low." I saw Cecily expose herself to the full view of the wounded animal, and her 12-bore spoke. We were spared another charge, thank goodness ; and as the dust subsided I saw the rhino ambling quickly towards the thick cover, blood pouring from its shoulder. We followed, discreetly, I assure you, as far as I'm concerned, on the blood trail until we reached the fringe

of jungle. The men volunteered to beat, but I was set against this ; so we wandered about on the edge of this natural zareba awaiting developments, my heart in my mouth the whole time. Intrepid Cecily was all for penetrating the thorn, and at last came on a place she could at least peer into. There was not a sound nor rustle, nor crackle of twig. Then Clarence, in evil minute, suggested firing the place, and under Cecily's directions at once set about the business with his fire stick. I had often tried to acquire the knack of summoning the spirit of flame thus, but had long since given it up as an accomplishment impossible for me to learn.

The thorn was damp and took some time to ignite, but in half an hour the blaze got a fair start and simply ate up all before it. We had to back farther and farther away each moment. Volumes of smoke rolled away to the northward, and the heat grew insufferable. It had been about as much as we could stand before we began operations. The flames roared away, licking up every trace of vegetation. I was so surprised no small affrighted animals broke cover, but this was explained to my wondering mind a moment later, when, to my amazement, a tawny lioness sprang from the burning bush and, terror-stricken, passed close to me—so close almost I could have touched her. I ran straight to my waiting pony held by my syce at some distance, mounted, and calling to a couple of men to follow, galloped on the track of the lioness. Occasionally I caught glimpses of her as she cantered between the low-lying bushes. Then she disappeared suddenly and

precipitately. There was a small nullah hereabouts, and I made certain the great cat had brought up there ; so I rode on and then settled down on the verge to wait for the shikáris to come up. When they arrived, they surrounded the place in most daring fashion, and began to prod with their spears into the thickest grass and thorn, keeping up a hideous yelling the while.

A choking, gurgling roar, and the lioness was out and off. I hastily brought up my rifle and fired. It was a shaky shot enough, and I only got her in the hind quarter. Things looked a bit nasty as she turned on us, ears laid back, mouth curled up in a furious snarl, and tail working up and down like a clockwork toy. She sprang, as a set off, several feet into the air. Such mighty bounds with a sideways twist about them, and I did not delay longer.

Seeing the great head over my sights, I pulled the trigger. Still she came on a few yards, worrying the ground with her mouth. Then the game and magnificent creature crashed forward and never moved again. She was a young lioness, in the heyday of beauty, and I sat down quivering all over at the sight of so wondrous a prize. After directing the three men who had followed to skin and decapitate my lioness, I worked back to the retreat of the rhino. On my way I sighted a dibatag and a couple of graceful oryx, but saw them disappear on the horizon without an attempt to annex one of them. It was not only late, but the men had all they could manage.

I imagined the rhino would be by now accounted for. It was—thoroughly ! Cicely met me as I neared



DRYING THE LIONESS' SKIN

the blackened waste, and explained they had waited and waited for the rhino to break cover, expecting the rush every second, and the flames and heat drove them almost out of range. Nothing happened, and it was not until the whole brake of thorn was a heap of ashes that they came on the pachyderm at last. His charred bulk lay in the smouldering embers, and until the place cooled it was impossible to retrieve his horns. What a pity and what a waste! We both cursed the fire stick and our haste. One bullet, Cecily's, I surmise, must have penetrated the rhino's heart, and after careering on for a short way the stricken animal settled down silently to die. We were intensely put out. Not even the beautiful lioness allayed our disappointment and chagrin.

After a rest and a meal in camp we returned to the scene of the still smoking barbecue. The vultures rose in a slothful lazy mass, and perched again around us. The hide of the rhino was too roasted to be of any use, and the men commenced sawing off the horns, a slow, weary job which we left them to finish. Bed was what I prayed for just then. I was wearied out. It had been our biggest, hottest day yet, and next morning, Sunday too, I deliberately and carefully detained Morpheus—what a loop-hole for a Somali scandal—until 9 A.M.

CHAPTER XII

OUR BUTLER LEVANTS

O, I am out of breath in this fond chase

Midsummer Night's Dream

Good morrow to you both ; what counterfeit did I give you ?

The slip, sir, the slip

Romeo and Juliet

WHENEVER practicable, usually when we remained a day or two in the one place, I made the men build me a little hut of bushes, so that if there was any breeze it blew through the branches. At such times I made my canvas residence a cache-tent, and gladly took up my abode in my jerry-built shelter, esteeming myself lucky in having it. I should never have done for a Bedouin or Baluchi. I hate and detest tents, even the most sumptuous. They are the hottest and coldest residences I know. Give me four walls and a roof of any sort ! Be they never so humble they are better than the best tent that ever was made. Really, if it hadn't been for the flies that unceasingly did worry, my *piéd-à-terre* was luxury, and I could sing with unmixed pleasure as I looked across at my, for the nonce, discarded tent, "I wouldn't leave my little wooden hut for you."

My furniture was of the "art" variety that you see so frequently advertised in that useful little journal

indispensable to housewives, *Home Suifs*. Two wooden boxes up-ended, with a box lid for top, formed the table. It was simple and effective, and only lacked the necessary Aspinall, hedge-sparrow blue for choice, to convert it into a joy for ever. The remainder of "the suite" matched. A *herio* made me a carpet, a biscuit-box a foot-stool. Cecily went in for Spartan simplicity, and her tent was quite like you read of famous generals who wilfully make themselves unnecessarily uncomfortable.

Late one evening we had a fracas with the butler. That henchman entered the precincts of our tent where we were hungrily awaiting supper, and instead of depositing my cup of soup on to another "art" table presented me with it in the form of an avalanche down my back. The soup was not only hot, burning hot, but exceedingly messy, being of the variety known to our cook as "thick"—*Anglice*, not sieved—and with more bits in it than usual. Our appearance was not so enticing that it could bear being played any pranks with, or putting to any additional strain. Moreover, the cook had no more soup prepared. I had it all, he said. I had indeed!

I gave our butler a sound talking to for his carelessness in this matter and in others, and incidentally cast doubts on the *savoir faire* of that English family who know what's what. This was the last straw, and I was answered in a furious jabber of talk. I could not make head nor tail of it, or even get a word in edgewise. Clarence came to the rescue as usual. He translated, and tried to stem the torrent of language.

Finally, the whole thing resolved itself into this. Our butler refused to "buttle" any more. He gave notice, and desired to leave our service. When I understood, I could not help laughing. I said of course I accepted the notice, but how he proposed it to take effect was beyond my understanding, as we were miles from Berbera, at the very back of beyond, and there could be no means of leaving the caravan with any degree of safety or sense. If the butler remained, as remain he obviously must, I insisted on his buttling as usual, but better. He withdrew at last, angry looking and discontented, and we went to bed.

I remember what a lively night it was. A lion roared for two hours or more at intervals of ten minutes, very close to camp—such fine majestic, rolling roars, ending each time in three rumbling "grumphs." I hoped the watch watched, and looking forward to meeting my serenader next day, I turned over and tried to sleep. What a glorious country to be in! I might anticipate presenting myself on the morrow to a king, and no mere ordinary mortal, without the "open sesame" of "let me introduce" being necessary. What a glorious country! Convention spelt with a little *c*, and originality—that most excellent of things—everywhere rife. No running of jungle affairs on the deadly tram-lines of tradition, and everything new looked on askance. Mrs. Grundy does not live in the wild; an' she did conventionality would be taught to the jungle people, and she would rob them of all their naturalness. Doesn't she regard originality very much in the light of a magazine of

combustibles, and take care to lose all the match-boxes? But I—superior I—in Somaliland might strike, and strike, and strike.

Having once returned to Nature, one has eaten of the tree of life and knowledge, and can never again be content with what we call “civilisation.” Fortunately Nature can be discovered everywhere quite close at hand if we hunt very carefully, but unless God is very particularly kind with His storms and clouds, imagination has often to do so much. Then, as if to remind me of my own smallness and impotence and limitations, came that earthquake roar again.

In the morning breakfast was served by one of the hunters who told us that Clarence—good man—was out betimes sporing for the lion of the night, and we hurried our meal that we might not lose any time in getting started out ourselves. The butler did not appear, and I did not ask for him, because I judged he was trying to recover his lost temper and sense of dignity. Breakfast over, Clarence rode into camp, and we heard raised voices and much discussion. We went on cleaning rifles. Presently a very perturbed Clarence hurried to us, and told us that the butler had taken notice, yet without it had annexed one of our best camels, its driver, a supply of food, and levanted! Heaven only knows where! How did he propose to reach safety, all unarmed as he was too. But—was he unarmed? As the thought struck us both instantaneously, we rushed—Cecily and I—pell-mell to our armoury, and delved into it. In an agony of fury we realised that our *ci-devant* butler

had taken with him our '35 Winchester. I doubt if he ever fired a rifle in his life, but I swore he shouldn't learn on ours. I would go after him, and catch up with him, if I had to pursue him all the way to Berbera itself. My chance of meeting that lion—which Clarence had practically located—were knocked out at 1000 to 1.

A few speedy directions and questions produced a couple of our best camels, lightly laden, and the knowledge that the fugitive had about an hour's start of us, having indeed, waited to go until he saw Clarence clear of the camp. I reproached the caravan that they had not prevented the running away, but no sense could be driven into their stupid heads. Every man feigned complete ignorance. The stolid "me no savey" of the Chinaman is not a whit more obtuse or provoking than the Somali equivalent. They can be as beautifully dense as the most wilfully non-understanding Chinese. Hammers won't drive a subject in if that subject is, in their opinion, better kept out. They are diplomatic, but maddening.

Our two camels for the pursuit were loaded up with a small amount of food in case we were out all night, and taking my '500 Express as the best all round rifle, I mounted, not without trepidation, an evil-looking beast, whose driver greeted me with a tolerant and broad smile. Clarence, as to the manner born, put himself on the other animal, and with a waved "Good-bye" to Cecily, who, lucky person, was going after King Leo, we set out. My irritation and annoyance at being so signally done kept me up for a short

time, but it was not really long before the unaccustomed method of travel began to tell. I had never before been for a long excursion on board a ship of the desert, certainly I had previously no idea of what it could do going "full steam ahead." It is difficult to explain the matter delicately. To put it as nicely as possible, I suffered horribly from "mal-de-camel."

We never stopped, we rushed on at top speed. The way the camel-men picked up the trail of the runaway was very clever, sorting it out from other trails, and must, I think, have been born of centuries of following. Sometimes the great splayed track lay ahead for all to see, but oftentimes it was lost—to me—in a maze of stones and scrub and thick country. We went on until, as far as I was concerned, the world was revolving around me, the sun a gimlet to bore my brain, the dust a dense curtain to my mind. I did not now look ahead. Vengeance and the desire for it had left me. Let the man go, and the rifle with him. Probably it would prove Nemesis enough without my taking on the function !

Suddenly Clarence shouted, and pointed enthusiastically to the horizon. Yes, there was a twirling column of dust. The fugitive of course. We had come up with him sooner than I thought. The driver urged along our camel until we fairly shot over the ground, and presently we could hear the pad, pad, pad of our stolen animal, and see plainly the recreant butler, apparently in two minds whether to alter his course or not. His party swerved suddenly, away to the left,

towards a tangle of thorn country. This was absolute nonsense, and I was provoked into firing anyhow, very wide, I need hardly say *how* wide, as a sort of warning to pull up. The runaways slackened speed at once, and the chase ended like a pricked bubble. We ranged alongside, and without speaking, bar a few curt directions, turned campwards, and slowly—oh, how slowly—retraced our way. We did not make home until 5.30, and during the whole of the hours since morning we had been going solid, and of course had no opportunity to get a meal. I personally did not require one, but the men must have been hungry.

Terribly jolted and worn out I made for my little hut, and lay down for an hour or so. Cecily was still out, and I resolved to wait for her assistance to tell off our shameless henchman. She arrived at last from a fruitless expedition. She came on the kill and followed the lion up, saw him, then lost all trace of him in thick khansa cover. So we hoped for better luck next day.

Clarence conducted the crest-fallen butler to the presence, and we intimated to him that we were astonished, not to say disgusted; that the promised bonus at the end of the trip was now non-existent as far as he was concerned; and further, on returning to Berbera, he would be indicted for the attempted stealing of the rifle and camel. These words had tremendous effect. He begged us to forgive him. With sophistry unequalled he explained that our ways were strange to him, that the Mem-sahib in whose household he was such an ornament was not like unto these Mem-sahibs.

She stayed at home, and we—"We scour the plain," put in Cecily.

It was all very absurd, and as we were for the time being perfectly impotent, however much we might bluster, we provisionally pardoned him on condition that he returned to butler's duty, and henceforth spelt it with a capital D.

"Oh, frabjous day ! Calloo ! Callay !"

Our men reported that the lion—presumably the same lion—had returned to his kill, and was now lying up in the bushes watching the meat. Our tempers had recovered their balance, and we happily set out, Clarence promising that we should "paint um day red." His vocabulary was varied enough to amuse us, and what little English he was absolute master of was interspersed with the quaintest idioms of Hindostanee and American, which he would bring out in whole representative sentences. His last big "shikár" was with an American magnate who wanted, said Clarence, to "shoot um libbah before um died." Whether it was to be before the lion died or the sportsman seemed a bit involved, though as it was obvious that the sportsman could not very well go shooting after crossing the "Great Divide," the demise of the lion must have been referred to. It certainly was more sporting to wish to shoot at the animal before it expired than after.

It was the oddest thing in the world to hear that Americanism of "Painting the town red" on the lips of the solemn Somali. Did he wonder at its origin as I did ? I remember hearing it for the first time in a

little Western mining camp, when its familiarity struck my ear. But it eluded me, until at last I placed it. You remember where Dante, guided by Virgil, comes on the suffering spirits of Paolo and Francesca :

“Noi che tingemmo il mondo di sanguino.”

There in a nutshell lies the origin of the “painting the town red” phrase. One cannot but admire the literary points of American slang, though we know there is so little originality in the mind of man, even of the American. There is no time to create. It is simpler to take the ready-made, so that all our speech and writing is unconsciously but a series of quotations from the great human poets, who expressed simple human thoughts in the most perfect and yet the simplest words. Every thought we have can be expressed in quotations from Horace, Dante, and Shakespeare.

The strength of our party on that memorable morning comprised six of us—Cecily, myself, Clarence and three hunters. The men led us first to the kill, from which two sleuth-like forms glided away—jackals, young ones, with youthful rough coats. Vultures poised motionless in the blue, or nearer flew sluggishly, with legs hanging loosely, screaming.

The dead aoul poisoned the air with odoriferous whiffs, and I found it difficult to believe that a lion had returned to a carcase in such an advanced stage of decomposition, but apparently it was so. Among the devious trails of hyæna and jackal were the indents of lion spoor. Massed often, and there in the sand was the plainly seen mark of the crouched beast as he

gnawed his food. We found, too, at a short distance a piece of dropped flesh, and either side of it the pugs holding on and quiescent.

Our men, as a rule, wore tremendously heavy sandals, which turned up at the front like the prow of a ship, but when stalking the hunters discarded these and were barefooted. For stalking some game the lightest of foot wear is essential, and though, as a rule, I wore nothing but boots, I found a pair of moccasins very handy on occasions ; they are too hot, though, for wear in such a country, and the knowing and learned shikári provides himself with cotton shoes. The thorns are too insistent to make any light foot-wear pleasurable to me, but I have gone the length of taking off my boots and running in stocking feet when a particularly alert koodoo needed an exceptionally careful stalk, but it was a painful business, even if necessary, and I don't advocate it.

Two exquisite lesser koodoo does crossed our front going like the wind, and we heard a distant bark. Otherwise the jungle slept in the heat of the sun. Our ponies drooped their heads as the fierce rays smote them between the eyes. Waves of heat seemed to come rising and rising as the hoofs churned up the sand.

We dismounted presently, and two of the hunters bestrode the ponies and fell behind. Fresh lion spoor was now crossing the old trail, and we decided to follow it up. We came on some very dense mimosa and khansa, and in this zareba the pugs vanished. We encircled the whole place. There were no other prints. Our quarry was run to earth. Cecily fired

into the mimosa once, twice, and instantly, like a toy, the machinery was set in motion, and great snarling growls breaking into stifled roars broke on the quiet air. This was a most business-like lion, and evidently was for putting up with none of our monkey tricks. The bushes parted, and quicker than I can set it down a lion charged out straight, like a whirlwind, past one of our men who stood next to me. The beast would have gone on had not the hunter made the greatest possible mistake. He bolted, thereby drawing attention to himself. The lion turned on the man, catching him, it seemed to me, by the leg, and they fell in an inextricable heap. We dared not fire because of the danger, but not a moment was lost.

All the four hunters rallied to the aid of their comrade. One threw a spear, which might have done some good had it been pitched accurately. It fell wide. One smart little fellow actually ran up and whacked the lion a resounding slap with a rifle—poor rifle! A most brave and familiar way of acting. It was effectual though. The lion turned from his purpose and made a bid for safety in the bushes again. I let fly my right barrel at him as he crashed in, but know I missed, for all I heard was metallic singing in my ears and no answering thud of a bullet striking flesh. I went towards the place where the cat vanished. The humane Cecily was attending to the injured man.

The lion betrayed his exact location by low growls, and I did all I knew to induce him to charge out again. I shouted, the men shouted, we whistled, we fired. Then the enraged animal took to roaring, real resound-



TYPICAL GAME COUNTRY

ing roars, in which his personal animus railed at us. I instructed the men to remain as they were, talking and endeavouring to weary the lion into breaking cover, whilst I did a stalk.

When investigated from the other side, the citadel chosen for the great stand was of less dense khansa, and the umbrella tops made great dark shelters for the tunnels between the stems. It was most exciting and dangerous, and I had so many things to plan and think out. I crawled in, and commenced to work my way towards the place occupied by my enemy, whose exact position could be located to a nicety by his growls and snarls, and the noise he kept up was of the greatest help to me. Even the lightest, deftest tracker could hardly go through bush like that in silence.

It was very dark at first in my covert, but at intervals it lightened up. I crawled for the best part of half an hour, and then, when my aching hands almost refused to drag me farther, I found myself in dense undergrowth, in the actual vicinity of the lion, who half-standing, half-crouching, was facing, in sparser cover the direction of my hunters and the scene of the catastrophe. There was nothing to fire at but swishing tail. The grass and aloes hid any vital part, and I dared not miss, whatever came about. A heart shot, or a head shot it must be, or the sportswoman! Oh, where was she! The thought struck through my brain of the imminence of my danger should Clarence or one of the others take to some flank movement whereby the present position of things might be altered by a hair's breadth. As it was, time was what I needed, and I

should get that. It was foolish of me to doubt my shikári's common sense. I had never known him fail, and he knew I was carefully stalking. I heard their voices at intervals in the distance, buzzing, and it all seemed some chimera of my brain. Myself in that hot jungle tangle, and but twenty yards away a lion of mettle and business-like habits! I was on my knees in half-raised position, and had he turned even in a half circle, he must, I verily believe, have seen me, and sorted me out as something untoward.

The air was stifling, and oh! how heavily I weighed on my knees! My fighting weight seemed enormous as I supported it. It was eight stone really and seemed like eighteen, but of course it was because, in my excitement, Antæus-like, I pressed down heavily to something solid until I drew my strength from earth, and thus took heart of grace. I carefully got up my rifle. It seemed a long business. Did I really make no noise? Strange crackling rustlings sounded in my ears, as at each growl I seized the opportunity, and in the semi-obscurity of the reverberations placed myself better. The lion came more into focus. I saw his side where it sank in, then—farther. A heart-shaking second. My bullet was too low. The vast body lashed round and round. I seemed to see what my fate would be in another instant. My breath was coming in great sobs, and I wondered whether the lion was choking or I. All this was in the fraction of a moment. Then came my opportunity. His chest presented itself fair and square like a target. I pressed my second trigger, and then threw myself backwards

and went anyhow as though the devil himself was after me, like a streak of greased lightning. "You kill um libbah?" asked Clarence, who remained pretty much as I had last seen him.

"I don't know," I gasped, stupidly enough.

And neither did I.

Loading up carefully again, I carefully retraced my steps, Clarence crawling after me. There was no sound. All was still as death. We crept on until we reached my coign of vantage, and there ahead, prone, motionless, lay a great yellow mass, some ten yards nearer than at my first shot. He was dead indeed, and a very fine specimen of his kind. Strangely enough, he had one eye missing, the hall-mark of some early battle, and to this fact I possibly owed much of the credit I had been taking to myself for my stalk. Then began the usual *modus operandi* for the animal's dismemberment, and I cleared out of the place to find that Cecily had taken the injured man back to camp, propping him up on her pony with the help of the second hunter. My pony was amusing itself at some distance, having dragged its moorings, and I caught him after a bit of a tussle.

The invalid was given my tent, which smelt like concentrated essence of High Churchism. Keating's incense smouldered in one corner and burning carbolic powder fought it for the mastery. Puzzled mosquitoes buzzed in and out, but more out than in, thanks be. The man's leg was torn in strips which hung in two or three inch lengths, fleshy and horrible. We arranged the torn shreds back, like patching an orna-

ment minus the seccotine. We covered the wounds with iodoform—very amateurishly of course—and then bandaged it. Altogether I think the invalid was rather pleased with himself, as he lay up in the cache-tent, feeling, doubtless, the importance of having been in the jaws of a lion and come out alive from such a gin.

As we could not move him for several days, we arranged to form quite a good zareba, strong and comfortable, round our follower, and make flying excursions of which it should be the base. The wounded hunter proved a very unwilling dawdler, being an active-souled creature, and did not take at all kindly to a life of enforced idleness. He acted like an irritated vegetable, and only slept and drowsed the hours away, and kept his leg up, because I solemnly told him he would die if he did not. I think the active spirits in nations not yet civilised are always the better. Laziness is demoralising anywhere, and with it one soon harks back to the animal. Energetic souls are never idle from choice. The power to idle successfully and with comfort must be inborn. During his days of illness our charge grew really attached to us, and looked for our coming with an expansive smile of welcome. We kept the fever down with quinine, and before many weeks were over his scars were healed into cicatrices, which, of course, he could never lose. They would, however, be a glorious asset and advertisement, showing such undoubted zeal, and should commend the proprietor to any one on the look-out for a truly sporting hunter.

While I was examining the skull and wet skin of

the lion as Clarence pegged it out, our cook volunteered the information that the butler had gone again on a still better camel, with the same driver, but minus a rifle. I had thought he would settle down to a dreary acceptance of the position. It really was uncomfortable to harbour two such unwilling people in our otherwise contented caravan, so we decided they were better gone even at the cost of a camel, and this time we wasted no energy on trying to retrieve them. Whether they ever made safety again we never could find out. Their movements from that hour were wrapped in mystery, and the butler, the driver, and the camel disappeared for ever from our ken. They must have wanted to go very badly. It was not complimentary, but we put as good a face on the crusher as we could.

CHAPTER XIII

WE CROSS THE MAREHAN

They are as sick that surfeit with too much,
As they that starve with nothing

Merchant of Venice

AND now for a few days we struck a period of bad luck. Our larder was empty save for tins of food kept for dire emergencies, and the men affected to be weak from scant rations. In any other caravan they would never, or hardly ever, have had them supplemented by flesh food; but we had thoroughly spoiled them. Game grew scarce, even the ubiquitous dik-dik was absent, and any shot we got on these flying excursions of ours away from the base camp we bungled. The more we failed the more disconcerted we became. How true it is nothing succeeds like success! At last matters got so bad we both of us always politely offered the other the chance of a miss. I would first decline to take it, and then Cecily. Meanwhile the buck made good its escape. We both got backward in coming forward, and, in American parlance, were thoroughly rattled.

At last I volunteered to go out early one morning with Clarence, and we put up a bunch of aoul some five hundred yards away. They winded us, and went off at their best pace. In desperation I spurred on

the pony, and called to Clarence to try and round up the flying creatures from behind a clump of mimosa and shoot one himself if he could. Of course they passed the place sailing ere ever he reached it. As we galloped along our rush disturbed another band of aoul at close quarters, and in sheer desperation I checked my pony so suddenly that he sat down. I flung myself into a semblance of a position, and fired at the vanishing quarters of a fine-looking buck. He staggered and kicked out, but caught up again with his fellows, and they all disappeared in a cloud of dust. Mounting again, we dashed after them, and after a hard gallop came on the wounded animal going slower and far separated from the others. I dared not try a shot from the saddle, as the going was so bad ; and if there is one thing I object to it is a cocked rifle at a gallop over ant-bear holes.

The aoul put on a spurt and my pony began to show signs of stress, and blundering terribly let me down suddenly over a large-sized hole. Much shaken, I gathered up my scattered wits and called to Clarence to ride the buck down. It was certainly wounded, and, I judged, badly so. To return to the famishing, reproachful camp without meat was unthinkable, as we had done it so often lately. I sat where I was tossed and meditated until I felt a burning sensation on my finger, sharp and stinging, and found it to be a scorpion of sorts. He paid toll for such a liberty, and the butt of my rifle finished him. I immediately sucked the stung finger perseveringly. What an odd thing it is—or seems odd to me, being unlearned—

that no mischief ever comes from the poison being sucked into the system *via* the mouth. Not even the virulent poison of the rattler harms this way. When I got into camp I soaked my finger in ammonia, and so got off excellently well.

I bestrode my weary steed again, asking no more of it than a slow walk, and followed on the traces of Clarence and the aoul. I shouted after a while, and he replied. I came on him shortly, sitting by the dead aoul, resting between moments of butchery. I hadn't heard a shot, but I must have been too dazed. We were a long way from camp, and the difficulty confronted us of packing so large a buck back. We could only do it conveniently, as I did not want to walk, minus the head and feet. The horns were good, but the head as a trophy was ruined by the way its neck was cut. The system of "hallal" doesn't seem to allow of ordinary throat-cutting, far down, where the gash does not show. The gash must run from ear to ear, consequently it ruins a trophy for setting up purposes. Laden, we hied us back to what Nathaniel Gubbins would call "the home-sweet," and were welcomed with glowing fires, on which the aoul, in parts, was immediately frizzling. The men gorged incontinently, as Cecily came in shortly after us with an oryx. These two beasts broke the run of bad luck, and afterwards, for a few days, we could not miss a shot. Our bullets seemed charmed. So did the men. They ate semi-raw meat in such large quantities I wondered they didn't get mange and lose their hair. There is no satisfying a Somali with meat. He cannot have suffi-

cient. If a man would give all the substance of a buck to him it would utterly be condemned.

After what seemed like a very long period of doing very little, we judged our follower was well enough to be moved, and very glad we were to strike camp, as the men were none the better for so much idleness. It takes about an hour to strike camp, load up, and set out. The camels kneel for the process of lading, with an anchor in the shape of the head rope tied behind the knees. Unloading is a much more expeditious business. Everything comes off in a quarter the time taken up in putting it on. Our rifles travelled in cases made to take two at full length. They were not very cumbersome, and we felt that the terrific amount of banging about they would receive during loading and unloading made it a necessity to give them entire protection.

This, I feel sure, is the very moment your hardened, seasoned shikári would seize to make a few pertinent remarks on the merits of various sporting rifles. Anything I could say on the subject, either of rifles, or the shooting on our expedition, I am diffident of setting down. The time is not yet when masculinity will accept from a mere woman hints or views on a question so essentially man's own. In the days of my youth I troubled myself to read all sorts of books on shooting: Hints to beginners on how to shoot, hints to beginners on how not to shoot; how to open your eyes; how to hold your rifle that you feel no recoil, how the rifle must be fitted to your shoulder or you cannot do any good at all with it; and (gem of all)

how to be a good sportsman—as though one could learn that from books!

All these tomes of wisdom were written for man by man. I tried to follow out their often entirely opposite advice, but after a while, being a woman and therefore contrary, I “chucked” all systems and manufactured rules for myself. I don’t close either eye when I shoot. I shoot with both open. In Cecily’s case her left is the most reliable, and she makes provision accordingly. Our present rifles were not fitted to our shoulders. So far as I know, they would have done nicely for any one’s shoulder. Either we were making the best of things, putting up with inconveniences unknown to us, or else there is a frightful lot of rubbish written around a sportsman’s battery. In spite of any “advice” and “remarks” to the contrary, I consider my 12-bore, with soft lead spherical bullets, driven by $5\frac{1}{2}$ drams of powder, ideal for lion and all more important, because dangerous, game. When one did get a bullet in it stayed in, and there was no wasting of its dreadness on the desert air. In reply to remarks as to the undoubted superiority of this, that, and the other rifle, &c., &c., &c., I merely answer oracularly: “May be.”

“This, General,” an American hostess once remarked to General Sheridan, who was busily manipulating an ordinary fork at the commencement of a banquet, “*this* is the oyster fork.”

“D——n it, madam,” answered the General, “I know it!”

In rifles, as in forks, and in many other things,
Chacun à son goût.

Not even marksmanship can make a good sportsman, if there is any temper or jealousy or smallness about one. A good sportsman is as happy on the chance as on the certainty, and is not to be numbered as of the elect because he has slaughtered so many head. It is not the quantity but the quality that counts. Any one, short of an absolute lunatic, can hit a large mark, say a buck, but not all men can hit it in a vital place. Wounded animals, left in the jungle, are one of the most awful evidences of unskilled shots, bad judgment, flurry, and an hundred other proofs of things not learned or discovered for oneself. Of course, often it is that the chances are entirely against one, and the quarry escapes; but the careful, thoughtful, business-like shikári does not take on foolish impossibilities. He knows that word without the "im," and the result is unerring success. Cecily and I never went in for anything but legitimate rivalry, and unlike the majority of women who go in for games of chance together never had the slightest desire to pull each other's hair out, or indulge in sarcastic badinage disguised as humour.

Wandering about the Mijertain we came on one or two wealthy tribes. Their wealth consists of camels, and so many in a batch I had never before seen. When grazing in their hundreds like this each mob of camels is led by one of the most domineering character, who wears a bell, just as the leader of cattle does

in Canada. The camel-bell is made of wood, carved by the natives, and, ringing in dull, toneless fashion, localises the band.

We now began to be afraid of our reception. We were out of the beaten track, and Clarence was getting a bit out of his depth. Nothing untoward happened. We did not allow any stranger into our zareba, and met every caller outside. We felt that if we played the Englishman's home is his castle idea for all it was worth we should be on the safe side. The Somali children seem to begin to work and carry heavy weights when ours at home are just about beginning to think it is time to sit up, and I never saw such out-sized heads ! They were all head and " Little Mary." With age equipoise asserts itself and the whole structure seems to revert to humdrumity. For three years at least every Somali could qualify for Barnum's as a freak. After that he begins to look like every other of his countrymen. But not all are alike. For instance, the head-man of this particular tribe was the most atrabilarious creature possible to meet. I don't think he could smile. We thought he must be crossed in love, but Clarence said the Lothario had already worked through a little matter of four wives, so I suppose his excursions into the realms of Cupid had been fortunate rather than the reverse.

A Somali is entitled to four wives at once, and the number of his children, as a rule, would rejoice the heart of President Roosevelt. The more children the better for him, because they make for the strength of the tribe. Even girls are not altogether despised assets,

because in their youth they are valuable to tend the camels and goats, and some day can be bartered for sheep or ponies. Some Somali women go to their lords with dowries, and, as with us at home, are the more important for their wealth. Consideration is shown them that is lacking towards their poorer sisters who toil and moil at heavy work the whole day long, and when on trek load all the camels, and do all the heavy camp work.

We tried our best to propitiate this Mijertain savage—he really was an ordinary savage—but he only glowered and received all overtures in the worst possible taste and rudeness. One could have told he was rich even if we hadn't seen his banking account feeding in their thousands.

This tribe looked on the sporting spirit with distrust, evidently suspecting ulterior motives. It would be hard to convey to an utterly savage mind that we took on all this *sturm und drang* of a big expedition merely because we loved it. Trophies here descended to being meat, and meat of all else topped the scale. Still, one could only eat a certain amount before being very ill, so why such energy to procure an unlimited quantity? I don't think our sex was ever discovered here at all. Englishwomen were not exactly thick on the ground, and I think it possible the melancholy Mijertain had never previously seen one. Probably his intelligence, of a very low order indeed, did not take him farther than thinking what particularly undersized, emasculated English sahibs these two were.

After a consultation we decided it would be really

nice to do a long forced march and put some miles between our two encampments. Somehow, we couldn't fraternise. And that beautiful sentence, without which no suburban friendship is ever cemented—"Now you've found your way here, you must be sure to come again"—was quite useless to be spoken. In Suburbia that formula is a solemn rite, never disregarded in the formation of a friendship. You might as well forget to ask "Is your tea agreeable?" at an "At-Home" day. But in Somaliland you had friendship offered so differently, if indeed it was offered at all. It came in the guise of a dirty *harn* of camel's milk, microbial and miasmatic, or in the person of a warlike goat, who with no *mauvaise-honte* is willing to take the whole caravan to his horns, or in cases of overwhelming friendliness a sheep may be presented, with no thought of return. We were rarely privileged to reach this giddy height—too stand-offish, I conclude.

We did a stalk about this time that amused us very much. We went out alone on our ponies, and came on a couple of oryx in a plot of country interspersed with light cover of mimosa and thorn bushes, who winded us and were off immediately. They did not run very far, but inquisitively turned to stare back, standing close together. They were considerably out of range. We separated, and Cecily rode off, so that finally we two and the oryx formed the points of a triangle. A nomadic Somali came riding up, the wind blowing away from him screened his approach, but presently the oryx caught sight of this new apparition and back my way they raced. As they came level



RHINOCEROS' SKIN DRYING

with my pony I blazed at the nearest buck, but as I am no good at all at shooting from the saddle I missed gloriously, and the confused and startled animal fled helter skelter, and dashed headlong into Cecily, who, not ready for the unexpected joust, went flying with the impact. Fortunately oryx carry their heads high when at the gallop, so she wasn't really hurt, only winded. It does take one's breath a bit to be cannonaded into by a flying buck of the size of an oryx. I think this one was the last we saw for some time, as this variety is very scarce in the Mijertain and Haweea country.

The Somali looked very much astonished, and after remarking a few not understood sentences, took to a course of signalling of which we hadn't the code. We agreed between ourselves that the man meant his *karia* was "over there," so we windmilled back with our arms to demonstrate we lived "over here," which thoroughly mystified and fogged him. He made things a trifle clearer by pointing to his mouth, and pretending to eat, which could not mean anything but "an invitation to lunch would be acceptable." We nodded benignly and signed to him to follow us, and rode back to camp. He gorged on oryx, like all the rest, and seemed to be about to put himself on the strength of the caravan, dawdling round until later on in the evening. We seemed to act on these wandering spirits like a fly-paper does on flies, but not wanting any more stickers I bade Clarence ask our friend if they wouldn't be missing him at home. And the last I saw of our visitor was his outlined figure, in tattered tobe, riding

away, gnawing a lump of meat, a "speed the parting guest" present.

This particular part of the world was overdone with snakes, of a deadly variety, black and horrible looking. I went warily now, I can tell you, and there was no more tracking for a few days in anything but my stout boots.

We next filled up every available thing that held water, and launched ourselves fairly on to the Marehan Desert. Never was the word more apt. The place was deserted by man and beast. There was no life nor thing stirring. We marched the first day from dawn to about 10 A.M., when the fierce sun forced us to take shelter in hastily erected tents. Even the men, accustomed to the glare, made shift to primitive shelters from the *herios*. The ponies stood up well, and the camels were calm as ever. Oh, the heat of that frightful noon-day! We did not wish to eat, and put off meals until the evening. The men were now on dates and rice, as we had no dried meat, and fresh meat, even if we had been able to get it, would not have kept an hour.

In the evening we doled out the water, and the ponies got their insufficient share. Afterwards we marched on, travelling until very late, or rather early. It was nearly full moon again, and the hideous parched-up desert looked quite pretty, and was busy trying to pass itself off as a delectable country. After too little of bed we rose and toiled on until 9.30, when we caved in, this time very thoroughly, as Cecily had a bad touch of the sun and was in rather a bad way. But

progress we must, as time was of the utmost consequence. I had a sort of hammock rigged up, made from a camel mat, with a shelter over it ; and she was carried along in it that evening for some miles. During the night hours the bigness of the job we had taken on began to appal me. I wished myself back in the woodlands of Galadi. But it is not of much use in purgatory to sigh for heaven !

Next dawn we could do no marching at all, and I was forced to use an unlimited amount of the precious water to keep wet the handkerchief on Cecily's burning head, occasionally pouring some over her lavishly and in regardless-of-consequence fashion. The heat in the tent, as out, was unspeakable ; and I spent most of the hours of that dreadful day fanning my cousin, who was really in parlous state. Clarence told me late on in the afternoon we must push on, whatever happened, as the water was very low indeed. I gave the word, and we marched, Cecily carried as before. We heard a lion roaring, but did not see anything, and it was not very likely we should. Night was the only bearable time, and I would it had perpetually remained night.

Not until the next night did we come on some water-holes, and they were dry ! I could not persuade the men to camp ; they said the place was not good, and mysterious things of that kind. I found out that the place was supposed to be haunted by spirits of some sort, and it was no use ordering or commanding, for the men would not stay to spend a night in the vicinity. We had to go on. Matters were now really serious.

Cecily was much better, though still travelling luxuriously, but there was not much more than a gallon of water left. We opened a bottle of lukewarm champagne and drank a little at intervals, but this silly idea made us nearly frantic with thirst, and we wished we hadn't thought of it. The ponies, poor creatures, had been without water for hours, and their lolling tongues and straining eyes went to our hearts. Cecily was the more concerned, because she said but for her the water would have lasted. I assured her it was my prodigality, but in any case it was water well wasted, as she was almost herself again.

I consulted with Clarence, and we found that by going on, never stopping, for another twenty miles we should make wells. Twenty miles was a big thing to us then with horses and men in the state ours were. I asked them, through Clarence, to "make an effort," and promised them water by the morning. We struck camp on a grilling afternoon at 4.30. Cecily in her hammock, I alternately walking to ease my pony, and then mounting for a little to ease myself. I will not describe the tramp through the night, or how very childish the men got. I prefer the English way of bearing small troubles—in silence. I think it is embarrassing to be let in on the ground floor of anyone's emotion.

Let it pass!

A few camel men raced on ahead, and got to the wells before the main caravan, who were able to quicken the pace pathetically little, and we made safety, which this time spelt water, about an hour after

dawn. I saw the ponies watered myself before turning in, and I slept eight hours straight on end.

Going out late in the evening with the object of securing something for the pot, I came on a regular aviary of birds. Sand grouse and pigeons, guinea-fowl and wild geese, and small birds too in thousands. I lay down for a little and watched the small ones preparing for the night. I love the tiny birds of Somaliland, and never wearied of studying their pretty ways. It seems to me that they are most beautiful in proportion to their size of any bird life. The protections, the pleadings, the dances, the love-making, the little furies, the make-believes, cannot be excelled in charm.

I was too wearied out to bother much, even though food in plenty was there to my hand, and I don't like killing anything so tame, even when I ought to. When I got back to camp I sent Clarence out with instructions to shoot some guinea-fowl and geese.

A vast caravan of some hundreds arrived at the wells in the middle of that night, and things hummed for an hour or so. I was not disturbed, except by the wrangling that went on all the hours until dawn. It was very cold, and my "carpet" ended on the top of me!

CHAPTER XIV

WE REACH A REAL LAKE

So fair a troop

.

Call it a travel that thou tak'st for pleasure

King Richard II

IN the morning we found ourselves the centre of an admiring throng. Every mouthful of my breakfast was criticised and commented on, every square yard of camp was congested with Somalis, and when one, more daring than the rest, embraced a rifle box, tight round its waist, as though to feel the weight, and then let it drop, bump, my amazement and horror knew no bounds. Even had he known the contents I don't suppose the treatment meted out would have been any kinder. The most experienced native hunter has an idea that rifles are non-breakable, and a small kink or bulge here and there can make no possible difference! But this—*this* was too much. I could not order the zareba to be cleared, for the good reason we had no zareba, having been too tired the previous day to form one. I could, and did, however, order the tents to be struck, and meanwhile Cecily watched like a detective at a fashionable wedding over the treasures. It would have been fairly easy to have lost bits of our kit in such crowds.

Marching until about eleven, we settled down once more, only to be immediately disturbed by a messenger from the head-man of the tribe just so gladly parted from, who was followed hard on his tracks by a number of horsemen, streaming across the plain, threading in and out between the clumps of durr grass, the sun glinting on their shining spears.

They very kindly wished to entertain us with a species of circus performance, known as the *dibáltig*, a great equestrian feat, carried out in this case by some fifty Somalis on typical native ponies got up for the occasion—a veritable attempt to make silk purses out of sow's ears—in trappings of red, and many tassels. Their riders were dressed in brilliantly dyed tobes of green and scarlet and blue, and each man carried a complete warrior's kit of shield, spear, and short sword. It was nice that the performance did not wait for us to go to it, but placed itself right in our way like this—a great improvement on the system of amusements at home. Our men gave up all idea of doing any camp work for the time, and stood in an admiring throng in a half-circle behind Cecily and myself, who were allowed a box each to sit on.

On a prairie-like waste of sand the Somalis formed in an even line, and with the usual "*Salaam aleikum*," the show began. One of the horsemen advanced slightly, and still sitting in his peaked saddle, began to sing a long chant. I do not know if he was chosen as chorister because of some hereditary right in his family, or by favour, or because of the fancied excellence of his voice. With every singer not all are

pleased. So I will just state that this one sang. I need not say *how*. It is rude to look a gift horse in the mouth, and this was a free entertainment. The warbler continued his romance and pæan in various tones for a long time when, suddenly, at a more screeching note than usual, every man left the line and galloped frantically about the sand, never knocking into each other, throwing spears with all their force here, there, and everywhere, to catch them up again as the ponies dashed past. The pace grew hotter, and presently each rider was enveloped in a cloud of dust, and we could only see the energetic frantic forms through a maze of sand. It reached us and set us coughing. The riders seemed almost to lift the ponies by the grip of the knees and the balance seemed perfect, and the greatest surprise was that something other than the ground was not jabbed by the flying spears. Some good throwers could attain a distance of about seventy to eighty yards.

They all careered about like possessed creatures in a turmoil of tossed up sand and wild excitement, when, at a signal may be, but I saw none, back the whole lot raced, straight like an arrow from a bow, so swiftly, I thought we should be ridden over. But of course we had to sit tight, and pretend we were not in fear and trembling about the issue of so furious a charge. The poor ponies were reined in at our very feet so jerkily and cruelly that the blood started from the overstrained corners of their mouths. Then crowding around us, jostling and pushing each other, the animals gasped and panted their hearts out. I

longed to take the whole lot to the wells to drink, but of course we had to go through the ceremonial properly. The *dibáltig* is a Somali way of doing honour or paying allegiance, and is only performed at the election of a Sultan, or for the offering of deference due to an English traveller.

With spears held aloft the Somalis united in the strident familiar “Mot ! Mot ! Mot ! io Mot !” (Hail ! Hail ! Hail ! again Hail !)—to which, as a safe remark, I replied “Mot !” The wrong thing, of course, and Clarence, who stood just behind, whispered I was to say “Thank you,” which I did in Somali, very badly.

Then we invited our circus party to a meal, and I said if they could produce a couple of sheep from somewhere I would pay for the banquet. We got through all right, but the whole of the day was taken up with the princely entertainment. The sheep duly arrived, and the entire camp helped to roast them, when with bowls of rice and *ghee* as a top up, every one made merry at our expense. We bestowed a few presents also, of which the most successful was a *tusba*, wooden beads to be counted in prayer saying. I was sorry we had not provided ourselves with more of these to give away, as they seemed so intensely popular. Cecily gave one Berserk a piece of gay red ribbon, and he seemed very much delighted. They do not care for things of which no use can be made, as they are not a silly nation. Red scarves and ribbon can always be used up effectively for the ponies’ trappings on *dibáltig* and other great occasions.

We managed to effect an exchange here. I wanted

a couple of the native dyed blue and red *khaili* tobes to take home as souvenirs, so Clarence managed it for us by handing over two new white ones, a turban, and a couple of iron tent pegs. These last were great treasures, as they can be fashioned into spear heads. The throwing spear is a cruel barbed affair, but some are plain. Accurately pitched it is a deadly weapon, and the Somali as he throws gives the spear a smart knock on the palm of his hand, which conveys an odd trembling that keeps the shaft straight as it flies through the air. The spear blades take different shapes in the different tribes, but shields seem to be of uniform pattern—of oryx, rhino, or other leather, made with a handle at the back.

We did a short march in the evening and were spared the trouble of building a zareba, and like cuckoos, took up a place in a nest of some one's making. It had been evacuated long enough to be fairly clean, and did us well with a little patching. Ant-hills around us were so numerous we seemed in the centre of some human settlement. That night a leopard entered our zareba and, regardless of the fires and the watch, clawed one of the ponies badly, being only driven off by having a rifle fired at him. Even at such close quarters the bullet found no billet, as there was no sign of the blood trail. We could clearly see the spot where our visitor entered; the thorn was lower and weaker there. We decided to remain over the next night and try and catch him. I gave orders for somebody to ride back towards the camp of our *dibáltig* friends and, if possible, buy a goat for tying up. Mean-

while, Cecily and I went out on a sort of prospecting excursion. We actually came on some water oozing up through a rock, not standing or sluggish. So we sent a man back to camp to tell the head camel man to have out all his animals and water them whether they wanted it or not.

We struck a well-defined caravan route, probably the road to Wardare over the Marehan. We arrived by a more direct line from Galadi. Game is always scarcer on frequented ways, so we turned off into the wilderness.

A rocky nullah lay to our left, and we caught a glimpse of a fine hyæna looking over the country. He stood on the summit of a pile of whitish rock, clearly outlined, and as he winded us, or caught a glimpse of the leading figures, he was off his pinnacle with a mighty bound and away into the adad bushes behind him. A little farther we came on fresh lion spoor, and followed it up only to overrun it. The ground here was for the most part so stony and baked up it was impossible to track at all. We held on, searching in circles and then pursuing the line we thought most likely. We were more than rewarded. Under a shady guda tree lay a vast lioness with year-old cub. Our men ran in different directions to cut off the retreat, but we called to them to come back. We had quite enough skins without trying to deplete the country of a lioness at this stage of the expedition, especially as the cub was small, and not yet thoroughly able to fight his own battles. She would have to wage war for herself and him. I dislike all wholesale slaughter; it ruins any sporting ground.

Interested, we watched the two cats cantering off, shoulder to shoulder, far out into the open country beyond our ken. Our men whispered among themselves. We were out with the second hunter, as Clarence was occupied in camp. They were puzzled evidently. As a result of a long course of noticing that to many white shikáris a lion is a lion, and has no sex or age, it seemed to the native mind a remarkably odd circumstance that we made no effort at all to bag two specimens at one fell swoop. I never had any scruples about killing hyænas. They are not to be classed as among the more valuable fauna, being so numerous and productive, and such low-down sneaking creatures, doing such harm among the herds and *karias*, carrying off the children so frequently, and always maltreating the face, as if with some evil design, voraciously tearing it before it commences on any other part.

We entered a little forest of khansa and adad, sombre and dark. But in the great tunnellings it was possible to see ahead for a fair distance. We were just examining a bit of gum-arabic with faint tracery on it when a hunter pulled my sleeve. There, a great way off, going with the wind, moving with a rolling gait, was a lion; head carried low as is their wont, and going along at a smart pace. Signing to the syce to stand there with the ponies, Cecily and I rushed down the path the lion had taken. But we never sighted him again. The jungle grew thicker, and it was getting late, so we were forced to abandon the stalk, returning to our distant camp after a blank day.

The goat had been procured, and after supper we had it tied in between the fences of the zareba. Our stolen homestead being of native make, I had a great loop-hole made for me in the inner circle and remained inside our main camp. You have to do this miserable form of sport to bag leopards, because they are too cunning as a rule to appear in the day-time, and rarely walk about in the open way lions will. There is nothing magnificent about the character of a leopard. He is a mere cunning thief.

A rush, and the leopard was on his prey, his side towards me, his tail slowly lashing from left to right with pleasure as he drank the warm blood. I carefully sighted. It was not a dark night, and I simply couldn't miss. Bang! Then the second barrel. The whole caravan turned out, and buzzed like disturbed bees, one or two wakeful spirits singing the chant they keep for the occasion of the killing of some dangerous beast. I had the leopard kept as he was until morning, when I examined him to find he was of the Marehan variety, or hunting leopard, quite different to his first cousin *Felis pardus*. His head was smaller, and much more cunning looking, and he was distinguished from the panther by non-retractile claws. He was fawn in colour, and his teeth were old and much worn.

It took two men now pretty well all their time to see after the trophies, and bar the way they went on with anything to do with wart-hog, they really were most assiduous and careful. At first the men actually routed us out every time the loading-up commenced in order that we should put bits of pig on to the

pack camels! We struck. It was going a little too far. We made a huge fuss, and some one, probably the cook, who seemed a more casual person than most, attended to this little matter from that time onwards, and things went quite smoothly. I am sure these scruples about pigs are very largely labour-saving dodges.

Next morning as we marched we came on a half-eaten lesser koodoo, surrounded by a lot of kites, vultures, and white carrion storks, tall, imposing-looking birds. We shot one to cure as a specimen, damaging it rather. It had a horrid smell, but was very handsome. One of the hunters skinned it at our next camp.

The American who was out with Clarence on his last big shikár seemed to have been outrageously free and easy in his dealings with the men. In fact, in one or two trifling ways such habits as we heard of had rather been to Clarence's detriment. A very little encouragement breeds too great familiarity in any native of narrow mind. I do not mean to infer that Clarence presumed, or that his judgment was ever at fault in his dealings with us, merely that I was annoyed to hear some of his stories relating to the terms on which the men of the camp were on with the free and open-hearted Yankee. One would think that an American, with the nigger problem ever before him, would be more stand-offish than most people. May be he considered himself on a real holiday, and let his national socialistic tendencies run riot. This is not "writ sarcastic," for I'm a Socialist myself, and



SKINS DRYING

if I were a professional politician I should be a Socialist of a kind that very soon, in our time, will be the usual type all over the world. At present, the Socialists, by going too far, by plucking the fruit ere it is ripe, have brought ridicule on themselves and their cause, and by associating themselves with nihilists, anarchists, and destructionists generally, have alienated the sympathy of all moderate, gradual, and practical reformers. The days for revolutions have gone by, and the reforms urgently required by almost every European nation can take place without the painting red of the great cities.

Gracious ! I am digressing ! And talking like a suffragette ! This is supposed to be a book on sport—mostly. Other things will creep in, and come crowding to my pen, crying, “ Put me down ! Put me down ! ” But—a big But : did you ever know a woman stick to the point ?

Everywhere we came on ancient elephant tracks, but I think it would have been difficult to find any sort of a specimen. We heard of none having been seen for years, yet it has always been understood that at no distant time this part of the Haweea was a resort for herds of the great pachyderms.

We were now not more than a week's trek of the east coast line. Wonderful ! Or we thought it so who had marched from Berbera. At our next halt we came on a lake, a real lake, a delightful spot, quite a good-sized sheet of water, 125 yards or so across, and formed in a basin of gypsum-like rock. We had not seen so much water *en masse* since leaving the sea,

and were so overjoyed and charmed with it that we ordered the tents to be placed on the verge, so that the ripples lapped up to our very feet. It was quite sea-sidey, or perhaps, more than anything, reminiscent of a park at home, for all varieties of birds floated on the surface and waded on the edge. When I threw broken biscuit to them they paddled to me in their dozens, flying over each other in the hurry to be first.

Of course, a swim was what appealed most to us. To be wet all over at one time instead of furtive dabs with a damp sponge seemed the acme of desirability. It seemed difficult of accomplishment. I don't care for mixed bathing at home—if the usual percentage of some twenty women to three men can be called “mixed”—and then there was the awkwardness about kit. Cecily suggested, in evil moment, cutting up the *khaili* tobes. And we did, fashioning them into bathing-suits during the hot hours of the afternoon, when we should have been using them. The result might not have passed at Ostend; they were a *succès fou* at Sinnadogho. On giving orders that the lake was to be reserved for us at five o'clock—the men, who were good swimmers, having been dashing in and out all day—the whole camp lined up to see the Mem-sahibs in a new phase. It *was* funny. We had made the tunics sleeveless, and from the wrist up our skin was as white as white could be, but from the wrist down we were Somali colour to our fingertips.

We ran in out of our tents, and words cannot tell how glorious that swim was. We dived, we raced, we floated, we dabbled, until at last we knew we must

get out, for the water was quite cold. It was altogether a rarity in Somaliland. The result will seem absurd, I know. Those wretched *khaili* tobés! The dye came straight out of them when wet, and on to us. We found ourselves converted into woaded Britons! It was quite a catastrophe, if ridiculous, and bothered us considerably, and at night, very late, when it was quite dark, we went across to the other side of the lake and had a real good scrub with any amount of water to draw on. Coming back, something started up so close to me, I felt it brush my hand—something furry. A wild dog, I imagine, for we saw many next day.

It was an absolute joy to breakfast by the cool rippling waters, and we could hardly bear to leave it to strike on to Joh, so remained all day, and then, in the late afternoon, regretfully said “good-bye.” After a short march we came on another small lake, not a patch on Sinnadogho, but we liked it because it was wet. The country now was of the most rolling description, intensely stony, with small rounded hills like Atlantic billows, and in between good grass and grazing for many camels. On the top of each rise there was thorn jungle, thick or sparse, and stunted-looking guda trees. It was a most peculiar tract, holding on like this for some way. We came on herds of camels and goats grazing, this time in charge of men, and no *karia* seemed visible for miles. We procured some camel’s milk for the men, as it is such a treat to them. We ourselves, however, liked it no better than before.

A Somali shepherd wished to tack on to us here,

deserting his charge, and as he seemed so very keen about it, and Clarence said he could do with another man, we assented. It is the dream with some of these jungle people to taste the sweets of civilisation, make money, and then return to his tribe, acquiring many camels and wealth of goats and sheep, and it is very strange that in no time he becomes a jungly person again, casting off the trammels of civilisation with ease after having lived perhaps for two or three years in the service of a white man. A very good thing it is so too. For the savage who lives in the wild is far more to be admired, and is altogether a more estimable creature than the savage who drives you about Aden, or hauls your boxes about at Berbera. Like many other wanderers, he learns the white man's follies and faults and none of his better attributes.

And so it comes about, once in a while, you enter a *karia*, with every evidence of native domesticity about it, and are greeted by the village head-man without the usual "Nabad," or "Salaam aleikum," and in great amaze, you hear an English salutation.

We camped for the night at a place of deep stone wells. If game seemed scarce, water was plentiful. Next day we came on a Somali encampment where lions were provided against and so must occasionally come to call. All manner of scare-lions were set about the zareba, torn herios arranged flag-like on broken spears, and an ingenious scheme for making a scratching noise in a wind amused us very much. It was a rough piece of iron, strung on a bit of leather rope, and its duty was to scrape against a flint set in a contrivance

of wood. Poor protections against so fierce a foe as a lion ! This tribe seemed none too friendly, and we put a couple of miles between us ere we camped.

We sighted a dibatag buck, shy as a hawk. This was a part of the country destitute of game apparently. Only the useful dik-dik abode with us to fill the pot.

To Joh next day. There was nothing to tell us it was Joh, any more than Bob or Tom. The only reason it had for being specified as a place at all was that it had a very superior well with running water. Even that did not please half the caravan, for we saw them, in preference, choose a dirty mud-hole and drink from it. We did a big day's excursion into the jungle, trying to come on spoor of any animal where spoor was not. As a resort for game this part of Somaliland seems unpopular. I cannot think why. Were I a lion, far rather would I haunt the shores of the lake at Sinnadogho than grill on the sands of the Ogaden.

CHAPTER XV

ANOTHER GAP IN OUR RANKS

Give thy thoughts no tongue

Hamlet

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where

Measure for Measure

THE poor pony which the leopard had pounced upon was now in grievous plight, hardly able to drag itself along, and the condition of his wounds, though we had done all we could, can better be imagined than described. I judged it kindest to read the death warrant, and the unfortunate creature was led away from camp, going very painfully, to be shot. His knell rang out as we were dressing, and rather spoilt our breakfast. We had grown by this time to be quite fond of all the ponies; even "Sceptre" counted as a friend of standing.

Leaving Joh about 8.30, we passed the spot where the men had buried our steed, not deeply, I fear, and as the caravan came up a great horde of yellowish animals ceased their depredations and made off. Cecily, who was walking, dropped one, I am glad to say, and the others loped away at break-neck speed. It was a fine vicious-looking animal, the sort of creature you would not care to meet if it happened to be hungry, and we afterwards knew it to be a Cape hunting-dog.

There were dabs of black and white here and there on its thick khaki-coloured coat, and the tail was immense, and white tipped. Each foot had but four toes, with much-worn claws. We delayed progress for a little while for the skin to be secured. Meanwhile, we rode off a short distance and sighted some *gerenük*, far out of range, and *dik-dik* in multitudes popped up.

We got into some thick thorn cover, too dense for the ponies' comfort, after a short ten minutes, and turning, on another path, we startled some large animal which crashed off in front of us. We separated, dashing different ways, to try and cut whatever it was off, and saw a reddish antelope careering away across a small open expanse. It was a *gerenük*, hornless; a doe, of course—I say “of course,” because our luck, or rather the lack of it, in this part of the world, was most depressing. To have endured that Marehan Desert for such “sport” as this! We kicked ourselves, figuratively speaking, every day.

Our next halt at a place garnished with a name was El Dara. “El” in Somali parlance means “well,” so anything “El” signifies water ought to be in the vicinity. Very often it isn't. But it ought to be—like a good many other things.

I don't see how any one could master the Somali language thoroughly—any foreigner, I mean. There are no books to be got about it, because the language has not as yet been reduced or elevated by pen and ink. Reading anything seems an intense puzzle to the native mind, and to be able to do it raises one miles in their estimation! Only the scholars can read

the Koran in Arabic. It would not be to the advantage of the mullahs if any one and every one could accomplish this feat. Not one of our men could even write, much less read.

I had taken a couple of favourite books along with me, as every traveller must who will be away from libraries and would yet change literary diet. In my moments of leisure for reading I accompanied Elizabeth in Rugen, or wandered with her through that solitary summer. She was very good to me, but she bored Clarence almost to tears. I read him a little one afternoon in response to his demands to know what the book was all about, and after a short while, thinking he was very quiet, I looked up; the vandal slept!

Sunday again.

After the great heat of the early hours of the afternoon we made another start, heading straight now for the return journey over the Marehan. Cecily bagged a couple of dik-dik out of a bunch of three. All those hereabouts did not find the two-is-company axiom worth considering, and ran about everywhere in threes. We secured two guinea fowl, too, for future meals. They were decidedly gamey by night; the heat was so against keeping any sort of meat. I very often thought this unceasing pondering on what could be provided for the next feast made for dreadful greediness. When we pitched tents Clarence reported that one of the camel men very sick. "Him die all right." I was not very much put about, because by this I had learned the Somali ways, and knew that every one of them considers himself at the portals of

death's door if he has merely a pain somewhere. They cannot be called cowards by any means, and will bear pain well enough when it comes, but in minor illnesses they cave in sooner than any other nation I have come across, and get so terribly alarmed about themselves. Theirs is not the stoicism of the American Indian, in matters large and small, the delightful *sangfroid* of the Chinaman is absent, and the calm of the Englishman unknown. We had really, up to now, been singularly fortunate in the health of the caravan, and most of the minor ills from which the men had suffered could fairly have been ascribed to gorging. This gluttony over meat occasionally landed them into double-distilled bilious attacks.

I was in a frightful tantrum with some one—of course nobody would own to being the delinquent—who had dropped, or somehow made away with, the very best oryx shield we had. Going over the trophies, which we knew individually, I missed the treasure. The immortal one counselled "Give thy thoughts no tongue." But, after all, he was giving directions to a young man just about to go out into the world, and had not dreamed of the conditions that would govern the loss of an oryx shield most hardly come by. I gave all the thoughts I had by me vehement voice, and, more than that, I borrowed a few from Cecily.

We had camped where there had once been a lake as large as at Sinnadogho. It was now a mere hole, and all the one-time springs were dry. Some Midgan hunters here gave us news of having seen a lion an hour or so ago. No wonder they reported such a find.

Lions and all other game seemed about to follow the dodo in these parts. We were so thoroughly disgusted now that all our object was to push back to our old haunts in the Ogaden, and enjoy ourselves for the short time left to us in the country. I am not wilfully rubbing it in about this Marehan and Haweea locality, because I myself hate bewailing as much as any one. But, to let you in on the ground floor, all this part of the expedition was hateful, and our one desire was to get it over. No wonder our shikári uncle, wise in his generation, had never passed the Bun Arnwein. We intended to lie low about our having done so also.

After our temper had dwindled a little, we went to see the sick man, armed with a few medicines, and our vexation merged into forgetfulness, and then to pity. The poor fellow lay on a camel mat, his dirty robe tangled about him, in acute pain, and often in delirium. It could not be a touch of the sun very well, for Somalis and the sun are well acquainted. Cecily suggested that dirty water of a short time ago as the root of the evil, but here again, had we not seen the men drinking quite as filthy water, and thriving the better for it. We really were stuck to know what to do, and fled to our everlasting remedy, champagne. It was difficult to get any down, and the little we managed to dispose of made no earthly difference to the writhing man. Cecily tried catapultic questions in a Somali accent that came from her inner consciousness.

“Wurrer anonesha” (head-ache)?

“Aloche anonesha” (stomach-ache)?



RHINO AND ORYX

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There was no reply, and Cecily had expended all the lingo she knew.

The man went on suffering all night, and we did all we could, putting mustard leaves on his side and keeping him warm, for the nights here were bitterly cold. Ever and again we tried to force champagne between his set teeth. Of no avail. He died about five o'clock in the morning. Clarence said it was Kismet, but I think, and always shall, it was a newt. Anyway, it was something swallowed in that filthy water, too much even for the inner mechanism of a Somali.

Cecily and I retired to get some sleep if possible, and the men buried their unfortunate comrade. We did not attend, as it is always so intensely piteous a ceremony—a burial without a coffin—at least to me it seems far worse than seeing a coffin put into the earth. I gave Clarence a blanket to wrap our follower in. He seemed amused, and certainly did not use it, for I saw him lapped in it a night or so later. I rebuked him, but he said it was a different blanket. All men are liars, and though an estimable servant, our head-man was no exception to the rule.

We investigated to see that the funeral had been conducted properly, and ordered more stones and brushwood to be piled on top, such a rampart indeed that Clarence said we were giving our dead friend the grave of a chief. Then, in the late afternoon we marched away, leaving the lonely stockade behind us. Every man of the caravan threw some grass upon the grave and, touching their ears, prayed to Allah.

Cecily and I could not help feeling very sorry, but in half an hour the men had all forgotten, and marched chanting a droning song. The camels that had been the charge of the dead man now were controlled by a lively little fellow, and the whole incident seemed of no moment.

Any amount of wild geese abode here. It was rather like keeping a vast poultry farm. The birds were so ridiculously tame and easily caught. At our next trek we should have to consider the return journey across the Marehan as begun, and we should not be likely to make any water for five or six days. Everything was carefully filled up, and the march commenced at 3.30 a.m. The net result of this Marehan excursion was one leopard and one wild dog, which we would just as soon have been without as with. They may be hard to shoot, and come on—I have heard so—but take it how you like, with everything said that can be to belaud them into valuable treasures, dogs aren't very grand trophies when all is done. Who values a coyote in Canada ?

We passed thousands of grazing camels. The men in charge weren't bothering about water at all, but drank milk only. I arranged with Clarence that our men were to go on to rations of dates, and do without rice for the trip over the waterless desert. Rice in such quantities sucks up such an amount of water, and it was safer to keep it for drinking purposes merely. The dates are very nutritious, and natives often live on nothing else for days.

We camped about eleven o'clock, when the sun

grew too fierce to let us proceed. We did a few more miles in the evening. Every hour we were not on trek we spent in exhausted sleep. Even as we marched I was often in a condition of somnolence that prevented my guiding the pony in the least.

We passed a fine range of mountains, said to be alive with leopards. We saw the tracks of several, but time did not permit of a stalk. However, one came to stalk us, very thoughtfully, and saved us a lot of trouble. We made the round of the camp that night very late before turning in to see that all was extra safe. The camels were lying in rows, some with heads outstretched flat, snake-like, on the sand, asleep, others chewing the cud, watching us lazily with keen bright eyes threading our way among the *débris* of the stores. Our candle lamps were hardly needed here, the bright fires lighted us to bed, and we had but just settled down when the most prodigious shouting and banging of tin pans together roused us up again. Then two shots reverberated on the night. By the time I was sufficiently clad to emerge with propriety the camp was more or less calm again, save for a few men jabbering in excited groups. The ponies stood in a bunch, and one or two of the camels had risen. A leopard had jumped the zareba, but was immediately turned by having a piece of lighted brushwood thrust in his face. One of the hunters had fired after the retreating animal, and claimed to have hit it. As no man of the black persuasion cares to go outside a zareba at night, all investigations had to be put off until day-break, when, without waiting for

breakfast, we hurried out to see what we should see.

The hunter was right. The blood trail was plain, and held on at intervals for a mile or more, when it led us to a flimsy bit of thorn growing in some rocky cover. Stones and shouts did not serve to eject our visitor of the night before, but we heard his singing snarls. Posting ourselves some hundred yards away, for a wounded leopard is not likely to prove an amiable customer, Clarence made some fire alongside us with another hunter by twirling the fire stick. And as soon as the flame burst from the timber he fostered it with a little durr grass, then using it to ignite a larger torch, ran towards the citadel and threw the blazing thing into the midst. Speedily the flames took hold, burning all before it.

“Shebel ! Shebel !”

The leopard stole out from the side of the underbrush, with low crouched shoulders, and made for the open. It limped badly, and lurched as it ran. I wanted to clear the hunters who were dancing about right in the very zone of fire—a lot of good shots are spoiled in this way—so dashed after our prey. Cecily ran round the back of the burning bush, and as she was nearer, the leopard hearing the quick pad-pad after him turned, as a cat does when cornered. With ears flattened against the head and a look of most vicious rage on the snarling face the leopard shot, all wounded as he was, straight at us like an arrow from a bow. He was a most courageous animal, but my cousin dropped him with a well-planted bullet, catching

him in the chest. The creature doubled up like a caterpillar, undid itself, gave one or two twists, doubled up again, and finally dropped very near to us.

We were anxious to get the trophy back to camp for the better convenience of skinning it, as we were already late in starting the morning's march, but our pony would have none of it, and at the suggestion of burdening his usually willing little back with the cat-like carcase, gave us to understand that whatever else he might carry at any time it would never be leopard. We had to give up the attempt at last, and two hunters stayed behind to skin and decapitate the prize, coming in to camp about two hours after us. This particular leopard differed slightly from the one obtained in the Haweea, but, like all of the leopard tribe, it doubtless differed in skin and colouring by reason of the part of the world where it lived and had its being. The chin was almost white, and it was lighter in colouring all over. We neglected to measure it when pegged out for drying, but, dressed, it touched just six feet from tip to tail. The bullet of the night before had passed through the forearm, and I think it would have got over its effects in time nicely.

Nothing more of any moment occurred on the great hurried march. We walked, and slept, and rode and ate, and ate, and rode, and slept, and walked. The history of those strenuous six days is summed up in these words. We managed very well this time about the water, though we ran things very fine at the ast, landing at wells with but a quart in hand.

The last afternoon was rendered hideous by a

plague of locusts, and their millions darkened all the sky, like the big black crow in Alice's Adventures through the Looking-glass, taking an hour or more to pass. Some didn't pass at all, but settled in countless thousands on an area of red sand, that they changed to rainbow colours. Closely looked at, they are the ordinary familiar locust of many countries, in shades of green, yellow, with red spots. Cecily, who would, I believe, curry anything, said they ought to taste like prawns. The insects quite forgot their plain duty—and didn't. They tasted like—well, like themselves! The shell of the back was as hard as nails, and I'm sure they were meant to be anything but curried.

At last, towards 6.30, as the light was not so good, we found ourselves on a plain again covered with splendid trees, and we knew we had left the dreary waste of forsaken desert behind us. Turning joyfully in my saddle I waved my hand, crying *Au revoir*.

"It's good-bye as far as I'm concerned," said Cecily stolidly.

We came to a place of many deep wells, and the men went down forthwith and began watering the animals. A few busied themselves cutting the thorn for the zareba, whilst two more erected our tents. The camels commenced to graze as each one was satisfied by a drink.

We rested under a thorn tree until, in awful moment, we realised it was already in the possession of a most horrible-looking creature, a hateful monster who eyed us from his branch above us. We vacated our seats

instantly, but returned carefully to investigate. 'Twas a hideous monstrosity indeed, alligator-like, with yellow claws. In length about a foot, with tail of twice as much, yellow gray, with whitish markings, and appeared to have no interest in us or animosity towards us. We knew it was of the lizard fraternity, and afterwards natural history revealed it to us as a Monitor. He disturbed my slumbers all that night. I could not get the hideous thing out of my dreams, and my fancy peopled the tent with creatures of his kind, and every place on which I would set my foot was covered with monitors. Next morning our friend was still on his perch, and we saw a smaller brother on another tree. Common chameleons frequented this part also. They lay thickly on the branches of the guda trees, brown-green, and almost unnoticeable.

That evening, as the light was fading, I shot a marabou stork, not often to be met with in these parts. It was indeed a prize, and we spent hours of semi-darkness, in a dim religious light, skinning our treasure. It sounds so easy—it seems nothing—but try your hand on a common or garden hen, and see if the business is as simple as you think? We poked and pushed, and, I'm afraid, tore a little, but in the end were successful, and stretched the result to dry. The splendid colour of the pouch of this marabou, which was so much admired by us, faded after skinning, and was gone. The feathers, so reminiscent of civilisation, and beloved of suburban fan proprietors, were very fine and fluffy. We measured the beak of our trophy,

and it came out at a shade over eleven inches, and the extended wings topped eight and a half feet.

We were now on the march through a waterless tract again, but game was once more plentiful, and the men dined royally every day. We not so magnificently, as a whole boxful of our provisions had mysteriously disappeared ; the camel man in charge said lost, but looted or sold really. I kicked up a frightful fuss, but of course that did not bring back the missing necessities. The loss of the box meant much carefulness to us, as it would certainly be five weeks or more before we touched Berbera, a consummation not wished for at all, and even the idea was a vast regret to us. To think that in a short space of time we should be in touch with the world again, that the wild would call, and we, all an ache of desperate longing, could not reply ! There would be nothing to compensate us for the loss of the joys of the jungle, no music like unto the lion's roar. We should listen in vain for the whining bark of the koodoo, and the weird calls of the wrangling hyænas prowling around our zareba o' nights would echo only in memory. To us these things were the heart of happiness, and to dream of leaving them was pain.

Ah me ! Well, " fill the cup."

Cecily bagged an oryx near Well-Wall, a fine female, ever the best fitted out in the horn line among this species. It is strange this should be so, when the bulls are so pugnacious. The horns of this trophy were in perfect condition, and measured thirty-two inches. The bird life around us charmed us exceedingly. I

think our admiration for the small birds puzzled Clarence very much. He made nothing of them. All the hunters were singularly ignorant on the subject, and could tell us nothing, not even the names of quite well-known finches. All the exquisite little things were tame as tame could be, willingly picking up crumbs as we scattered them in the very tent. The most wondrously coated starlings wandered about in their inquisitive habit, and made many moments of amusement for us with their quarrels and peacocking ways.

At Well-Wall we got some water, and camped for the night. There were many stray nomadic Somalis, hunters mostly, at the water, some Midgans, almost in "the altogether." They were a scraggy, miserable-looking lot, with whom our men got to loggerheads in "the wee sma' hours," and, quarrelling most of the night, made the place hideous with their din, all carried on, as it was, on a top note. I went out once to try and silence them all, and Cecily had a go at it also, but nothing would stop the incessant jangle of their voices. We simply lay down, said things, and wished for day.

When the dawn broke in gray shadows we insisted on striking camp at once, breakfasting after a short trek. The outcaste Somalis followed us for a long way, begging for tobes. It seemed cruel to refuse them, but we hadn't enough to go round even if we handed over our remaining stock, and really to give one tobe, or even two or three, to such a needy band would be about as much use as to present one brace of

grouse to a hospital. At last we outdistanced our following, and were able to negotiate breakfast. How I loved the breakfasts "out there" in the open, a permanent, everlasting picnic. Many insects came to breakfast too, but then, what would you? Were they not all part and parcel of this world of happiness?

We went on, and everywhere was beautiful now in green splendour; the jungle had dressed itself anew in robes of emerald. How exquisite the colours, how drowsy all the air! Great golden cobwebs hung from thorn to thorn, the early sun scintillating on the myriad dewdrops clinging to the fragile web. Ants here lived in larger palaces than ever.

The only available track lay through jungle as dense as could be negotiated by any caravan. Progress was very slow, and sometimes very annoying. Camels refused to move through gaps, necessitating unloading and reloading, all the time bothered by the grabbing wait-a-bit thorn. My pony put his foot into a hole of sorts unexpectedly, and I came a terrific purler bang into a bunch of thorn. I daresay it was a blessing in disguise and saved me a bad shaking, but I was grievously pricked and scratched. Besides, it really is a very humiliating feeling to be retrieved from a thorn bush by a mere camel man. I felt disgraced for ever as an *equestrienne*. It was a "come off" so disgracefully simple.

At intervals, when the bush lightened a little, we came on spoor of lion and rhino. The latter again whetted Cecily's desire to come on another of these creatures and give battle. I agreed we would track

the spoor if she really wished it, but after a hard five miles of really impossible going at right angles from our main camp we quitted the chase for that day arranging to get up with the sun and make a real day of it after rhino. I admit I did all I knew to stifle these sporting longings. It seemed cowardly of me to say "Go alone, if go you must." But I longed to say it. I could never forget the apparition of that rhino going for the Baron, and—I'll whisper it if you'll come nearer—where a rhinoceros is concerned I am a contemptible coward.

CHAPTER XVI

CECILY SHOOTS A RHINOCEROS

The day shall not be up so soon as I,
To try the fair adventure of the morn
King John

We are blessed in this man, as I may say, even blessed
Winter's Tale

THE sun shall not be up so soon as I. Indeed, I had a whole half-hour's start of him, while I put my house in order. I prepared in my own way for the fair adventure of the morn, and told Cecily where to look for my will. She was in wild spirits, and chaffed me no end. She saw to her armoury, and asked me over and over to eat more. But I said I felt exactly like a man about to be hanged, of whom you read in the next day's papers: "The prisoner made a most excellent breakfast."

Out we started, Clarence, the Somali who joined our forces at the spot where the camels tried a course of mud baths, four hunters, and two syces. We followed the old spoor for miles, but it was at last apparent that the pachyderm we were after had by this time travelled far out of our ken. We sat down to cogitate, and the hunters went off spooring on a detour of their own.

In the thick jungle we disturbed a few baby

ostriches. I could not count how many, because they scattered right and left, thrown into panic by the shameless desertion of the little brood by their father, who making a direct bid for his own safety, took a bee-line out of our radius. I cornered one little fluffy yellow and black bird, and could have caught him had I wished. He was about twelve inches high, very important looking, and his bright black boot-button eyes gazed at me unblinkingly. Stout little yellow legs supported the tubby quaint body, and then I let him pass to gain solitude and his brothers. We did not war with ostrich babies. I had rather a contempt for that cock bird. Imagine leaving his children like that ! And yet, considered in the abstract, an ostrich of all other denizens of the wild world stands for respectability and staunchness of purpose. He pairs for life. None of your gad-about ideas for him. One life, one love, is the ostrich motto, and if he finds the "Ever and ever, Amen" variety of domesticity spells satiety almost invariably, well, he is no different from other two-footed creatures we know. Nature is the same wherever or however we find it.

The ostrich does not *look* a happy bird. His sad pathetic face makes one think something in this "sorry scheme of things entire" does not altogether satisfy. What the ostrich really needs is a matrimonial system whereby these birds might take each other on the lease principle, as we do houses, with the option of renewal. Things would brighten up for them, I am sure, considerably. I don't know how we can arrange it, or even put the suggestion to them. Perhaps

some intensely knowing person could arrange this, the editor of the halfpenny patron of patriotism, for instance. He understands everything. The suggested lease system would add considerable zest to life in the ostrich world, as indeed it would in many others. Just before the lease fell in Madame Ostrich would assure her husband that the very last idea she had would be its renewal. For all masculinity wants is that, and that only, which is denied him. Mr. Ostrich would feel that the renewal of the lease was the be-all of everything, and the fattest slugs, the best bit of ground for finding tit-bits upon, and the least prickly walks in the jungle would all be offered as persuasive arguments. The general pleasantness would last them both for weeks.

A hunter reported he had come on a maze of rhino tracks. Allowing for the usual exaggeration, we judged one rhinoceros might be get-at-able. On investigation, we found that one had passed through the thickish country, and that very recently. Joy !—for Cecily ! Hastily we left our ponies in charge of the syces, detailed two other hunters to remain also, and with the remaining followers prepared to stalk. Often the spoor was lost for a hundred yards or so, but our very able shikaris never failed to pick it up again, and though the going was exceedingly heavy, we made fair progress. We saw numerous oryx and dibitag, one of the latter passing so near me that I exchanged glances with her at twenty-five yards. But, of course, “the likes of them” were safe from us now.

We sped across an open bit, and then into another belt of jungle. The whole aspect of the spot looked to me as the very place to see a repetition of the Baron disaster. We plunged into the ubiquitous thorn, starting a frightened dik-dik as I took my header. Crawling, pushing, scratching, we won our way to comparatively clear ground. Clarence raised his hand for utter silence. We heard a scrunching and breaking of thorns. A great beast was a-travelling. Maybe he had winded us or been disturbed. And then "a strange thing happened." I, who had been absolutely impassive up to now, was drawn into the mesh of desire. The effects of rhino shooting on me is like unto the results of champagne drinking on Brillat-Savarin, at first (*ab initio*) most exciting, afterward (*in recessu*) stupefying. I was now thoroughly game for anything. But kept my reason in sufficient bounds to remember that thick thorn cover is not an ideal place to meet a rhino in.

We did a most careful stalk, creeping towards the place of the sounds, under Clarence's complete directions. At last, he alone pressed on with us, the others willingly remaining where he signalled. We were not now in overwhelmingly thick thorn, but it was too dense to be pleasant, and necessitated our handling our rifles with the greatest care. After a hard few minutes we sank down to rest. Our rifles covered a small clearing.

The game of all sizes had made tunnels through the jungly place, high enough in some parts for us to stand upright, and all seemed to lead to this open

glade. Flies in myriads were buzzing about the undergrowth, a reddish squirrel, with bushy tail, jerked towards me on a fallen guda tree, then with a chatter made off among the branches. The air was simply stifling with dry heat, and I was thirsty beyond words.

Wonder of wonders! A dark ponderous bulk loomed on the left of us, under a great guda tree, overhung with armo creeper. The great head came well into view, all unconscious of intruders. The beast was lunching, eating his favourite bushes, and munching steadily. This was not at all sporting—it seemed so simple.

Cecily gently pushed the muzzle of her 12-bore through the sheltering thorns, and was able to take careful and steady aim at the rhino's ear. She was in excellent range. It is no use trying for a rhino at a distance exceeding eighty, or at the most, ninety yards. Bang! The smoke hung for a moment, obscuring everything. The animal seemed to stagger to the shot. And then, on the instant, with snorts and squeals, small out of all proportion to the size of the emitter, charged across the intervening space. Then when he made the jungle he as quickly dashed back again. I was very anxious for Cecily to have this shoot all to herself, and though I had a glorious chance of a heart shot from my position, I held my fire.

I am not very clear what happened next, and when I apply to my cousin she says, "I'm sure I cannot tell you." I think Cecily came dangerously forward. The



DEAD RHINOCEROS

rhino turned on our inadequate fortress of mimosa, and as the peril swept upon us we seemed to gather wit and sense to combat the danger. Separating widely as the beast plunged straight in where we had been, we turned on him, simultaneously, to fire. Then we branched off again, at right angles. I fell into a thorn bush, and took the opportunity of comparative safety to reload. Cecily was now dancing about in the open, in a most sporting but in no sense a common-sense fashion. For a dreadful instant I feared the result. The rhino bull took up a large circle with its careering and struggles, and the dust was so great that from my post I could not clearly see the finish. I heard the rifle crack twice again, and then a ringing shout for me came. There lay the mighty carcase in a kneeling attitude. A mountain of flesh indeed!

Cecily had a great gash on her wrist, caused, I fancy, by some sharp flint stone, and the blood was running down her rifle as she held it at the trail. She was too excited to speak, and there was no calming her down. She really seemed like a person in a dream. I announced to her solemnly it was to be our last rhino shoot. The tension relaxed then, and she laughed at my serious face.

A series of whistles brought up the hunters, and the last phase began. Cecily and I set off to find our ponies, and, full of elation, made for camp and tea. We had tea at all hours of the day, finding it the most refreshing of anything, and I don't really think it affected our nerves one scrap.

It was rather late when our men reached camp,

laden with treasure. They brought the rhino's feet, his tail, his head, and some of his skin. There was no reason why they should not have brought it all. It comes off quite easily. They said they had not time, as they feared being bushed, or that lions would be attracted to the spot by the smell of blood. The skin is very valuable to the Somalis for shields, and many other purposes, and we rather thought it was a put up business to secure half the rhino hide for themselves. We thought of going back then and there and seeing the thing finished, but Clarence said it was such a long way off, the result would be we would all assuredly be caught out in the bush at night. I suppose he was right. They had us fairly.

The Somalis don't care for eating rhino, and I cannot say the flesh looks very inviting, but we got the chef to make us some soup of the tail, which you hear so well spoken of by all travellers. I do not think our opinion can be considered a fair one. It would have been a better soup had we made it ourselves. Our cook could not cook anything properly, and the tail and taste of it, if there had been either in the pan at any time, was drowned in a waste of water.

Before the great pachyderm began to be dismembered we measured him, and his waist, or where his waist should be if he had one, was by the tape, seven feet three inches. I don't know what a fashionable belle rhinoceros would think of that. In length he was a shade over ten feet, but this was not a very large animal as they go. We set to work helping to stretch and clean and saltpetre. The anterior horn

was much blunted at the tip, the result of some accident or wear and tear of some kind, so that it lost half an inch or so in length. But eleven inches looks formidable enough, on such a fearsome head. The eyes are ridiculously small in a rhino. I think to such altogether inadequate optics much of the bad sight put down to the rhino must be ascribed. One would hardly think every single animal of this variety starts its career with bad sight, but that is what every hunter tells you. Go nap every time on the non-seeing powers of your enemy if he happens to be a rhinoceros if you like, but see there is a tree to get behind before you begin. This is advice from myself.

Next day was a poor one as far as sport was concerned. We were very stiff with so much crawling, though at the time we had not noticed it. We sent off a few men to retrieve the rest of the hide from the remains of the rhino, and when the camp was quiet we investigated the trophies, and overhauled them carefully. Some of them cried aloud in their agony for attention. The skin of the last killed lion was beginning to lose some hair in parts. And this was because, when we undid it and looked behind, great lumps of flesh still adhered, making it impossible for the preservatives to do any curing. It took us a long time to set this right, and we rubbed alum in as hard as we could on the inside. Of course, if the skinning is not carefully done, the chances are the trophy will have to be thrown away. I don't know how we should have taken a catastrophe of such magnitude.

The men returned to say the skin of the rhino was not to be found. I don't suppose they had even been to the spot. I am confident they had, in some mysterious way, managed to let their friends know a wealth of shields were to be had for the taking. There was nothing left of our huge friend of the day before, so the men said. Wild beasts had eaten him.

Later, I heard a great shouting in camp and calls for us, and answering in person, I saw Clarence seated on a pony, proudly displaying and offering to me a baby oryx, which he had in front of him. We lifted the mite down, holding it, all struggling, firmly. It was terror-stricken, poor wee thing. I tried to stroke its satin coat, but it only started and looked at me with frightened piteous beseeching eyes. Clarence meant well, but oh, I would a thousand times he had left the kid with its mother. And then a thought struck me. How had he come by this fleet thing? May be killed the doe and then ridden the baby down. Instantly I put it to him. I know I frowned. But he disarmed me by saying the matter was not as I thought, and the mother was alive, unharmed; that he had ridden them down until the little oryx, spent, had to drop, and the mother fled away in fear before his threatening gestures.

I consulted with Cecily, and we came to the conclusion that if we wanted to please Clarence there was nothing for it but to keep the buck, but after mixing it some condensed milk, which we gave it in a bottle with a bit of rubber tubing on the neck, we realised that to retain our little guest meant *our* going

without milk in our tea for weeks. Camel milk was not available, and the baby could not eat. I was thankful of a reasonable excuse to offer Clarence, and he saw the sense of it. I longed to restore the tiny creature to its mother, and Clarence said if we took it back to the place from whence it came the doe would assuredly find it.

We decided to try this, but to secrete ourselves, and cover the baby buck with our protecting rifles. Otherwise, it was quite on the cards that a lion or leopard would make off with it ere its mother could retrieve it. In any case, I should imagine a violent death awaited it. It was so very youthful and easily stalked. I took the timorous creature across my saddle, it seemed all struggling legs and arms, and with Clarence for guide made for the place, some two miles off, where he first started the oryx. I confess I still had my doubts as to his tale and its veracity, but in this I wronged our shikári.

We set the baby down alone, so fragile and small it looked, and then hid ourselves in a great thorn brake. We were as far off as we dared go, and the buck did not wander far. Sometimes it bleated in a little treble, once or twice it lay down, tucking its long legs beneath it, to rise again and wander, all lonely, among the low thorn bushes. Two hours or more we waited and then—a gentle whinny, and almost before we realised it, a perfect oryx doe cantered towards the fawn. She nosed it all over and her joy expressed itself in every imaginable way. It was a most beautiful and pathetic sight. We made some movement, and all alert again,

the graceful creature sailed away, the baby trotting beside. My eyes were full of tears, and I had a lump in my throat. 'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful. To think that in all the jungle a mother could find her way to the lost best beloved with nothing to guide her, nothing to tell her. Clarence took it all most naturally, and said all female things are like that. I do almost believe him !

* * * *

The sun sailed high in a sky of molten brass, the hot sand blistered the palm set down on it, not a breath of air was stirring. And I, foolish wight, was stalking, on hands and knees, a hartebeest. A family of ants had crawled up my sleeve. I went too near their palace, I suppose, and they mistook the way. A yellow snake, small, wicked-looking, and alert, lay right in my path. Not for a hundred hartebeest would I disturb him ! I made a great detour, to the wonderment of Clarence, who trailed along in my wake. When he saw he wondered no longer. He has learned now, and thinks snakes are a sort of mania of mine, and that I must be humoured. Great bluebottle flies jumped up in our faces from the red-hot sand, then—buzz—and down again. Oh, for some shade—some air—some water ! There was my hartebeest again, with well-groomed coat and flicking tail. The flies were a worry to him too. Now he gets beyond a bunch of aoul—his sentinels. I shall never get within range. I lay my rifle down, myself with it. I can't

see the hartebeest, the aoul, the flies—there is nothing anywhere but a golden maze of light, and a world of noisy hammers in my ears.

* * * * *

'Twas nothing, just a mild touch of the sun, and next day Richard was himself again, and out with the second hunter, like a French falconer, prepared to fly at anything. Only we chose towards evening for our hunting.

Our ponies carried us through most of the dense country, but sometimes we had to get off and seek an easier way round. We saw tracks of all varieties of game, but for an hour or more had the jungle apparently to ourselves. We were leading our steeds, when we crossed a great find, a place where a lion had been lying, may be after some great banquet. The thorns had taken his size and shape like a mould, and his hairs were all about to betray his whilom presence. The hunter spooed about and picked up the lion trail some little way off. The ground being so loose and sandy made no good evidence of time. The pugs might have been made now, or that morning. We went on silently and after not more than five minutes going, with an electric-like shock, I realised that a lion stood over a kill to our immediate front. He winded us, and stretching his great neck and head upwards to sniff in magnificent disregard bounded into the thicket, the tuft on his tail being the last glimpse I caught of him. I was too taken aback

to even try to get my rifle up. It all happened so very swiftly. We were a very small party to tackle a lion in thick cover, but my man was a little Trojan and did not hesitate when I said I would proceed and he must take a hand at the game. He was carrying my 12-bore, and I had my .500 Express.

First we tethered the ponies, thinking they would be quite safe as we should be in the near vicinity, then we commenced to beat after a fashion of our own. Walking as straight ahead as we could, pushing and struggling through where we couldn't. We fired into the dusky depths in desperation at last, but nothing happened. It was not until we had covered a few hundred yards more before we saw, in a lightening of the undergrowth, a sinuous yellow form streaking along. The hunter in his excitement brought up his rifle. I held his arm. The danger was too great. If a wounded lion turned on us here we were done for, hemmed in as we were. We saw no more of him, he had put some distance between us, and "on my life, had stol'n him home to bed."

It was a great disappointment, but, after all, there isn't much sport in courting disaster. The chances should be almost even, a little in favour of the animal, not entirely so.

The ponies had untethered themselves, it doesn't say much for the way we secured them, I'm afraid, and had betaken their way campwards. We had to track their hoof marks that we might also cut a long journey short. Night was closing in, and we wanted

the shelter of our zareba. And supper, oh, supper ! most of all !

We had no special time for meals in camp. A system that would properly disgust a good housewife. The cook had to produce food whenever we required some, at any time, early or late. It did not make for good cooking ; but then, neither did the chef.

CHAPTER XVII

TREE CLIMBING

Do not give dalliance too much the rein

The Tempest

WHEN out early one morning a green oasis tempted me to leave the sandy waste and ramble in among the depths of the aloes, creep in and out of the festoons of armo, and hunt for anything that might be astir. Choosing the part where the bushes seemed most willing to admit us, we crept in—a hunter and I—he of the Cook's Guide turn of mind. Parting the creepers as we went, we found it easier than we had thought to penetrate the density.

On almost every branch a chameleon lay basking, dead to all appearances save for the eternal wakefulness of their eyes. In a glade where the grass grew high there was a whirr and a rush. Some small animal was startled. But we saw nothing. The hunter prepared to account for it, but I would have none of it, and silenced him with a look. I was there to read the book of the wild for myself, not to have it read aloud.

A tree snake dropped from his low perch on a thorn bush, and wriggled away in the thicket. Two distinct lines of brown marked him, and that was all I saw. He gave me "creeps," and I turned away in

an opposite direction. Sometimes a bit of thorn would hold me lovingly, and all my blandishments could not make it let me go. I only obtained freedom with leaving a piece of my coat as tribute. Vulturine guinea-fowl ran at the sight of us, raising their naked necks and setting off at great speed to make safety. They are beautiful birds, and the prismatic colours of the feathers show up against the green of the armo very distinctly. Doves cooed above us, but I could not catch a glimpse of one. As we neared the middle of the oasis we came on a few scattered half-eaten bones—a dead lesser koodoo. He had furnished a meal for a lion, doubtless, and later for one of his own people. One or two varieties of antelope are very fond of nibbling dry white bones.

We took a turn to the right, and on the instant a beautiful lesser koodoo took a gigantic leap over an in-the-way bunch of aloe scrub. He disappeared into a thicket and I stood motionless listening. So I suspect did my koodoo. All was still, but only for a moment. The amateur Cook's Guide got entangled somehow or other with a trailing creeper, and to my complete horror and amazement let off my .500 Express which he was carrying. He must have been holding it in very unskilled fashion. The bullet missed my head by a couple of inches. I felt the whiz of it and heard it ricochet into the trees. I was so unnerved I sat down and thought things out. My hunter was quite oblivious to any shock I might have received, because the stock of the rifle had hit him hard somewhere—I was too vexed to inquire the exact

location—and he bewailed his misfortune. I ordered him to go home to camp and leave me, which he did with alacrity. After about half an hour my trembling fit passed. It was very cowardly to be so upset, but I hate unknown and quite unforeseen dangers, and an unsuspected bullet at close quarters demoralises me.

I sat on quietly, and the bush began to stir and take up its daily round again, forgetting the demon crash that had disturbed its slumbers. A little red velvet spider ran speedily up an armo leaf, tumbled over the edge and suspended himself on a golden wire. Jerk! jerk! Lower he went, then up again. Two bars of his house completed, when alas, a great fly of the species that haunted our trophies, flew right across and smashed the spider-house to nothing. The velvet spider sat on a leaf—fortunately he had made safety ere the Juggernaut passed along—and meditated, but only for a moment. He was a philosopher and knew all about the “Try, try, try again” axiom. Over he hurled himself on another golden thread and laid another criss-cross foundation-stone. And there I left him because I wanted to penetrate farther.

How could I manœuvre a big antelope now if I shot one, seeing that my hunter had left me? Was it not counting my chickens? Yes, but that is what one does all the time in big game shooting!

In one bit of glade I worked my way through the caterpillars had played devastator; every leaf was eaten. I hurried on. I rested again on a fallen

guda tree, hunting first to see no snake shared my seat with me. I kept utterly silent for an hour or more, when my patience was rewarded. Through the bushes I saw a white chin bobbing up and down as it chose out the most succulent thorns. Lower it went. I hardly breathed. To see a lesser koodoo in his haunts one sometimes has to wait for months. Here was I, in the limits of a morning's patrol, so lucky. The great broad ear flickered in and out. Because this antelope mostly lives in thick cover where quick hearing is his only safety, his ear has grown in accordance with necessities. Somali hunters never seem to differentiate between the koodoo and the lesser koodoo. They are both one and the same to them, and are called "Godir" indiscriminately. And yet the two animals are so different it seems absurd to think of confusion.

The koodoo (*strepsiceros koodoo*) is the biggest antelope in Somaliland, heavy, magnificent and warlike. It inhabits mountainous parts, and the reason would seem to be plain. Space for such great horns is required, and though on occasion they frequent jungly parts of the Golis, their nature and habit is to live in the stony gorges, and stalking one is not unlike stalking one of our own Scotch deer. The lesser koodoo (*strepsiceros imberbis*) is the personification of all the graces. What the koodoo gains in majesty the lesser has in exquisite symmetry of line and contour. The lesser koodoo never grows much larger than a small donkey, the horns are replicas in little of the average three footer of the koodoo, and there is

no beard, but a short mane. Like the koodoo, the lesser is striped down each side like the white ribs of a skeleton.

My friend still fed, rustling the bushes as he chose out his favourite herbage. I had seen nothing to fire at, but, in any case, I did not mean to try for him, as in my lone condition it would mean a return to camp for assistance, and meanwhile the beautiful antelope would be food for any prowling beast. I hated at all times to kill wastefully. The head of the lesser koodoo looked, as far as I could see, a fair one, the light of the sun glinting through the shadowy depths occasionally caught the curving horns. But since he might not be mine, since I could not get him back to camp, I would not kill wantonly.

In speaking of the wholesale slaughter of Somaliland fauna by sportsmen and sportsmen so-called, one ought really to include the Somalis themselves. They have assisted materially to decimate the country—of elephants particularly. On lions they have not made much impression, as these animals are too big a job to tackle unless they are driven to it. But in the days when the elephant roamed the land, their slaughter for the sake of the ivory was wholesale, terrific and amazing. Clarence, who was of the Gadabursi country, well remembers his father and his tribe hunting the elephant on a colossal scale, killing several a week. The manner of it was courageous, to say the least. The tribe went out, mounted on swift ponies, and the marked-down elephant being selected from the herd, he was ridden down in the open. One

agile Somali would caper in front of the pachyderm to attract his attention, and a rider at the gallop would pass in swift flying rush behind and cut the ham-string or tendon of one of the hind legs. The elephant would then be at the mercy of the hunters. It must have been a dangerously exciting business. The sword used—I saw one in the hut of a Mullah at the Upper Sheik—is of native make, apparently, strong, and longer in the blade than the biláwa, which is often seen in its scabbard of white leather bound round the waist of a Somali. It was not unlike the familiar sword known to us as the “Dervish”—two-edged, with a groove down the centre, and light. The handle was of horn, and bound about with leather. And yet we think ourselves brave to venture in the vicinity of my lord the elephant with the latest thing in rifles in our hands !

What with the ham-stringing, and all hunters killing cows and bulls indiscriminately, the result has been that the elephant has left his old haunts, never to return. The Somalis wasted the entire carcase. They do not care to eat the flesh, and even the hide is not so beloved as that of the oryx and rhino. The Somali tusks were never of the vast proportions attained in other parts of Africa. Ivory still forms part of the stock of some trading caravans, so the elephants must exist in the flesh somewhere in Somaliland, unless these traders trade with others again at the rear of the back of beyond.

A twig cracked ! No twig of mine, I swear, since I sat like a statue carved in stone. My foot had long

since gone to sleep, and pins and needles pricked it. The bushes trembled, then were still, and stealthily, with very little movement, the beautiful antelope moved away. I saw him as he circled round a bend in the jungle, and in a flash he was gone. Really I had enjoyed my morning as keenly as though I had added to my bag an hundredfold.

And so back to camp I went, and as I went I notched the trees that I might find the right place in my "Hedd-Godir" (koodoo forest) again. I wanted Cecily to come with me and try and track my friend the lesser koodoo. When I got home, I found all the men congregated round one whom they said was grievously hurt through a camel falling on him. I couldn't find anything wrong, no broken bones, but the man said the pain internally was very great, almost unbearable. I got out my hypodermic syringe and injected some of the morphia we had in case of emergencies into the arm, to the wonderment of the men, and then I had the invalid placed down on a camel-mat to sleep, and all the other men were forbidden to disturb the invalid. And lo! when the effects of the morphia wore off we heard no more of aches and pains. It was *the* cure of the trip. And the "coogeri" medicine was held in high esteem ever afterwards. I asked what "coogeri" meant, and was told—"inside."

Sitting on a camp chair in peace and quietness, with a book and the cup that cheers, Clarence broke in on us to say that a party of twenty-five horsemen had arrived prepared to dibáltig before us—Heaven

only knows why, or where the men had dropped from. With as good grace as we could, and a cup of tea in hand, we went outside the zareba to see a crowd of Somalis, mounted, in the usual lively get-up, *khaili* tobies, shields, spears, and the other necessities of performers of the *dibáltig*. The ponies were so be-tasselled on a bright red band over the eyes, I don't know how they were to see the way at all. One stalwart, the head-man of the party, had decorated his steed with a frill of lions' mane around its neck, fastening in front with a large bunch of yellow ribbons. Very hot and uncomfortable for the pony, but very effective and circus-like.

"Salaam aleikum," and "Mot ! Mot ! io Mot !" Then the chorister-in-chief (these *dibáltig* performances are somewhat like the "waits" at Christmas) began a long song, all—Clarence said—about us, wishing us health, happiness, and many wives.

"Wives, Clarence ?"

"So says the song."

"Then say we can't have wives, because we are not sahibs, and some day we shall be wives ourselves."

"With luck !" ejaculated Cecily.

Clarence translated, and a perfect tremor of excitement shook the whole team. The horsemen pressed closer, and gazed at us until their eyes nearly dropped out of their heads. Laughing at the intensity of the inspection, we took our hats off and bowed. Our hair might be considered adequate proof of Mem-sahibdom. Goodness knows what the team considered it. They drew back and talked and jabbered and discussed.

To dibáltig or not to dibáltig, that is the question. And how we *hoped* they would answer it in the negative, and let us get back to tea.

With a wild war-whoop the matter was decided, and girding up their loins, away and away, hither and thither dashed the performers, throwing spears, catching them, jumping off the pony, then vaulting the saddle, then back again, finally gaining a seat face to tail. A real circus show this. Going at a mad gallop the riders would suddenly jerk the bit—a perfect devil of cruelty—and back the foaming pony would go, haunches to the ground. Poor creatures, how lathered they were and beside themselves with the pace and rush. Dust rose in volumes, and we receded and receded, but the flying figures only drew the circle closer. The affair went on for a whole hour, when it had to cease because the ponies were done, and could not keep up the required speed any longer. All the Somalis came round us, the ponies' heads facing us, almost touching us, and we must have been hidden entirely from our own men, because as our dibáltig friends sat their panting ponies they raised both arms with spears held high, and dear me, *how* they shouted that “Mot” sentence.

I signed with my hand that we wished to get out of the circle—it was not pleasant so near the panting, pawing ponies, and one big black-looking fellow backed his steed out and made a path. I thanked them through Clarence and then began the usual palaver about the inadequacy of the presents.

If every man had to have a tobe it meant twenty-

five, and we had to economise or we should clear out our stock before we finished up at Berbera. We had started out with several pieces of sheeting, but had done an immense amount of distributing. A tobe when cut has to be about twelve times over the length from a man's elbow to his finger tips. That is how we measured. We offered half a dozen tobes, and suggested that the performers should toss up for them.

A hurricane of stormy words ensued, most annoying, as six tobes at a whack is very generous indeed. The men could not be invited to a meal because the rice supplies would not bear any undue strain. The affair ended with the presentation of five good clasp knives. And then the dissatisfied warriors rode away. We took the opportunity of telling Clarence that if any more Somalis came bent on doing this dibáltig performance they must do it on their own. We had seen enough of it. And run on the present lines it is more expensive than a box at the opera. We went back to a second tea, and a bath to get rid of the dust that covered us like flour.

In the evening, Cecily and I again penetrated my koodoo forest by ourselves, more for the pleasure of wandering in the beautiful oasis than anything, and our search went farther than my stroll of the morning. We pushed and crawled our way through the densest thickets that we might find the reason for such flapping and screaming of dozens and dozens of vultures, kites and hawks. In a thicket of thorn where the durr grass grew high, and in patches left off altogether,

and exposed the sand, lay the remains of a lesser koodoo. It had been partially eaten, but not by vultures, a lion evidently, because it had begun on the hind quarters and eaten about half the animal. The antelope's head was thrown back, and the fore legs were tucked beneath him. The lion had sprung from the grass straight on to his prey. The horns swept the hunched shoulders, and I think it must have been my friend of the morning.

Judging by the way in which the birds were acting, coming near, and then retiring, and taking into consideration the fact that they had not ventured to the kill, it was likely that the lion was now lying close to the meat, watching it, until the internal arrangements permitted of eating some more. This is a very usual thing with the big cats. Was it nice to be in this durr grass with a lion, even a fed-up one?

We decided to hurry back to camp and try and get out some of the men before the light gave in, to build us a "machan" over the dead antelope, in which we should keep watch and ward all night in the hope of bagging the lion as he returned to his kill. Our first idea was that one of us—to be decided by tossing up—should remain in the jungly place to see that time was not taken by the forelock by his majesty. But, debating the point, we thought it was going to be a trifle lonely for the one left behind, with night, and possibly a lion, coming on.

We made our way out as quickly as possible, and careering back to camp as though all the fiends were after us, brought Clarence and four of the hunters



KOODOO

with axes and *hangols* to the place where the koodoo had been. Had been ! For there it was not when we returned. The dragging of the bushes and the crushed grass showed us the way. There at some two hundred yards off was all that now remained of the lesser koodoo.

A flash of sinuous yellow. A cry of "Libbah ! Libbah !" from the left-hand hunter. The durr grass waved, and a fine lioness bounded high and sank again. Crack ! from Cecily's rifle. She must have been in better place than I was for a shot. I should have annihilated one of the men had I blazed away. Crack ! again. And then I saw what the redoubtable Cecily was firing at. Another animal altogether ! A massive lion, with an almost black mane and more cumbersome in the front than any other of his genus I had ever seen. All lions fall away very much behind, but I really think this one must have been malformed. However, we never saw him again, so the point had, perforce, to remain unsettled. As the lion streaked off, evidently not inconvenienced by Cecily's bombardment, his mate made a successful effort to follow his lead. Flat, and low to earth, snake-like, she crossed the only bare patch of clearing to the right of me. Still my line of fire was blocked by a hunter who put himself in my way every time as if by design, and had not the sense to drop and give me a chance. Still, there was Clarence on the extreme right, armed with a 12-bore. The lioness would have to run the gauntlet of his fire. " Máro ! Máro ! " (Shoot ! Shoot !) I cried to him in an agony of nervous Hindostanee.

The imperturbable Clarence did nothing, and let the yellow one pass him. Cecily was not now so placed that she could get in a successful shot. Two lions, and both gone! No koodoo left to attract anything save hyænas and jackals. When I asked our shikári why on earth he had let slip so wonderful a chance he was quite calm and said: "Mem-sahib shoot dar lion. I no shoot dar lion." Evidently he meant to be very magnanimous and refrain from poaching on our preserves in the laudable desire to see we got our money's worth.

It was now getting dusk, and ominous dark corners told us night had cast her mantle athwart the trees. I ordered a hunter to cut off the head of the maltreated lesser koodoo, for the sake of the horns, a very easily acquired trophy, but one very well worth having. The head was not eaten at all, for as I have explained it is the habit of lions to begin at the other end.

Then we tried to get out of the place. We took some tosses over thorn and bramble, and disturbed the guinea fowl as they settled to roost in rows on the branches. I upset the equilibrium of a hornbill and his wife, who flapped and croaked their annoyance at me. Before we were clear of the oasis, night had settled down in inky blackness, and then Clarence led us by the hand. I believe he saw in the dark like a cat. He brought us safe and sound to the sandy waste that rimmed the green garden, and once there camp was easily reached.

All through the night the lions roared, and we could distinguish the difference in the voice of the

lion to that of his mate. One would have thought they had eaten too much to roar—a whole lesser koodoo between them ! Perhaps they were protesting that we had docked them of the head. Next day around the wells near where we were camped the pugs of two lions stood out clear in the sand, going from the oasis and back. The wells are too deep for wild creatures to negotiate, but water sometimes is to be had in the clay troughs used by the camels. These troughs were very dry, and I'm afraid that the lions went away thirsty. As it seemed an undoubted fact that the great cats were still in the fastness of green a mile or more in circumference, it did seem absurd for us to go on until we had made another effort to secure a fine trophy for the collection.

At the edge of the oasis, on the north side, before it finally ended in a yellow waste of sand, stood a few guda trees, difficult to climb, for no branches hold out kindly assistance for at least sixteen feet from the roots, when the tree spreads vigorously into fantastic shapes to the top, which attains a height of some fifty feet. The foliage is very wide, and beautifully green. Our idea was to climb a guda in the evening, having tied up a suitable bait below. It had to be a sheep, because we had no goat. We chose our tree, and when the witching hour of twilight arrived, armed with climbing-irons we began the ascent this-wise. First myself, to the astonishment of half our caravan, who had come to see what they should see. They liked the climbing-irons immensely. I don't think they had seen any before.

When I was perched on the bough selected I flung the irons down to Cecily, who used them. Next, with cords, we drew up the rifles. Clarence and a hunter used the climbing irons also, and came up like woodpeckers. The men below tethered the sheep, and departed to camp and bed. It was not very long before we wished we had had a platform made. Not being birds, or bird-like, the perching business hurt frightfully. And it was only by getting well against the trunk we could put up with the position at all. Clarence lay extended full length along a bough, on the look-out—"ship-ahoy!" sort of game. The other hunter imagined himself a Blondin on an insignificant branch beyond me, slightly above me. A ridiculous situation we were all in. I longed to laugh out loud. But we had to be very, very silent and hardly move a muscle. After about an hour I began to get cramp in my foot, and had to press my boot hard against the bough to try to bear the agony calmly.

A roar broke on the stillness. Things were more interesting for a few moments, and Clarence's tense figure outlined on the branch seemed to be an Argus of many eyes. The Blondin gentleman had got on my nerves long since, and I wished with all my heart he would take a seat. The clouds grew darker and darker, and presently rain began to fall, real Somali rain, not in single drops, but water-spouts. The hunter pirouetting on the adjacent bough missed his footing and fell to the ground—Somalis are not the slightest use as tree-climbers—and caused as much

consternation to the sheep as the appearance of the lion could have done. The man had to be followed by the necessary humanitarian inquiries, and we reflected that no lion with an ounce of caution about him would have failed to take warning long ere this. The rain had damped our ardour as well as our clothes. We voted for camp and bed. Cecily affixed the irons to her boots and descended, and then I pulled them up again for my use. Clarence got the rifles down, and the fallen hunter had no need to get any lower. There we all stood in pouring rain. Clarence had to lead the hunter who claimed to be badly injured, and Cecily and I led the sheep.

The caravan was silent, fires out with the rain, but the watch was alert, for on our approach we heard, "Kuma?" (Who are you?) repeated twice. Clarence replied "Friends," and we passed, and all was well—at least more or less, for the camp was in a dismal state of slop. A big rain-storm speedily turns the deep sand to mud. The men were sleeping beneath *herios*, and I think one or two had been making free with our tents, as they had a very hot native smell about them when we turned in to rid ourselves of our dripping garments. The canvas residences stood up well that night and resisted the downpour valiantly. Everything was damp and fires were impossible.

All the next day the deluge continued. It was no use to attempt to go a-hunting, as the rain was washing out spoor as fast as the animals walked. The day dragged through somehow, and bored us almost to tears. However, night saw a welcome cessation of

the rain, and the sky grew clear and dotted with stars innumerable. The next morning had to see the camel-mats dried ere they could go on, and the sun was fortunately like a furnace.

In the evening we were able to trek some eight miles, and formed zareba by starlight. To get the fires lighted was a great difficulty, and the cook sent many messages by the "boy," to encourage us in the belief supper would be forthcoming if we had the patience to wait long enough.

Chatting over the meal we realised that the hour had come when we might dawdle no longer. Time and the season bade us make a decided effort to cross the Haud again now that water was so plentiful. We sent for Clarence and talked to him, deciding to rise early on the morrow and get things into trim for the great undertaking.

CHAPTER XVIII

A JOUST WITH A BULL ORYX

On a sudden one hath wounded me,
That's by me wounded

Romeo and Juliet

Truly, pleasure will be paid, one time or another

Twelfth Night

THE following day we made our way to some adjacent wells, and spent the whole of the hours in filling up everything we could lay hands on with water. All old bottles were utilised, and I arranged that the precious fluid should be allowanced, and any man found helping himself would find the promised bonus at the end of the trip a myth. The camels and ponies were watered, and we had baths ! Then, in the dawn of a day of intense heat, with the early sun a-shimmer on all the glory of green that surrounded us again, the air yet heavy with dew, and drowsy with the hum of myriad insects we marched, heading for the Haud. We might not again have any opportunity of securing any water before we negotiated the great tract, which we were to cross in a different part to our previous journey over.

The jungle was very dense, and the caravan simply crawled. I rode ahead, and about eight o'clock walked into, almost over, a lioness sound asleep with

two cubs. She was off almost before I realised the marvel of the thing. Clarence dashed up, his quick eye had taken in the scene. He handed me my rifle. I frowned at him. Surely he had learned by this time that even a woman can be sporting. For it was not only discretion that made me play the better part, nor the thought of the panic a fracas with a lioness would cause in the caravan. I would have loved to take a cub home. But—there was a big but. Nobody short of a sportsman who “browns” a herd of buck indiscriminately—oh yes, there are such men here and there!—would destroy such a family. They departed in peace, and not in pieces. I spoorred a little way, and in clear sandy ground came on the tiny pugs, now quiescent, now running and claw marks showing.

Next we came on rhino spoor, but in spite of what I had said Cecily halted the caravan, whilst she, in the very hottest part of the day, did a stalk. It all came to nothing, thanks be. I fell asleep on a *herio*, and awakened to find my tent over me. The men had erected it to screen me from the sun. They were servants in a thousand.

From this thick jungle we emerged on to a great open plain, or “bun,” and Clarence told me it was called the Dumberelli. He often told us the names of places we came to, and sometimes I wondered why they should be christened at all. The “bun” was a waving sea of bright green grass, and full of game. Aoul in regiments sought the new grass, an oryx or two, and “Sig” (Swayne’s gazelle), looking like well kept sea-side donkeys, stood about in ones and twos. But

always out of range. Time was of such value here we could not make a really big attempt to secure a specimen of picked hartebeest. But I managed after a wearying effort, in which I was frustrated time and time again by alert bands of aoul, who constantly gave the alarm, to bag a smallish sig, a female, and they carry much lighter heads than the male. I could not afford to pick and choose. It was my first hartebeest, and I feared the possibility of going home minus a specimen of the genus. However, Cecily, who did a rival shoot on her own, secured a male, whose horns topped seventeen inches, a great improvement on the beggarly twelve of my trophy. We took the tape measurement on the front curves.

The sunsets were superb, and heralded the most intense cold. It became necessary to trek every hour we could, as every one dreaded a water famine. We seemed in these days not to sleep at all, but march and march interminably.

One early morning we found the quaintest of lizards lying in the sun. It had an outspread tail that seemed to overbalance the horrid little thing. Clarence prodded it gently with a small stick, and it cried every time he did it, just like a baby. He told us it is called "asherbody," which translated means baby, and I noticed, not for the first time, that the Somali mind has a nice sense in the christening of things.

We trekked right into a large Somali zareba, the largest camp we had yet seen, and after a visit from the head-man, were let in for a "tomasho," or native dance, a different thing altogether to the dibáltig, and

much more boring. We arrived at the *karia* at the time appointed, dressed in our best clothes, which did not say much, as the best was very bad. I would we had been fortified by the possession of spotless garments to steel ourselves against the inquisitive looks of the Somali ladies. It is so hard for a woman to appear at ease in rags. He was a philosopher indeed who said, somewhere or other, "It is our clothes-thatch that, reaching to our heart of hearts, tailorises and demoralises us."

We were received by the usual curious crowd, who fingered our coats and tried to look into our pockets. Clarence explained we were to sit on the *herios* prepared, and the show would begin. Men and women took part in the dance, advancing from either side and then retreating. I have attended many an Indian "potlatch" of extravagant description, but they were dignified in the extreme to the Somali equivalent. I won't describe the dance in detail, because this is supposed to be a pleasant book; besides, Mr. Stead may read it. To put the case mildly, the affair was savage to a degree of ignorance I had not dreamed of in its unvarnished vulgarity.

It was the first indication we had that the Somalis are uncivilised savages. I tried to doze. And being very weary, slept. A violent push from Cecily aroused me to a sense of politeness again, and realising that peace reigned around we stood up, and through Clarence, thanked the gratified "artistes," and left them wrangling over the gifts which lay on the ground, looking as though they were trying to apologise for

the fact that there were not enough of them to go round. We had to trench on the water supply a little after this entertainment, for a wash was an absolute necessity.

Next day a somewhat untoward incident occurred. Cecily and I had detached from a herd of three a fine bull oryx, who by reason of some infirmity was not so fleet as his fellows, and so made an easier quarry. Such a glorious chase he gave us, and more than once we almost took a toss as the ponies groped for a foothold in the maze of ant bear holes.

At last, to cut what promised to be a never-ending chase, I flung myself off the pony at the nearest point I judged we should ever get to the coveted oryx this way, and taking no sort of a sight, I was so out of breath with the shaking of my steed, brought down the antelope in a crumpled heap at a distance of some two hundred and ten yards. This was not so bad, all things considered. We went up close to the fallen creature. I had my hand through the reins of my prodigiously blowing pony, and most injudiciously ranged alongside. Cecily was still mounted. The splendid bull rose from the dead, erect and firm, and I was given no sort of a chance to protect myself before he made for me with lowered horns. It all happened in the twinkling of an eye. I jumped as clear as I could, but the reins entangled me, and the vicious horns caught my left arm as my foe swept along. I was brought to my knees with the impact. As he pulled up in a great slide to turn for a return joust Cecily dropped him, at such close quarters

though that the skin was much damaged. My arm was ripped up most ingeniously for quite three inches. Another rent in my poor coat to be mended ! However, it might all have been much worse. It might have been my right arm. The wind was tempered to the shorn lamb.

I rode back to camp, with a handkerchief twisted tightly round the wound, and Cecily stayed to guard the oryx from vultures, until I could send some one to take over, when she returned to me fired with medical ardour and primed with medical knowledge from our book. She pronounced the wound as of the variety to be stitched. Could I bear it being stitched ? I said certainly, if she could endure the horror of stitching it. So we prepared for action. I told my doctor I would not have the place washed because I was convinced that Somali water, even when filtered, was not calculated to cleanse, rather the reverse, and I did dread blood-poisoning. I sat outside the tent on a packing case, and Cecily put three most workman-like stitches into my arm. She was a brick, never flinching until it was done, when she let off bottled-up steam by crying about four tears, and I think four tears are allowable—I mean without showing any sort of cowardice or lack of courage—don't you ? Rome was not built in a day, and Cecily had never even been hospital-nursing ; but then she is the most unfashionable person in the wide world.

I carried my arm in a sling as we marched next day. Cecily was very anxious to halt the caravan on my account, but this I would not allow. The wells

must be reached at the earliest possible moment. Clarence had reported that the supply was dangerously low. We traversed very ugly country, sand and sand, with a few low scrub bushes dotted about—a dispiriting vista enough. We shot a dik-dik for dinner, and so fared sumptuously. There is about as much meat on the body of this tiny buck as one gets on an English hare.

At last we came to the wells. We found a number of Somalis making a spa out of the place, and selling the water, drop by drop. I don't know if the wells were some one's birthright, or if some speculative Somali jumped the claim, but a repellent old gentleman, who looked as though he had not tried the precious liquid on himself for some years, gave us to understand he owned the place. He asked such wealth for a mere dole of water we decided to camp and think it out. He knew the value of what he had to sell, the old sinner, for though we were but a few marches now from the end of the Haud our caravan was a good size, and its consumption necessarily great. We had the tents set up right there, and prepared to improve the shining hour by seeking some sport on the Toyo Plain.

I discarded my sling altogether, and we started from camp early, reaching the great "bun" after a stiffish ride. We left the ponies in charge of the hunters some way from the fringe of grass, and in a certain amount of cover. We stood for quite a long while watching the sea of waving green which was not yet tall enough to conceal the numerous bands of game

that were out betimes to breakfast. A somnolent hartebeest stood up out of range behind a clump of active aoul. Then we worked our way very gently to a spot which gave us a clearer view. We lay down awhile, glad of the rest, and watched the little harems quarrel and make it up. Sometimes a buck of detective-like propensities would seem to say "I spy strangers," and communicated his alarm to the entire herd. A perfect note of interrogation animated every one for a few moments, and all would gather together, until a buck skipped towards us, and then in active graceful bounds dash back to bring a pal to help investigation. Satisfied, they rejoined the admiring does again.

But that hartebeest! I longed to get near him, but it seemed a hopeless task. His sleepiness had passed, and now he was all ears and eyes. The sun lit up his glossy coat, and caught the odd twist of his horns until they gleamed again. We stalked in vain for an hour or more. My arm was a great drawback to me, but I would not allow it to hamper me, and played the Christian Science dodge on myself, saying, whenever a particularly acute shoot of agony stabbed me, "You only *think* you have pain." At last we hit on a device for ensnaring the active one. He was taking no chances, and that the best laid plans gang aft agley we know. Still my schemes and machinations were rather disorganised for the moment, because I suddenly realised I was sharing my small portion of the earth's surface with a particularly nasty looking snake! It was quite large enough to rout us both, and we should have fled, I know, had not the reptile manifested a

dislike of its own to our presence, and made off into the long grass.

It took us a few minutes to recover from this shock and get back to our designs for ensnaring the hartebeest. The general idea was that Cecily was to work her way round opposite to me so that the sig lay between us. The coveted prize would then, at least we hoped so, break near to one of us. Of course it might just as easily dash off in quite another direction, altogether out of range. But it was the only thing we could think of to dislodge our quarry from the out-of-reach area in which it fed. I could not do any stalking myself that necessitated going on hands and knees, so Cecily set off, wriggling along like an eel. Though I soon lost sight of her, I could in a way judge of her whereabouts. Aoul started here and there as they winded her, moved away, and then contented themselves again. They are like sentinels, these creatures, and must play a most useful part in the drama of the jungle. Not knowing, though, the actual moment Cecily would start the hartebeest, I began to feel quite nervous for fear I missed an easy shot. The tension got quite irritating when up from the sea of grass rose Cecily, like an Aphrodite in khaki. Her loud shout startled the sig, who stood an instant in paralysed affright, then, on the wings of the wind he sailed past me. I threw up my rifle, the pain in my supporting arm forgotten, and fired. The animal went on at a great pace. I do not think I got him anywhere, but Cecily, who ran through the grass to join me, says she heard even from where she was the

"phut" of the bullet, and why didn't I? This worried me a lot. I hate to think of half-shot creatures dragging on in agony. We found our ponies and galloped off in the line of country traversed by the vanished sig. We rode for a long way, searched thoroughly, but found nothing. We saw ostrich, but at long range, and we hadn't the desire to try and bag one. After a lunch of cold oryx and bread of sorts (the oryx, by the way, who gave me reason to remember him), we decided to give up the chase, satisfied my bullet had not found a billet. The whole way home was blank. My shot had alarmed all the jungle folk, and they were now as shy as hawks.

Back in camp the parleying with the stingy proprietor of the wells began. He would not reduce his charges, and we had to have water. I so hated to be done. After due deliberation we served the old gentleman with an ultimatum to the effect that we offered him a fair price, and if he would not accept the amount, we should take the water by force if necessary. Clarence translated the message, and afterwards we saw the recipient talking to his friends, some fifteen Somalis, and gesticulating wildly. The time arrived when the kettle demanded filling ere tea was forthcoming, so with almost all our men carrying *horns* and barrels, we marched right up to the walls. The old man, backed up by his Somalis, came close to Cecily and myself, and jabbered a great deal in furious tones. I expect the words were cuss words all right. They sounded like them. I signed to the men to set to work filling up. The enraged Somali

struck at me with his spear. It would have fallen heavily upon me had not Clarence seen the danger and parried it on his rifle. This annoyed me frightfully. I tendered the amount we considered the water worth, and tapped my rifle significantly. The Somalis fell back, and congregated at a little distance, one of their number presently advancing to ask for backsheesh. The battle was over.

That night my arm was in a parlous state, swollen and inflamed, and the pain well-nigh overwhelmed me. I was in a high fever, and to proceed with the journey was impossible. Cecily's kindness during the awful days that followed was wonderful, and her patience inexhaustible. In truth, I cannot tell how much trouble I must have caused her, for things were not always clear to me, and time seemed nothing. One night I wakened from this world o' dreams, and the tent flap being open I saw the scene around me like a clear-limned etching. A glorious moon lit up the camp. Cecily stood just outside, and by her side—who was it? I racked my muddled brains. Why, of course, the leader of the Opposition. I sank back again, convinced I was dreaming. By my side, on an upturned packing case, lay a bunch of flowers. In the dim light they looked like English roses. They were dream flowers, I suspect, but they seemed to me most sweet. I pondered about them for an age. Was it the marvellous Marconi? Or did Mercury bring them? I cared not, so they came.

Next morning I wakened to sense again, and Cecily was beside me and told me—her dear eyes filled with

tears—how nearly I had been lost to her, and how, at the very worst of things, all unexpectedly, the leader of the Opposition and Ralph had ridden into camp ; that without their help and common sense she could never have pulled me through.

The wells were now practically in our possession, the old gentleman having waived his claims, but we were, of course, still out on the Haud. Camels had been sent off to Berbera to meet us a little farther on, to return with stores, mainly for the men. The Opposition had provided us with many necessities, and I was so glad because I did not want to leave the wild any the sooner because of all this wasted time.

Next afternoon I held quite a Durbar. I sat outside the tent, and most of the men came to make their salaams. Clarence—the good fellow—even got so far as to say, shyly, “Me glad you olri.” They *all* seemed glad to have me all right, and it was nice of them.

The leader of the Opposition and Ralph came to tea, and we made very merry. The latter pretended to be not on speaking terms with Cecily, because at their last interview she had called him “horrid pig,” but I explained that it must be a wild pig, and then it would be a compliment ; he is so much nobler than a tame one, is fleet of foot, and courageous of heart, and sometimes resembles a lion. Where comes the sting of being called after such an animal ? It was delightful to feel we had friends so near, at least just now, when self-reliance was at such a low ebb with me. Old William puts “Honour, love, obedience, troops, of friends ” as making up the joys of life. I did

not want troops, but after the jungle world, *two* did make my joy just then. I have to say the jungle first, because it still stood first, and I longed to be out again, not in it, and yet not of it. "He who has heard the voice of Nature in her wildest places, who has felt the mystery of her loveliness, the glamour of her nameless airs and graces, is one who has eaten of the bread of Faëry, and drunken of the wine of dreams."

And the next day they propounded a scheme to me—these three arch-plotters—we would all join forces, and wind up the shoots together. But I had so many objections, one being the remembrance of the remark at Aden about our wishing to cling on. The leader, with deep sophistry, said that was more than atoned for, and wiped out by the humiliating fact—to them—that our trip was much the most successful, not only in the actual results, but in the peace and quiet of the caravan. In theirs chaos had reigned from the very outset. The head-man had levanted early on, taking with him the two best camels and no end of loot, far worse calamity than a butler! Not a thing had been done willingly, only under compulsion, and grumbling was the order of every day.

I wondered if the extra large sum of money promised to each man of our caravan at the end of the trip, provided his conduct pleased us—quite my own idea—had kept things straight. Was it bribery and corruption? If so, in our case, at least, the end justified the means.

As for our trophies, we of the rival expedition had

much the best of it. The Opposition had but one rhino, and altogether we had reason to feel quite conceited. I hope we didn't. For if there is one thing I hate it is this same conceit. And sometimes I fear I have it slightly. For I judge by the fact that I am apt to feel contempt at times, and lose sight of the motto "Make allowances." Now, conceit and contempt are hand in glove, and if one has the one it entails having the other. But I hate contempt in others, and admire humility as much as any virtue, it is perhaps the rarest of them all. So I tried to be very humble, and thanked the warriors for their gracious words.

Another great reason against the amalgamation was the trouble that would arise with the men. With us Clarence was all powerful. Perhaps the new arrivals would not pay allegiance to him, and so large a number together would surely fight. All things considered, we agreed not to join, but to meet at Berbera and go home together. We were bound there by way of the midst of the Golis, and the Opposition did not propose to take them so far up. They thought the game hardly worth the candle, in more senses than one. True, the reserved area spreads a long way, but we wanted to see the country anyhow.

In these days of convalescence we learned we had such worth having friends. If Cecily regretted calling Ralph a "pig," my conscience pricked me that I once scornfully cavilled at the "leader's" lack of inches. Not that he was by any means a midget. How foolish I was ! Why, the greatest men

have been little. Nelson and Napoleon, Lee and Frederick the Great, Gustavus Adolphus and Marlborough, too, were on the small side.

How very foolish I was !

Of a night Ralph would play his violin around the twinkling fires. It looked so unlikely an instrument in his hands, and yet he made it speak to us like a living thing. He was the finest amateur I ever heard. Even the Somalis loved to hear him play, and sat in charmed groups listening intently. It shows they have receptive souls for beauty. I agree with an old friend of mine that the man who has no music in his soul is fit for "treasons, stratagems, and spoils." If I haven't mangled the Immortal One's words.

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE GOLIS

There was never yet philosopher that could endure the toothache
patiently

Much Ado About Nothing

To climb steep hills requires slow pace at first.

Henry VIII

THE next matter of interest lay in the return of the camel men. They came into camp unexpectedly, and Ralph, who was lunching with us, called out to me in my tent that a civilised looking "oont-wallah" (camel-man) wanted to speak to me. There indeed stood one of the men who had gone off to Berbera by the shortest possible route for supplies. He was to have met us farther on, but we had delayed our departure so much longer than had been planned; we were not, of course, to be found at the arranged rendezvous. So, very sensibly, the small caravan came on to find us. The man gave me particulars of his stewardship, and handed me a bundle of letters, and some ancient *Daily Wails* and other newspapers. The whole lot seemed out of place. Letters and papers are for those who live in the humming world of men. We considered ourselves dead and buried to it. We wished we had been in very truth after opening some of the communications. "Another little bill," Cecily said, handing me a quarter yard long sheet.



RALPH

There were letters from our old shikári uncle, full of advice, kindly doubts, and a few sharp digs. But his rapiers always had great big buttons on, so did not hurt us as he lunged. Sooner, I know, would he have broken his weapon across his knee.

All Suburbia was announcing, through the columns of the *Morning Post*, that marriages had been arranged for them. Who does all this "arranging"? Nobody ever "arranges" a marriage for me. I often look hopefully to see. I suppose if you come on it "arranged," however unpleasant it may be to you, there is nothing to be done but see the thing through. A quaint business! Really quite on the lines of the Stone Age, when a furry suitor would arrange with the furry father to exchange the furry daughter for a couple of rabbits.

Cecily says if some one doesn't arrange a marriage for her soon she'll be left on the shelf, but one can see a lot from a shelf, provided it is high enough. Of course she'd be unpopular. Old maids always are. And this is just because a man sees in every unmarried woman a walking statistic against his irresistibility.

The Opposition kept us going in meat these days, but at last I prevailed on Cecily to leave me and do a stalk on her own. But Ralph joined her, and I wonder how much stalking they did. Anyway, they were bound for the Toyo to look for hartebeest, and all they came back with was the tail, very much the worse for wear and time, of an aoul. Ralph said he grabbed it as the animal dashed past him, and it came off in his hand! I told him he reminded me of the Book of

Chronicles—Unveracious Chronicles! After all, it was no taller story than many one hears, and a good deal funnier than some. We know Eve told the first lie, but I am confident that if Adam ever went big game shooting he came in a very good second at the winning post.

The leader had a brilliant inspiration just then. We would have a day at pig-sticking. He was great after pig in India, and of course where we were was quite the right sort of country. I won't say we had the right sort of mounts. They did not understand the chase of a pig, did not yearn to, and certainly never fathomed the secret.

First, we were explained to about the rules of the game. Then Clarence and some hunters were told off to beat, and we saw to the spears, tipping them, choosing the most likely from the collected ones belonging to our men. I was allowed to wield a light one, being still a semi-invalid. We all rode out towards the Toyo Plain, the men walking behind. I think I have forgotten to mention the fact that Cecily and I rode astride. That torturing, awkward, and most uncomfortable position which is at home considered the correct way to sit a horse would have been impossible in Somaliland, not to say dangerous, living under our present conditions.

The men beat every bush and blade of grass most conscientiously, but at first nothing resulted. On nearing the Toyo, however, we joyfully discovered that a bit of thick thorn cover concealed a small sounder of wart-hog. They scattered as we rode into them.

Cecily smartly detached one of them, which immediately charged away back into the fastnesses of the waving grass of the "bun." A grand hiding-place, and I feared we had lost the treasure. The leader and Ralph dashed like lightning after the pig, and rounded it up in style. Back it came like a whirlwind, and made for the open again. I rode at him, thinking I was doing quite the right thing, and wild to draw first blood, when Ralph signalled "Sow." I was going far too quickly to draw up, my stirrup leather broke, and the consequence was the pig and my steed cannoned violently, and bang over I went. I called to the others not on any account to stop, but to pursue the vanished sounder before it was too late. This they did, and disappeared in a moment.

After I had sorted myself from out the pony, and with Clarence's help picked sundry bits of the landscape off my clothes, I mounted again, and following the trail of the others, and led by their shouts, I arrived on the scene of action just as one spear—Ralph's—was taken. I tried to join the exciting chase that ensued, but my pony would not see the thing through, and disgraced me and itself every "jink." The leader's spear now flashed about so very quickly I could hardly follow each phase of the game, intent as I was on forcing my pony to take a hand in it. The boar charged several times most ferociously, but the nimble warrior parried each onslaught successfully. The boar was indeed a game one, and nothing could hold him. Ralph and his pony went down like nine-pins before him, but the effort was the gallant hog's

last. The leader pinned him down, and that spear was the *coup-de-grâce*.

They said Cecily and I did very well for complete novices at the sport, but I can't see that we did anything but get in the way. It was all very exciting, and we were no end done up by the time we made camp again. Cecily's pony had a nasty gash as a reminder of the fray. Ralph stitched it up most scientifically. We were promised the tushes of the boar, set up in some way, as a souvenir of the great adventure.

One late afternoon Cecily went off with Ralph and Clarence for a final attempt on the life of a hartebeest, while the leader and I peacefully collected butterflies, or tried to, and paid a visit to the opposition camp to see their trophies. All the skulls and skins were inspected. They had a couple of Grevy's zebra, having been to the Bun Feroli (Zebra Plain), after we left them in the Ogaden, and a magnificent hippo from near the Webbi. I felt very envious, but one can't go everywhere. The zebra skins were most exquisite, shining and silky, marked in great lines of white and brown. The stripes varied very much in the two skins, one having much narrower lines than the other. Birds of many varieties the leader had collected, snakes too, and all the lizards. Being full of infinite variety he loved the coleoptera as much as the flaunting glories of the lepidoptera, and it took us a long time to go through it, for each treasure was safely put away in its own box. We made for my camp to find Ralph in the seventh heaven of delight

because he had brought down a hartebeest that Cecily had missed—missed on purpose, she said, to give him the pleasure of bagging it. Anyway, there lay the trophy, a present, Ralph said, for me. I thanked him profusely, because our collection was not overdone with this variety.

I do not really admire this antelope very much, or perhaps I should say I admire it less than any other, since every antelope has some points of undoubted beauty. Their faces are what baulk me. They are so silly looking, like a particularly inane cow—a cow's face, and yet not a cow's face, and though very massive and magnificent in the fore they pan out to nothing in the hind quarters. The horns, set in sockets, are hardly ever the same, curving this way and that way, as cow's do. Hartebeest are the quickest goers in all the antelope world. They are never spoken of by the natives by any other name than "sig." And this is odd, because in other varieties I frequently heard the correct designation.

The best of friends must part, and we were no exception to the rule. However, we buoyed ourselves up with the notion that it was not to be for long. For the second time the opposition shoot watched our departure, but this time we all had an interest in the affair—very different to the almost animosity that actuated us at the start. *Souvent femme varie*, and man too.

Our caravan got on the move once more. The *harns* were not well filled because we had used up all the water, whoever it belonged to, and this made it

necessary for us to march as swiftly as might be. We took on three of the most terrific treks, for length and weariness unsurpassed. The track was fortunately good, but the dust was absolutely blinding, blowing before the wind in clouds, and once or twice during the march I had the tent pitched that we might rest awhile in a slightly clearer atmosphere. Our small quantity of water was used almost at once, and the last march on the Haud was a forced one indeed. We lumbered on long after darkness had fallen, and reached some wells, apparently free, about eleven o'clock. The men formed a rough zareba, but we were all too tired to trouble much, and after watering the animals by the light of the watch fires we had supper and turned in.

The Haud now was safely over, and before us lay the great ascent of the Goli range. The gradual rise began to be felt after the second day's march. We saw numerous Speke's gazelle, and Cecily bagged a fine male, after a prolonged chase, that took her some miles from camp. I was nearly out of my senses with toothache, a grievous pain indeed, and one so impossible almost, under the circumstances, to cure. Dentistry was beyond us.

For two days I trekked in a state of semi-delirium. I got no peace at night nor by day, until at last I hit on a glorious panacea. We had finished a huge day, and on turning in for another sleepless night I decided to drink enough whisky to paralyse me *and* the tooth. A very little spirit overcomes me. I mixed half a tumbler full of whisky with precious little water—drank it—and knew no more till morning!

The thing worked like a charm. The tooth had given over aching, and bar a dark brown taste in my mouth I was none the worse for my carouse.

We saw a couple of oryx out early, and dashed off after them. Ponies were of no use now, and had to be left behind. I crawled along such stony ground I wore down to my bare knees in no time, and then only got within range as the oryx sped away again. They sailed so gracefully over the rough ground, and no obstacle barred their way. Cecily was posted on a small rise beneath which the oryx passed, and got in a telling shot, running down to see the result. We were exceedingly foolish in what we did, after all the experience we had too. Seeing the oryx was hard hit we ran towards him, and he who looked at first like dying as suddenly rose to his feet and ran towards us head down for the charge, his whole weight set for the blow. Perdition catch our stupidity! Did we not know the strength and power of those rapier horns? Cecily was taken back with the onslaught for a moment, and then dashed precipitately behind a clump of aloes. I dropped on one knee to try and get a surer shot, to rise next moment to dodge and flee. My very ignominious flight was my cousin's opportunity. The buck followed me, she followed him, and getting in a close raking shot, finished what looked like the commencement of an ugly affair. This was our last oryx of the trip, and a very fair specimen. The skin of his neck was quite half an inch in thickness, a veritable armour-plate. I did not know until later that the best and most desired shields are got from the neck

skin, the shoulder providing the second quality only.

Higher and higher we climbed each trek, the going much slower now. The camels took their time over the so far simple ascent. We sighted *gerenük* many times, both when riding alone and with the caravan. Many times we pursued them, and as many times returned discouraged. Stalking was a very difficult business here, the bushes all grew aslant, and the buck had a perfection of balance unknown to us. One try of Cecily's very much amused us. She got a chance at a *gerenük*, after a stiff pursuit over hill and down dale, fired, and the kick from her rifle overbalanced her as she clung with uncertain feet to the hillside, and she slid like an animated toboggan downwards. Goodness knows where the *gerenük* or the bullet went to.

We camped on a beautiful range one night, where a small plateau seemed to invite us to rest awhile. The sun was just setting, and the mighty mountains around were bathed in a roseate glow. It was a most perfect scene. The camp that night was like a biblical picture—the sleeping camels, the recumbent forms of their drivers, and over all a sky of such wondrous blue dotted with stars innumerable.

Next the sublime is always the ridiculous. Another camel man fell sick here, but his case was not really genuine, I verily believe. Cecily and I feigned to have found among our things a medicine of most marvellous properties, warranted to cure in one dose all the ills that flesh is heir to. Quinine was its name

really, and Clarence dosed the Somali with it, and the curative effect was at once apparent.

Jackals were here very plentiful, too much so for our peace and quiet. They came prowling round the camp in ones and twos seeking for what they might devour. I shot one at night on hearing a crunching sound near by. I rushed out of the tent in terror lest the half-dry rhino was furnishing a succulent meal. We had no thorn zareba in these days, and the watch must have belied his name. The stealthy prowler passed behind our tent, and I got a clear shot between his gleaming eyes. Far too near! I blew the jackal's head to smithereens, and damaged its beautiful coat considerably also. The whole camp awakened then and buzzed with excitement, until the men knew the nature of the animal that had come in on us. When it was discovered that the intruder was a mere jackal matters quieted down considerably. It was no credit to them that it wasn't a leopard. I lectured the parody of a watch severely next day, and as we were getting to an end of the trip our lightest words had immediate effect. It was quite odd.

The thickness of the aloe jungle here was immense, and to penetrate it was impossible, though constantly we longed to do so, as we heard mysterious rustles in the density.

Our mileage was next to nothing these days, and our marches desperate slow. But a camel won't be hurried.

We had a day in the ravines, picking up the caravan at a given place, taking Clarence and the second hunt

with us. We ventured down a perfect abyss clothed at the bottom in aloe jungle. It was most difficult to keep upright at all, and we took some glorious tosses. The worst thing to contend with was the hunter's habit of carrying Cecily's rifle pointing straight at the person who happened to be struggling along in front. It gave me the creeps to watch him. However improbable an accident may be, we know they do happen in the best regulated families. At last, as repeated telling him did no good, we relieved him of his load. He may have had some method in his madness.

We heard a crackle of the aloes, and two koodoo passed in view, going fairly hard. We hadn't a look in, for they vanished before we realised they were there. We crossed from ravine to ravine, and came on any amount of koodoo spoor, and leopard, the latter some two days old. At last, as we were giving up dispirited, sitting down to recover our breath, a small koodoo bull passed below us, at a distance of some two hundred and thirty yards. It was ridiculous to wait for a slightly improved position, there wouldn't be one, and as meat was very scarce with us these days, I had a try for him. I really aimed in front of the bull, averaging the pace at which he was travelling, and pressed the trigger. It was written in my Kismet book that I might not do freak shots of this kind with success. The koodoo saved his venison, and a sort of groan went up from the greedy hunters. Two hundred yards is really the limit of a sporting shot or chance, and at that distance you cannot make out the animal's

ear clearly—my invariable test. A down hill shot is the one most likely to fail, because it is so difficult to judge distance horizontally, not vertically.

We had a huge climb for it back to our camp, which we saw perched high above us, our tent looking a mere white speck on the sky-line. Once as we skirted a thick bunch of foliage and undergrowth we heard a leopard “cough.” We pulled up, and listened awhile, but could hear no more of him. Firing the place was no use. The smoke might hang about, there was little air in these ravines, and it might be impossible for us to see clearly. We were really tired, and very unenthusiastic, so let the matter go.

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST PHASE

Our gayness and our guilt are all besmirch'd
With rainy marching in the painful field,
And time has worn us into slovenry,
But, by the mass, our hearts are in the trim

King Henry V

AT night came that weird lowing sound a leopard often makes when hunting. Our friend of the afternoon, of course. He wakened us up, and we turned out to see that the watch happened to be on the alert. It would be a parlous thing if we lost any of the precious trophies now when the expedition was almost over—not that taxidermine-covered skins and heads would be the sort of feast that would appeal to a saucy leopard. Then silence again.

Next day one of our hunters heard of a neighbouring *karia* losing a sheep the previous night. It was struck down but not removed. I had heard of such a thing before, and believe it to be an undoubted fact that a leopard kills on occasion for mere lust.

Cecily and I went to the *karia*, which was perched on a plateau surrounded with slopes covered with aloes. Quite a natural fortress, and one that might be most easily guarded from the incursions of wild beasts. But the Somalis seem to me to introduce the kismet idea into every phase of their everyday

life. Any easily avoided disaster is accepted in this fashion.

The head-man gave us all the particulars. A leopard had indeed entered the *karia*, killed a sheep, and then left the carcase. We begged for the remains, and for a consideration got them. Clarence bestowed them at the foot of the rise in open ground, by a brake of aloes and thick cover. The men set about constructing a "machan" in the jungly place, and kept guard till sunset, when Cecily and I took the job on. We climbed into our refuge; it was intensely rickety, and rocked every time we made the least movement. I was no more enamoured of this sort of sport than before, and suppose we were doing it because we felt the trip being so nearly over it was foolish now to miss any chance whatever. For once in a way we were both rather uninterested, a fatal frame of mind in this sort of an affair. We were bitterly cold, and I could hardly hold my rifle at all. Hours seemed to drag along, minutes really. I had to strike a light, whatever the consequence, to ascertain the time. It was 12 a.m. Oh, for bed and this sort of sport at an end! Another weary silence. I slept, I believe, with one eye open. Then an ominous rustle, and a lightning whirr and rush, succeeded by a blank silence again. Whatever had happened now? We listened and gazed attentively, but no more sounds reached our straining ears. Over all the jungle brooded a stillness that could almost be felt. Then Cecily, whose sight is better than mine, said it was plain to be seen even in the blackness that surrounded us that the carcase of

the sheep was no longer there. After that, what a weary night. We did not care to risk getting out, and there was no good to be done in staying in. The dawn broke at last, falsely at first, and dark gray shadows fell again to flee away before the all conquering sun, who rose in splendour, gilding the lofty ranges with tips of gold and red.

We pushed our way out, not waiting for the men to come and let us free, and the whole show, unable to hold up any longer, fell over with us. It was very badly put together, and would have been a pantomime protection in case of stress. We were dishevelled looking before, and worn out for want of sleep, but we were objects by the time we had fought our way from out the collapsed "machan." We followed the pugs of the leopard till they disappeared in impenetrable bush. He had taken his victim to a safe stronghold. But we weren't to be worsted so easily. When Clarence appeared we asked him the best plan for dislodging the cat, who must be gorged now, and a little overdone. Our shikari said he would order some of the men out and try to beat the place. I asked him to take the .35 Winchester himself, and use it if he could. Then began a lively morning. The men beat the place with their spears in sort of flying rushes, dashing forward, then dashing back, and at last, as we really made the radius of the place smaller, we heard a continuous snarling, like that a domestic cat makes when it has a mouse in its paws, only this was much more vicious and sounding louder.

I stood close to the jungle, and Clarence begged me

to stand a little farther off. This I did not care to do. The men were not armed, bar their spears, and it seemed unfair to expose them so without giving them the protection of one's rifle. Cecily was doing the same thing on her side of the brake, where the men were spearing bravely and shouting lustily. We fired into the undergrowth, but it was of no avail ; still the ominous snarling kept up, still the animal would not break cover. I made up my mind I would try and see if I could not get a shot into him somehow, so I took on the silly job of crawling very slowly down the rough trail made through the dense bush by the dragging of the sheep. I came on its remains almost at once. The leopard, where was he ? Then I saw it in one brief second. What a face of rage and fury ! I dare not fire. I backed hurriedly, getting clear of the place, and then fired twice into the very place where I judged the leopard lay up. A rush. Out he came, rather from the side, looking like a fiend let loose. I was glad we were not bang in his path. I could not get a shot in at all, for one of the hunters, in the warmth of his earnest efforts, put himself in my light. There was Cecily, she blazed away ; there was Clarence, whose rifle spoke, but I heard his bullet strike a rock behind. The leopard, with lithe swinging bounds, was up the clefts of the ravine in a moment. I threw up my rifle and had a try for him. No result. He was lost to sight. Four of the men went to the top of the ravine and descended carefully, reporting the leopard to be in a sort of cave between two boulders. We must get there too, of course, which would be a

prodigious bit of climbing. Cicely said she was confident her bullet told; I know mine didn't. We reached the spot where the animal was ensconced, and there, sure enough, we could see, if we stooped, his crouched shoulders, head dropped on paws, eyes gleaming defiance. He was a foe to be afraid of, and I *was* afraid for consequences. The men were in such dangerous positions, and all of us had such insecure foothold. In case of a charge from the leopard one or more would certainly go over the rocks to the bottom of the gorge, a very nasty fall indeed. I made up my mind I would finish it. I walked as carefully as I could towards my enemy, rifle ready, expecting the very worst every minute. I drew a bead on its head. Fired! A moment of such intense anxiety. No movement. We advanced cautiously. The great cat was dead. A passive ending indeed.

By all the laws of first blood he belonged to Cecily. She had got him very much indeed, in the base of the spine. He was done for when I shot him, and it is questionable if he had the power to move at all. Indeed, his ascent of the place, wounded where he was, seemed to us a wonderful feat. The men extricated the beautiful thing; he was somewhat aged, with old teeth, and skin much scarred and seamed with fighting. The head-man from the *karia* was very much delighted, for he insisted the leopard was one for whom they had long looked to make an end of. He had struck down a Somali, who was only saved by the spears of his friends. The yellow danger lurked in rocks, and would, from all accounts, probably have developed into a

man-eater. We were glad to have finished his career.

All the flies in all the world seemed to join in at the skinning, and we went back to camp, breakfast, and a bath of sorts.

We rested that day, seeing to all the trophies, the new acquisition included, instructing the men where to rub the skins and where not. Taking them all round, every specimen was in good condition.

We progressed during the evening hours as long as the light held. The climbing was now quite a big thing, and for one step forward we seemed to go two back. A sounder of wart-hog crossed our front, and Cecily bagged a small sow, quite by mistake, but it was the animal's own fault for growing tushes. This freak occurs often, and I don't think one can be blamed if accidents happen through this mistaken habit. Accidents always do happen when femininity adopts the attributes which are the prerogative of the masculine gender. Anyway, the pig was a great luxury in the way of a change on the daily menu. Of course we had to dress it ourselves—a bit of a set back. We fried some chops for supper that night, and smiled to ourselves as we thought we could almost rival Chicago for quick despatch.

The next big undertaking was the negotiating of the Upper Sheik, a big affair indeed, and we set off with not a few qualms as to our success. The foremost camel looked as though if he fell he must carry all the others with him in swift rush downwards. We took care to lead the van.

“The morning was one of God’s own, done by hand, just to show what He could do.” We climbed up and up, painstakingly and ploddingly, and presently saw the rugged way over which we had come far below us. We had then been marching close on two hours, and must have done less than four miles. A little lonely *karia* was perched on a terraced outlook away to the west, its inhabitants strolling out lazily to watch our progress. Half a mile or so off was the Sheik Argudub’s tomb, a white dome-shaped structure, glinting in the sun, and looking for all the world like a replica of some massive wedding-cake. The whole scene was now grandly picturesque in the extreme, and gaining the top of the pass a wondrous panorama lay spread at our feet. Wealth of colour sprang voluptuous around us: here a mass of green merging to purple, there pale tints of cream and brown, æsthetic and delicate. Everywhere great ravines yawned, black and mysterious. Farther off, the vast Marmitime Plain, and miles on miles away, thirty or more, a tiny dark blue riband, fringing the whole, told us that the sea was there. Valleys, ravines, mountains, rivers too, helped out the beauteous scene, and above all, rising superior, was Mount Wager, mightiest of all the Golis.

We camped in this delightful place, overlooking a vista I can never forget. Preying vultures kept watch over infinite space, in widening circles. A hot wind blew through the camp. Here at last, for the moment, we could see about us without that smoke-like dust to curtain all things. The light of the setting sun

limned clear the mighty peaks, and brooding night swept gently down the slopes and wrapped the world in sombre garb. The wild eerie grandeur of it impressed me greatly, and I simply could not leave our terraced plateau, but beneath the arch of the stars sat on and marvelled. Then, as though by some special arrangement of Providence for our good entertainment, a mighty storm brewed itself sullenly away over the Marmitime, then crept insidiously to the Golis, and broke in majesty. The bombardment lasted for an hour or more, reverberating through every pass and every ravine; the heavens were alight with wondrous flashes, that rent the air in forked spears, striking down to the depths of the darkest crevass.

We were as safe outside the tent as in, I think, but nowhere very safe, the lightning grew so close. Some of the men got under *herios*, some even under the standing camels, a nice Juggernaut to run the risk of bringing down on one's devoted head. Then, gradually the wildness passed, and spent itself in deep-tongued mutterings and distant murmurs. Then came the rain, Somali rain, and we had to shelter. Cecily's treasure had made us our inevitable night-cap—tea—before the streams of water drenched his fire. Thanks be!

I pictured in my mind the days when herds of elephants roamed the Golis valleys, and the lion woke the still ravines with resonant sound. Alas! this place will know them no more.

The Sheik Pass is, of course, christened after the old gentleman who is buried in the wedding-cake

arrangement, and not very far from our camp was an immense cemetery where many thousands of people are buried. Clarence took us also to the ruins of a one-time city, now covered with grass and aloe growth. How ancient the place is I cannot say with accuracy, but it looked very ancient indeed. Not far away at the Upper Sheik is a large Somali village, a Mullah settlement, and the Sheik there, a very enlightened person indeed, told us that the remains of the city are not really very antediluvian, and is the site of the homes of the early settlers from the Yemen. As we neither of us knew anything about such influx we kept silent, to conceal our ignorance. Quite a lot of the tracery on the stones which satisfied unarchæological people like ourselves is nothing but decorative work carved by the shepherds trying to kill time !

Being comparatively near Berbera and "civilisation," the pass being a kind of high road to Brighton. this Mullah saw a good deal of Europeans, and spoke a little English. We presented him with a Koran, a *tusba*, and a couple of tobies—the last of the Mohicans—and so our reception was exceedingly cordial. The Mullah was an elderly man, but it is exceedingly hard to guess ages "out there," and his face was deeply lined, his eyes were very jaded. When the conversation, engineered by Clarence as usual, began to flag I cast about in my mind for a suitable remark, which I placed carefully. He would just wait for me to make another, and seemed to have no inventive faculty of his own. At last I said I hoped all his

wives were well. The Mullah tersely said he had none, and relapsed into silence again. This was a set-back that took some getting over, but I gathered myself together sufficiently to say I trusted the forlorn condition of things was temporary only, and that when he had some wives they would keep well. Cecily pulled my sleeve, and whispered I was getting on very badly. "You try then," I said huffily.

She asked him how many cattle he owned. Oh, hundreds. Would we like some milk?

"I hope he didn't think I was hinting!" murmured Cecily abashed. But we did look forward to a good drink of cow's milk. When it came we could not manage it, for the milk tasted so horribly. I think the milking vessels must have been dirty.

In this settlement they made large quantities of *ghee* for sending down to Berbera, and the whole atmosphere seemed more business-like and agricultural than most Somali *karias*. Quite a crop of *jowári* cultivation brightened the plateau ground around, and farming seemed to be thoroughly understood. Many herds of sheep, watched over by women and children, whitened the hills. A goat of acumen and intelligence led each band, and they were not driven from the rear, with the consequent going in the wrong direction every time that attends the moving of a flock of sheep with us. The shepherdess walked in front, the tame goat followed, and the sheep came wandering after. They were exceedingly fat sheep, and our men revelled in the grease that ensued after the cooking of two presented to us by our friend the Mullah.

The hot *karif* wind here blew hurricanes for a couple of days, and tents would not stand against it. We tried to keep them up, but the anxiety of the prospect of one's house about one's ears kept us awake, and the next night we had a sort of circle made of all our boxes and luggage generally, and slept inside the ring with the gale blowing great guns over our heads. The *karif* is part of the Haga season, July and August, and we had met it, only less furiously inclined, on and off lately. It springs up at night, and you may go to bed with not a breath stirring to wake to feel the tents straining at its moorings. The sand blows before the wind in clouds, and the best way to combat it is to precipitate oneself face downwards until the swirl of grit has passed for the time. At the height of the Golis the *karif* is not usually prevalent, keeping its attentions for the plains. And we were delighted that each morning as the day advanced the wind of the night spent itself into a pleasant refreshing breeze.

Just where we pitched our camp was a reserved area for game, so we descended next morning, minus the hunters, to lower country, down the remains of elephant trails. They are not so amazing to me as the tracks of the bison—extinct, or practically extinct anyway—one comes on in some parts of Montana. I remember one in particular that I thought was the ancient bed of some great river, so wide and deep was it. And yet thousands of bison passing over it to drink daily at a lake in the vicinity had made the wondrous track. But I'm digressing, and that badly.

A couple of agile wild asses raced along a little path-

way cleft in the side of the ravine above us, the dislodged stones raining about our ears. Graceful alert creatures, but of course barred to us, and not only by reason of the red tape that ties them up. I cannot think a wild ass is an allowable trophy. I should for ever apologise if I had one. So—we saw them vanish in a cloud of dust. We saw a klipspringer as we turned a little curving piece of rock. I fired, and missed. Most unfortunately, as the shot was called through every ravine by every echo.

As we were silently standing gazing across a lovely valley a couple of wart-hog sows with immense families ran among the aloes. Cecily dashed after them, and into them, separating the little band. Laughing heartily, she pursued one agile mite, and almost cornered it. The sow turned viciously and charged head down. I shouted to the venturesome Cecily, but she saw the danger as soon as I, and made for an aloe stronghold. The baby pig with little grunts and squeals ran to its mother, who gave up the idea of punishing us for our temerity in waylaying her, and trotted back to her litter, all scuttling away in the tangle of jungly places. We laughed at the comical sight they presented, and then began to lunch off a bit of their relation.

The air made us drowsy, and I think we slept awhile. The bark of a koodoo wakened us, and we started up all alert. Two small does crossed the ravine lower down, but were gone in the fraction of a second. It was a stiff climb back, and as I made a detour round a jutting peak of rock I caught a glimpse

of a distant klipspringer. Down I went, and oh, how I prayed Cecily would keep quiet, and not set a dozen stones a-rolling, for she had not sighted the prize. I threw up my rifle and took careful aim. The klipspringer was off. It perched again on a spiky summit. Bang ! sounded to the astonishment of Cecily. The little buck took a header clean off its halting place, and turning somersaults fell a hundred feet or so. We slid and ran and fell after it. I made certain its horns would be broken and useless, but, thank goodness, we found them intact. I had hit the klipspringer fair and square in the heart, and its rough olive-coloured coat was hardly marked. The little straight horns of this trophy measured three and three quarter inches. The females are hornless.

Then came the difficulty of packing our prize back to camp—our camp in the skies. First we sought a stout branch, and then tied the hollow rounded hoofs of the little klipspringer to it. We always went about with our pockets stuffed with cord and useful things, the sort of things a woman in peace times would not find useful at all. Then we lifted together. What a mighty weight for so small a thing ! The rests we had, the slips downhill, the tempers we got into, are they not all graphically described in my diaries of the day in the following terse but meaning words : “ I shot a klipspringer at the bottom of a ravine. Cecily and I carried it back to our camp in the Upper Sheik ourselves.” Simple words, but fragrant with meaning.

Near camp the waiting Clarence met us, and we gladly turned over the klipspringer to him. It was

indeed a charming trophy, and we were intensely happy at having procured one of this species. Our excursion had about put the finishing touch to our garments, which were already on their last legs. We were literally in rags, and had come down to our last suit. Time had indeed made us slovenly.

If the ascent of the Upper Sheik had been a big matter, what shall we say about the descent? It was a very serious matter, but Cecily and I laughed and laughed, and hugely enjoyed ourselves. The proceedings of a barrow load of stones tipped over the edge would have been graceful to us. I tried the going down for a short way on my pony, but speedily resolved that if I must die I would at least do it with some degree of dignity, and not be hurled into space in company with a wretched, if well meaning, Somali tat. The camels, one by one, went on before us; it would have been vastly unpleasant to go before. Westinghouse brakes are what they wanted, Somali camel men are what they got. Clinging on to the already overbalanced creatures, backing, pushing, shouting, rarely have I seen a more amusing sight. The ponies practically tobogganed down, and the accidents were many. One box full of provisions fell off a heaving camel, burst open, and all the provisions spread themselves as far and as widely as ever they possibly could. I scooped up all the coffee I could find, as it was the last we had. We drank it as "Turkish" afterwards, grits and all, and thus got it down with more liking.

At the bottom of the pass we called a halt for a

much-needed rest, and looking back one wondered however we had made the journey down so successfully. The camels seemed none the worse, but one pony, my erstwhile steed "Sceptre," had gone very lame. We were now in big timber country, and for the first time for an age saw water running, and not stagnant. We took off our boots and stockings, and went in at once, only sorry that propriety would not allow a total eclipse. We could not leave that blessed brook ; I really cannot dignify it by the name of river.

Camp was formed here, but a zareba was no longer a necessity. All that day we drowsed away the hours, wandering about among the trees and chasing butterflies. It was quite an idyllic day.

Next morning we left camp, thoroughly fresh and game for a big tramp. We took our way up a rocky gorge that led us towards the Marmitime. The scenery everywhere was still of the most exquisite description, vastly different to the sun-dried plains we had traversed so short a time ago. Walking was not easy, and we made a great clatter of stones as we passed along. Our noise startled a small creature we had not noticed before, so much the colour of the ground was he. He sprang from rock to rock with surprising agility, and poised for a moment ere he took off again like some light-winged bird. We excitedly started in pursuit, and I was almost certain we should lose him. Cecily vowed she must risk it, and I did not think it mattered very much anyway. The gazelle seemed to me lost.



“ ILEC OLIM MEMINISSE JUVABIT ”

My cousin waited for the creature to rest a second, and then did what I consider the finest shot of the trip. She brought her quarry down from a great height, two hundred and ten yards at least, smack, to a little grassy knoll beneath, stone dead. I patted her on the back. It was a wonderful and never-to-be-forgotten achievement. We had no end of a difficulty to reach the place, and arrived, our joy knew no bounds. It might be said of our trip as of the life of King Charles, that nothing in all of it so much became it as the ending, for this, our last trophy of all, proved to be the somewhat rare Pelzeln's Gazelle. It is not at all rare in the Marmitime, I believe, but necessitating a special expedition there to bag one. The gazelle had quite good horns, topping eight inches. He was fawn in colour, darker on the back, with a black tail. The females of this species carry horns also.

I stayed up in the rocks on guard until Cecily brought Clarence and one of the hunters to do the carrying of our treasure, Cecily and I having gone out of that business.

In camp now the greatest activity reigned, the men working so very willingly, taking no end of pains with the heads and skulls and skins. And the cook, Cecily's cook, made us weird hashes and tea till we feared for our digestions.

CHAPTER XXI

END OF THE GREAT SHIKÁR

Approved warriors, and my faithful friends

Titus Andronicus

Then must I count my gains

Richard III

And so I take my leave

A Midsummer Night's Dream

At last Berbera in the distance. At last the one remaining night in our tent—over. At last the final breakfast in the open—over. Then the outskirts of the town, and then Berbera itself.

The leader of the Opposition and Ralph met us almost at once, looking quite respectable and clean. They said they had been waiting right there for two days for fear we should come unwelcomed. We put up at the old familiar rest-house in the European Square, and our camels and *impedimenta* generally camped in front of us. Our first dinner in “civilisation” did not please us half as much as the culinary efforts of Cecily’s *chef*. Roast chicken with flies is not, after all, so appetising as badly cooked oryx, served up with hunger sauce, and at least, in the jungle, we escaped that last resource of the average cook when she can’t think up a pudding—stewed rhubarb. I wonder if there is a country where the weed can be

avoided? Here it was again, a mass of flies and fermentation, singing away to itself in a little dish.

After dinner we sat outside the bungalow fighting battles o'er again, and regretting, oh, with such an ache of longing, the jungle and the wild. That night we hardly slept at all. We missed the camp sounds, the grunting camels, the sound of the fires being piled, we missed the open—all! We stretched out longing arms and touched a wall! We paced a floor that was not ground.

Everything in the world comes to an end. How sad that is sometimes! How we longed to turn the hands of the clock back, and Time with it!

Next day we joined our camp again, and began to make arrangements for its disbandment. We had come in at a bad time—camels being a drug in the market. The leader and Ralph disposed of theirs by public auction, but there could not be much of a demand for any more at this time of the year. Our beasts were in a very fair condition, all things considered, but we had great difficulty in getting rid of them. At last Clarence produced a dirty old Arab, whose appearance gave one the idea he had no means whatever, but of course this is not peculiar to Arabs, for some of our home millionaires are afflicted in the same way. The old gentleman bargained and bargained until I almost let the creatures go at 30 Rs. apiece, but Ralph arrived at the crucial moment and put a different complexion on the matter. He rushed into the discussion with vigour, and called the offer piracy, robbery, and things of that sort. I never could have

been so personal myself. The Arab did not seem to think any worse of my kinsman for it, and the camels changed hands at the much improved price of 35 Rs. apiece.

The ponies were practically given away, and I had no end of a difficulty to unearth a philanthropist willing to board and lodge "Sceptre." We only just got rid of our camels in time ! That very evening the sportsman arrived in Berbera whom we had left cogitating at Aden. His wife was going stronger than ever, and her temper was, if possible, *worse*. He had not lost her. What a wasted opportunity ! Their caravan had taken a completely different route to ours, having been to the Boorgha country and round by the Bun Feroli. Their trophies were very fine and numerous, and the kindly old shikári showed them to us with great pleasure and pride. He managed to be a sportsman in spite of Madam, not, I am sure, by her aid. She was a Woman's-Righter, and like Sally Brass, a regular one-er. Regardless of the plain fact that we must all be hopelessly ignorant of home affairs, she worried our lives out of an evening to discover our trivial, worthless opinions on all sorts of political questions. It was very amusing to hear Cecily artfully trying to conceal her dense ignorance ; we listened to them one night after dinner, and Madam, who probably knew as little of the subject as her victim, desired to know what Cecily thought of Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal policy. My cousin did not enlarge, so that her lack of knowledge was overwhelmingly apparent. She shook her head solemnly, and said darkly, with grave emphasis, "What indeed !"

Now, "What, indeed!" can cover a multitude of things if said just as it should be. Put the accent on both words, and try it next time you are cornered.

I know Madam regarded us four as a ribald crew, and kept her fickle smiles only for "the Leader," whom she desired to propitiate because his place at home adjoined hers, and as the old shikári meant to put up for Parliament at the next election, Madam saw a faint chance of securing a vote. We got a great deal of amusement out of her wiles and blandishments. One day in between the camel-selling and general disbandment we had much difficulty to repress our mirth, as we heard the warrior being tackled something like this.

"Of course, Major," very suavely, "I can count on *your* vote?"

"I ought to say 'Of course' too. But what precisely are your husband's political views?"

"Oh, he hasn't any. Except on big game shooting."

"Well, that simplifies matters, anyhow," said the officer, musingly. "Could you tell me if he holds with an eight hours' day?"

"I expect so." Then added, as an afterthought, "What—er—what kind of a day is it?"

"Oh," answered the no-wiser warrior, "an eight hours' days is—er—an eight hours' day."

"To be sure," in a tone of great relief. "How silly of me! I should persuade my husband to have any kind of day his constituents most preferred."

"But imagine," put in Cecily, "if they all wanted different!"

“There are three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, I believe,” said the offended lady, frigidly.

The old husband was much more likeable, and we got on well with him when we were allowed a look in. He had a pretty wit, and told stories in an inimitable manner, though not always of come-in-with-the-fish variety. Indeed, some of his anecdotes could better have made an *entree* with the curry. I dare say so much camp life had roughened him a little. When Madam waxed sarcastic, and scornfully told him a tale was too far fetched he would say quite good-humouredly he could never fetch his stories from far enough, as he was for ever seeing the light of auld lang syne in some eye. He had that best and most useful of gifts, the power to say things *apropos* at just the right moment. Most of us think them up afterwards when it is too late. Such a power is a gift worth having from the gods, just as malapropisms come from another quarter.

The traveller's bungalow affected to put us all up. Ralph said it was affectation merely, as the place was so crowded out he slept with his feet through the window !

Anything that was likely to be of the least use to him we gave to Clarence, to his great joy, and his choice did fall on some quaint things. An ordinary English axe was his first selection ; he passed over the native ones in lofty scorn. In addition to these few simple gifts we decided to bestow on him, as a mark of our immense appreciation of the good work done, our spare 12-bore, in order that he might go out on his

next shikár with every degree of safety. Such a present overwhelmed our follower by its magnificence, and he was almost too excited to speak, or express his thanks. At first he did not realise we meant to give it, and it was very pleasant indeed to watch his face as the wonderful truth dawned on his mind.

The rest of our men filed past us as we stood ready to pay them by the side of the tent that had been our home for so long. Every man got his bonus of money, and a little present besides from the stores, and we shook hands all round. I think we all felt the same regret at parting. Absurd as it may sound, the saying "Good-bye" to these rough followers of ours was a sentimentally sad business.

"What days and nights we'd seen, enjoyed, and passed." And truly few travellers had been better served. Clarence was immensely anxious to go home with us, and become, I don't quite know what, in our household. He spoke to me very seriously about it.

"You welly good people," he said; "me go to Englan' all same you." But England and Clarence could never amalgamate, and we had to explain to him we would all look forward to meeting again in Berbera some day.

Cecily gave my Waterbury to the cook—a cheap way of giving a present, as I told her; but she had to give him a useful mark of her appreciation, she said, and her own watch was broken. I said farewell to this personage more in sorrow than in anger, and he went off winding his Waterbury as hard as he could go.

Clarence helped us pack the trophies in great cases, a big piece of work, and one that took us right up to the time of sailing. We counted our gains, and found that they included rhino, lion, leopard, hartebeest, dibatag, gerenük, oryx, aoul, Speke's gazelle, klipspringer, Pelzeln's gazelle, wart-hog, hyæna, jackal, wolf, ostrich, marabou, dik-dik, and one or two other varieties of game and birds. As for our losses—well, I was assured the Baron was no loss at all. For on being guided by Clarence to the filthy abode in the native quarter where the Baron's family resided, I was given to understand that his removal was a source of gratification to them all. The amount of money owing him, and a little over, which I tendered apolegetically enough, instantly caused the very memory of the ill-fated man to fade away. Our other follower, who died naturally, with no assistance from us, directly or indirectly, did not appear to have any belongings.

And so the great shikár ended, and for nearly four months and a half we had lived in tents, and played at being nomads.

Every one of our men came to the quay to see us off, Clarence carrying his rifle, the cook still winding his watch. We all shook hands over again.

“Salaam aleikum, Clarence.”

“Aleikum salaam, Mem-sahibs.”

Salaam.

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