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THE LION
AND
THE ELEPHANT.





THE AFRICAN LION

THE LION
AND
THE ELEPHANT.

BY
CHARLES JOHN ANDERSSON,
AUTHOR OF
"LAKE NGAMI," "THE OKOVANGO RIVER," ETC.

EDITED BY
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"FIELD SPORTS OF THE NORTH OF EUROPE,"
ETC.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE late Charles John Andersson, the well known traveller in Africa, and author of "Lako Ngami" and "The Okovango River," ended his days miserably, as so many other enterprising men have done before him, in the wilds of that continent, leaving behind him voluminous papers and notes, which are now in my possession. Amongst the rest, are materials for his contemplated great illuminated work, "The Ave Fauna of Southern Africa." of which an abstract has recently been published by his talented friend, Mr. John Henry Gurney, under the title of the "Birds of Damaraland, &c.," and as this valuable work has been very favourably received, and poor Andersson, in consequence, once more brought to the remembrance of his numerous friends both in England and Sweden, I am induced to give publicity to the present volume,

which, as coming from the pen of one who probably saw more than most men, of the animals therein spoken of, will not improbably interest both the naturalist and sportsman.

Other notes of Andersson, relating not only to his more recent travels, but also to the natural history of various four-footed animals indigenous to Southern Africa, are still in my possession, and should the present work meet with the reception it is to be hoped and trusted it will, these also may probably be shortly published.

L. LLOYD.

GOTHENBURG,
May 30, 1873.

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THE LION.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—PLACES WHERE THE LION IS FOUND—LION HUNTS IN AFRICA AND IN ASIA—DISTINCT SPECIES—NUMEROUS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA—DESCRIPTION OF THE LION AND LIONESS—THE FACULTIES OF THESE ANIMALS—THE LION'S ROAR—SIZE AND WEIGHT—IMMENSE STRENGTH COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE BENGAL TIGER—DOGS VERSUS THE LION—THE LION'S PACES.

ALTHOUGH both in “Lake Ngami,” and “The River Okovango,” many of my adventures with the Lord of the African wilds are recorded, much remains to be told of his habits, modes of life, &c., some of which, perchance, *may* not have been noticed by other travellers and sportsmen.

The number of lions actually killed by myself have not, it is true, been very great. Neither inclination nor circumstances permitted me to devote much time to their destruction. When leisure permitted, the chase of the Elephant—probably the most exciting and hazardous of African sports—was my favourite pursuit; I may however safely say, I never hesitated to attack the lion when he crossed my path. Still I have seen him face to face when he has been infuriated by the anguish of mortal wounds, have felt his breath fanning my cheek in the

dead of the night, have assisted in depriving him of his prey when maddened with hunger, have met him in the ready swamp and in the dense jungle, have "stalked" the antelope in his company, have seen him pull down the stately giraffe, have roused him in the midst of his "children," and encountered him under many other circumstances—and without taking undue credit to myself, I therefore think I am in some degree, at least, qualified to judge of the royal beast and his habits.

The lion is found from within one hundred miles or so of the Cape of Good Hope to the shores of the Mediterranean, in short, through nearly the length and breadth of Africa. As regards the more southern portion of that continent, however, it is a very generally received opinion with both colonists and natives that there are two distinct species of this animal, viz., the so called "black-maned" and the "yellow-maned" lion; the former being described as the longest in the body, and the latter as the larger in regard to general proportions. The dark colour of the mane of the "black-maned lion" they furthermore say, is not attributable in any way to age—the cause usually assigned by naturalists—but it is of that hue from the first; and this, their view of the matter, is in some degree corroborated by a circumstance that came to my personal knowledge, and for the correctness of which I can vouch. Two lions were shot on the same spot, and almost at the same instant of time, Both were full grown; but one was young, whilst the other was so old that he had merely the stumps

of his teeth remaining, and yet the manes of both were similar—that is blackish.

Besides the so called black and yellow-maned lion, the Anna Zulu Caffirs, whose opinions are by no means to be despised, distinguish between the grey or white, the red and the grey-necked lion (called by the Boers the blue-necked), which they say is peculiarly savage; and, in addition, both hunters and natives make mention of a maneless lion.

In Damora-land again, the inhabitants speak of two kinds of lion. One of a whitish hue, maneless and very long in the body, and hence designated by them the *Onkyama Ombaske*, that is the lion-giraffe; and the other as of a brownish, or of the usual tawny colour, short in the body, and of a fierce disposition. This they call *Onkyama Okomba*.

But the late Sir Cornwallis Harris (then captain), who, as the reader may be aware, spent some time in Southern Africa on a shooting excursion, altogether gainsays the notion of two species of lions being found there; for, after telling us “that, with the exception of the mane of the African lion being often larger and of a finer texture than that of the Indian, attributable probably to the less jungly nature of the country it infests, and to the more advanced age to which it is allowed to attain, it is in every respect (and often in this respect also), precisely similar to that found in Guzerat in India.” He goes on to say, “But I need hardly inform the well-instructed reader that both the colour and the size depend chiefly upon the animal’s age, the

development of his physical powers; and of the mane also, being principally influenced by a like contingency. That, for instance, which has been designated the 'maneless lion of Guzerat,' is nothing more than a young lion whose mane has not shot forth; and I give this opinion with the less hesitation, having slain the 'king of beasts' in every stage from whelphood to imbecility."

In Northern Africa, again, it would seem the general opinion that there is more than one species of lion. M. Gérard, the famous slayer of these beasts, tells us, indeed, "that no less than three species are found in Algeria, viz., the black lion (*el adrea*), the fawn-coloured lion (*el asfar*), and the grey lion (*el zarzouri*). He, moreover, goes into many details relating to each, but his story is too long for insertion in these pages.

The lion also inhabits the hotter portions of Asia, amongst the rest, as said, certain districts in Hindostan. In parts of Turkey, Persia, Syria, &c., it is far from uncommon. What may be the case in the Holy Land at the present day, I know not; but from the frequent allusions made to this animal in the Bible, it would seem formerly to have abounded there.*

In parts, at least, of Asia, as in Africa, the idea is likewise entertained that there is more than one species of lion. Layard, for instance, in his celebrated work, "Nineveh and Babylon," after telling

* Judges xiv. 5, 6; 1 Samuel xvii. 34; Psalm civ. 21; 1 Kings xiii. 24, 25, 28; 2 Kings xvii. 25, 26; Jeremiah xlix. 19; Nahum ii. 11, 12, 13.

us that, on the River Karoom, he had seen lions with a long black mane, goes on to say, "The inhabitants of the country make a distinction between them and the common maneless lion; the former are '*kafir*' or infidels, the others Mussulmans, By a proper remonstrance, and at the same time pronouncing the profession of faith, a true believer may induce the one to spare his life, but the unbelieving lion is inexorable."

Though the belief of there being two or more kinds of lion, not only in Southern and Northern Africa, but in Asia, is, as shewn, pretty general, yet great naturalists, on the contrary, assure us there is only one species in the world, and that the difference observable amongst these animals, in regard to size, colour, &c., is solely attributable to the effects of climate, soil, food, age, or other circumstances. "The lion," says Carpenter, the zoologist, "is much more disposed to exhibit varieties than most of the feline family, with the exception of the domestic cat," and he quotes many unmistakable instances of animals originally of the same race, changing their habits and character by being removed to localities differing in physical condition from those pertaining to the place of their birth.

But be there only one species of lion, or be there several, the subject is at all events deserving the attention of naturalists, and others who devote themselves to the advancement of science.

To resume: lions, though generally distributed over the African continent, probably abound most

in countries bordering on the torrid zone. In parts of Southern Africa they are also very numerous, as what follows will shew :—

“ These rocks and vales and picturesque scenes,” says Moffatt, when describing one of his journeys in the interior, “ were often vocal with the lion’s roar. It was a country once covered with a dense population ; on the sides of the hills and Kasban Mountains were towns in ruins, where thousands once made the country alive, amidst fruitful vales now covered with luxuriant grass, inhabited by game. The extirpating invasions of the Mantaties and Matabele had left to beasts of prey the undisputed right of these lovely woodland glens. The lion, which had revelled on human flesh, as if conscious there was none to oppose him, roamed at large, a terror to the traveller, who often hears with dismay his mighty roaring echoed back by the surrounding hills.”

Elsewhere, when speaking of a wild and desolate region that he was traversing, the worthy Missionary writes :—“ The number of lions hereabouts may be easily accounted for, when it is remembered how thinly scattered are the inhabitants ; and, indeed, the whole appearance of the country impresses the mind with the idea that it is only fit for beasts of prey.”

And further on, when speaking of the Chuenyane Mountains, he says :—“ The number of lions here was fearful. . . . During the night we heard their roar from every point of the compass ”

Then, again, we are told by M. Delegorgue, the

African traveller, naturalist, and sportsman, who spent a considerable time in the Caffir country, "that during the great migration of the Dutch Boers from the Cape Colony to their present settlement, no fewer than 350 lions were killed by them."

Harris, also, testifies to the great number of lions in the country where he was then shooting, in a letter to Colonel Delamaine, an equally enthusiastic and renowned sportsman as himself. He says:—"They are nearly as numerous as the rhinoceros,* and used to visit our waggons by twos and threes by daylight, and every night they made a descent on our sheep and oxen, frequently killing them, and generally driving them out of the thorn fence into the wilderness to a distance of miles."

The lion—I here speak of the common type—is a strikingly bold and majestic-looking animal; his large and shaggy mane, which he can erect at pleasure, surrounding his awful front. His huge eyebrows, his round and fiery eye-balls, which, upon the least irritation, seem to glow with peculiar lustre, together with the formidable appearance of his fangs, exhibit a picture of terrific grandeur, which no words can describe.

One must not, however, judge of the animal from the specimens usually exhibited in menageries; for though these frequently equal in bulk those found

* Of which animals, as he had previously informed his friend, "he on one occasion, when bringing to his bivouac a distance of about a mile) the head of a koodoo shot on the preceding day, encountered no fewer than twenty-two, and was necessitated to shoot three of them to clear the way."

in a wild state, yet being reared in confinement, and deprived of the milk of the mother—of fresh air, so to say—of liberty, &c., they too often acquire a sickly, emaciated, and melancholy look, which, coupled with the want of an ample mane, causes them to contrast very unfavourably with their fellows in a state of nature.

Harris, who had ample opportunities of making the acquaintance of the lion in his native wilds both in Africa and India, would seem, like myself, to have been greatly struck by the different appearance the beast presents when in a state of freedom from that when a wretched prisoner. His words are :—

“Those who have seen the monarch of the forest in crippling captivity, immured in a cage barely double his own length, with his sinews relaxed by confinement, have seen but the shadow of the animal which ‘clears the desert with his roving eye.’”

The lioness is a much less imposing-looking animal than the lion, being not only one-third smaller, but devoid of a mane. When roused, however, either by rage or hunger, she has an even more ferocious aspect than her stately mate, whose countenance is often partially hidden by his flowing mane.

It is said that, as a general rule, the lioness is more fierce and active than the lion, and that such as have never had young are more dangerous than those that have had families.

The lion is possessed of a piercing sight, and his

hearing is very acute, but his sense of smell would not appear to be very nice. Indeed, to judge by Gérard's adventures with the beast, which, by his account, often approached to within a very few paces of him without being at all aware of his presence, it would not seem as if his olfactory nerves served him in any very great stead.

The roar of the lion—perhaps one of the most remarkable characteristics, so to say, of the animal—is fearful, and when heard in the night time, whether in the desert or the forest, impresses one with something like awe. It much resembles distant thunder. The Arabs of Northern Africa have, indeed, only a single word to express his voice, and that is *Rud*, or thunder.

When, however, people speak of the roar of the lion, it is to be presumed they have in their mind's eye the low, hollow, and half suppressed sigh, or groan, that one so often hears in menageries. The roar of the animal in its wild state is something very different, and is truly terrific and appalling. But it is seldom heard in all its intensity; indeed, a friend of mine, who frequently hunted the beast in Southern Africa, only remembers hearing it twice, and I, for my part, on not more than half-a-dozen occasions. The lion's roar, however, even under the mildest form, is most impressive and has not been inaptly likened to the efforts "to disgorge something from the throat."

The impression made on my own mind by the lion's roar would seem to have been in great measure shared by other travellers, who, as my-

self, have had ample opportunities of hearing it in the animal's native wilds.

“Each night,” writes Delegorgue, “these grand carnivori disturbed by their roarings our sleep and the repose of the cattle, confined within a circular fence. There is something terrifying in this noise, the only one that troubles the night in these solitudes, something which obliges me to acknowledge the lion as the ‘master’ in them.”

“One of the most striking things connected with the lion,” says Gordon Cumming, “is his voice, which is extremely grand and peculiarly striking. It consists at times of a low, deep moaning, repeated five or six times, ending in faintly audible sighs; at other times, he startles the forest, with loud, deep toned, solemn roars, repeated five or six times in quick succession, each increasing in loudness to the third or fourth, when his voice dies away in five or six low muffled sounds very much resembling distant thunder. At times, and not unfrequently, a troop may be heard roaring in concert, one assuming the lead, and two, three, or four more regularly taking up their parts, like persons singing a catch. Like our Scottish stags at the rutting season, they roar loudest in cold, frosty nights; but on no occasions are their voices to be heard in such perfection, or so intensely powerful, as when two or three troops of strange lions approach a fountain to drink at the same time. When this occurs, every member of each troop sounds a bold roar of defiance at the opposite parties; and when one roars, all roar together, and each

seems to vie with his comrades in the intensity and power of his voice. The power and grandeur of these nocturnal concerts is inconceivably striking and pleasing to the hunter's ear. The effect I may remark, is greatly enhanced when the hearer happens to be situated in the depths of the forest, at the dead hour of midnight, unaccompanied by any attendant, and ensconced within twenty yards of the fountain which the surrounding troop of lions are approaching. Such has been my situation many scores of times; and though I am allowed to have a tolerably good taste for music, I consider the catches with which I was then regaled as the sweetest and most natural I ever heard."

"Elsewhere," Gordon Cumming observes, "as a general rule, lions roar during the night; their sighing moans commencing as the shades of evening envelop the forest, and continuing at intervals throughout the hours of darkness."

According to Gérard, who had more opportunities than most men of studying the roar of the lion, "It is composed of a dozen sounds, commencing with sighs which rise in volume as they proceed, and finish as they began with an interval between each."

"When a lion and a lioness are in company," Gérard further informs us, "the lioness is always the first to roar, and this at the moment of leaving the lair.

"The lion alternates with the lioness.

"In this manner they proceed on their way, roaring every quarter of an hour until they have ap-

proached the *Douar** which they propose despoiling, and when their appetites are satisfied they recommence roaring and continue until daylight.

“The lion, when alone, also roars on leaving his den, and it often happens that he continues doing so until he reaches the *Douar*.

“In the Summer, during the great heats, the lion roars less, and sometimes not at all; but in the pairing season he makes ample amends for lost time.”

“When the lion roars” says General Dumas, “people pretend one may readily distinguish the following words:—‘*Ahna on ben el mera,*’ that is ‘I and the son of the woman.’ Moreover, that he repeats twice ‘*ben el mera,*’ but ‘*Ahna*’ only once, from which they conclude he dares not recognise any other creature than man besides himself.”

The natives of parts of South Africa, it is to be remarked, assert they can readily distinguish between the roar of a hungry lion, or one intent on mischief, and that of a lion whose appetite is already appeased. When the beast is hungry, his roar, they say, is dull and stifled; but when, on the contrary, his belly is full, it is rather loud.

Moffatt testifies to the like effect. “As we were retiring to rest one night”—writes the Missionary,

* Arab village, or rather encampment, as there, nomad people are constantly on the move from one locality to the other, in accordance with the season of the year, and the state of the pasturage, &c. The “*Donar*” usually consists of from ten to fifteen tents pitched in a circular form; and in the Winter time, at least, is commonly situated on the western slope of a hill—the whole being surrounded by a high and strong fence—with a single opening for the people and cattle.

when sojourning with some natives that he fell in with in his wanderings, who lived entirely on roots and the produce of the chase, and who seemed perfectly versed in all the tactics of the lion—"one of those beasts passed near us, occasionally giving a roar, which softly died away on the extended plain, and it was responded to by another at a distance. Directing the attention of these Balala, and asking if they thought there was danger, they turned their ears as to a voice with which they were familiar, and after listening for a moment or two replied. 'There is no danger, he has eaten and is going to sleep.' They were right, and we slept also. Asking them in the morning how they knew the lions were going to sleep, they replied:—"We live with them, they are our companions.'"

Impressive and terrible as is the roar of the lion, cattle, unless they scent the beast, or have been previously wounded by him, would not appear to take so much notice of it as is generally represented. I at least have known the lion to growl—ay, to roar most savagely—within gun-shot of my bivouac, and not an ox or sheep stirred.*

* What Anderson here tells us seems somewhat contradictory to the experiences of other travellers, to that of Moffatt, at least, who at page 131 says: "One night we were quietly bivouacked at a small pool in the Orep river, where we never anticipated a visit from his majesty; we had just closed our united evening worship, the book was still in my hand, and the closing notes of the song of praise had scarcely fallen from our lips, when the terrific roar of the lion was heard; our oxen, which before were quietly chewing the cud, rushed upon us, and over our fires, leaving us prostrated in a cloud of dust and sand; hats and hymn-books, our bible and our guns, were all scattered in wild confusion. Providentially no serious

And as further evidence of the little dread that domestic animals entertain for the lion's roar, or even for the beast himself, I may mention that it is a usual practice with the South African hunters, after having killed and flayed a lion, to strap his skin behind the saddle, and the horse, even when untrained to the chase, is rarely or never known to shew symptoms of fear. Gérard indeed tells us, he carried his first lion strapped on two mules placed side by side.

The length of a South African adult lion, from the nose to the extremity of the tail, I take to be from eleven to twelve feet, and its height from heel to shoulder, three and a-half feet and upwards. Individuals are, however, said to attain to a still larger size.

Delegorgue when speaking of the District of Mas-selica, on the Eastern coast, where he hunted for some time, and where, from circumstances, he

injury was sustained; the oxen were pursued, brought back, and secured to the waggon, for we could ill afford to lose any. A frienar, seeing the reluctance of the people to pursue in a dark and gloomy ravine, grasped a fire-brand, and exclaimed, 'Follow me,' and but for this promptness and intrepidity we must have lost some of our number, for nothing can exceed the terror of oxen at even the smell of a lion. Though they may happen to be in the worst condition possible, worn out with fatigue and hunger, the moment the shaggy monster is perceived they start off like race-horses, with their tails erect, and sometimes days will elapse before they are found."—ED.

* The length of the dried skin of a wild beast is not to my mind any criterion of its real size when living, because in my own country, Sweden (and the like is probably the case in Africa), when the skin of a bear or wolf, for instance, is nailed up to the wall to dry, it is not infrequently drawn to an unnatural length, and one altogether disproportioned to its breadth.

thought, with some reason, that lions should be the largest and strongest of the race, goes on to say. 'The *dried skin** of one of these animals measured from nose to tail (the latter one metre in length) three metres, fifty centimetres.'

The weight of the beast—so far as I am aware—has never been correctly ascertained, but it is very considerable; and as I should imagine, cannot be less than from five to six hundred pounds.

The lion inhabiting Northern Africa would seem to be fully as heavy as that common to the more southern portion of the continent. Gérard, when speaking of what he calls the "black lion," which he describes as a trifle less than either the "fawn-coloured" or the "grey," says:—"The breadth of his forehead is a *coulée*, the length of his body from the nose to the insertion of the tail, which is a metre long, measures five *coulées*; the weight of his body varies between two hundred and seventy-five and three hundred *kilos*.'

Elsewhere, and when speaking of a huge lion (but the species or variety he does not name), killed in a great *chasse* at which he was present, he tells us that the beast must have weighed at least six hundred livres, or some six hundred and sixty-one and a-half English pounds.

The strength of the lion is enormous; in Algeria—according to Gérard—the Arabs say it is equal to that of forty men. Hans, my faithful attendant, told me he had known an instance where the beast had broken the back of a large ox whilst it was yet alive. This feat the lion accomplished when

planted, so to say, on the poor animal's hind quarters;—for striking his claws deep into the neck of the victim, he, by a violent effort, brought its fore and hind quarters into such close proximity that the spine, as a natural consequence, was at once separated.

He (Hans) told me, moreover, that on a certain occasion a lion seized one of his largest oxen by the muzzle, and dragged it away bodily to a distance, when he killed and devoured it at his leisure.

Thunberg's testimony is to the like effect. "The lion," he says, "is possessed of such immense strength that he will not only attack an ox of the largest size, but will very nimbly throw it over his shoulders, and leap over a fence four feet high with it, although at the same time the ox's legs hang dangling on the ground."

And Sparnian tells us, "that he saw a lion in the Cape Colony take a heifer in his mouth, and though the legs trailed on the ground, he carried it off as a cat would a rat, and leaped a broad dike without the least difficulty."

But what Montgomery Martin relates as to the enormous strength of the lion, is still more extraordinary. After stating "that a young lion has been known to carry a good-sized horse a mile from the spot where he killed it," he goes on to say: "An instance occurred in the Sneemoberg, where one of these beasts carried off a two-year-old heifer; his "spoor" was followed by the hunters for five hours on horseback, and throughout the whole distance, the carcass was ascertained to have touched the ground only once or twice!"

Notwithstanding the above proofs of the great strength and power of the South African lion, Englishmen who have hunted in India, where, as said, this animal also abounds in certain districts, are inclined to think that in these respects he is inferior to the royal tiger, who has been known to smash a bullock's head by a single blow of his paw! That the strength of the lion should be inferior to that of the tiger can, however, hardly be the case, since their relative size is, I take it, much the same, and the structure of the skeleton (however different the outward form of the animal may be) is so nearly alike as to make it difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the one from the other. The notion in question is not unlikely to arise from the tiger being in the habit of *striking* his victim; whilst the action of the lion, when despatching his prey, is more *cat-like—scratching* as it were.

Speaking of the lion's strength and prowess, it may be proper here to remark that English naturalists, after telling us that in the Cape Colony the lion is hunted with dogs, go on to say: "The hounds surround him; and rushing upon him all at once, soon tear him to pieces." It is not, of course, for me to gainsay such high authorities; but I strongly suspect that the reader, after perusing these pages, will agree with me in thinking that even if a score of dogs were simultaneously to attack the king of beasts, not only would a few of them bite the dust, but he himself would come out of the conflict all but, or altogether unscathed!

The usual pace of a lion is a walk, and though

apparently rather slow, yet, from the great length of his body, he is able to get over a good deal of ground in a short time. Indeed, he has been known, in the course of the night, to cross a plain which, at that particular point, was, as the crow flies, forty-five miles in width.

Occasionally he trots, when his speed is not inconsiderable.

His gallop—or rather succession of bounds—is, for a short distance, very fast; nearly or quite equal to that of a horse. Indeed, unless the steed has somewhat the start when the beast charges, it will be puzzled to escape. Many instances are on record of horsemen who have incautiously approached too near to the lion, prior to firing, who have been pulled down by him before they could get out of harm's way. Happily, however, the beast soon tires of the exertion of galloping, and unless his first rush succeeds, he, for the most part, soon halts and beats a retreat.

CHAPTER II.

NATURE OF THE LION'S PREY—SAID TO EAT HIS MATE—DESTRUCTIVE TO CATTLE—THE LION A "MAN-EATER"—THE WHITE MAN VERSUS THE BLACK—NATIVES COMPELLED TO LIVE IN TREES—MANNER IN WHICH THE LION SEIZES HIS PREY—THE LION'S BOUND—THE WOUNDS HE INFLECTS—FOOT OF THE LION—HIS GLUTTONY—FAMILIARITY OF INFERIOR ANIMALS WITH HIM—THE LION'S FLESH—AGE TO WHICH HE ATTAINS—ATTEMPTS SUICIDE.

THE lion preys on most of the animals inhabiting the African wilds that chance to fall in his way; but the antelope tribe would seem to be the chief objects of his pursuit. It happens, however, that the beast is beaten off by the powerful gemsbok, or oryx, on whose long and sharp horns, indeed, he is occasionally impaled, and in such wise that, being unable to extricate himself, both in consequence perish. Even the tall giraffe, as will hereafter be seen, is not unfrequently his victim.

At times, likewise, the young of the elephant becomes his prey. "He lies in ambush for it," says Delegorgue, "and pulls it to the ground; and after strangling it, walks off without disputing his prize with its dam, being certain of recovering it at an after-period."

Occasionally, moreover, he attacks and kills the

buffalo, one of the fiercest and most formidable of African beasts—but often has to pay dear for his temerity; for should there be several buffaloes in company, or others near at hand, the probability is he will be gored to death.

Delegorgue even goes so far as to say that the lion not unfrequently destroys the huge white rhinoceros, an animal which all but rivals the elephant in regard to strength and bulk. His words are:—

“Maintes fois trouvai-je des rhinocéros de la plus haute taille, que ni leur poids, ni leur force, ni leur fureur, n’avaient pu préserver de la mort. La place de combat était visible; partout elle était foulée, et l’empreinte du lion s’y lisait sur chaque point.”

This, however, is quite contrary to my own experience, and that of some of the most celebrated African hunters. As a rule, indeed, lions are said to make themselves scarce where the rhinoceros abounds. Occasionally, it is true, the lion will surprise and destroy the young of this animal as well as that of the elephant; but even the hyena is known to accomplish this feat.

Unless the rhinoceros be previously wounded, I myself am doubtful if the lion ever ventures to attack the adult animal; and even if it be maimed, he would not always seem to prove the victor. I judge so because when on one occasion I was following the spoor of a black rhinoceros (which is greatly inferior in size and strength to the white) that I had wounded on the preceding day, I came

to a spot where one, if not two lions, probably taking advantage of his crippled condition, had evidently attacked him, and, after a desperate scuffle, had been compelled to beat a precipitate retreat. In this case, however, the wounded animal would appear to have been aided by a companion, who had evidently only left him when he could walk no further. This is the sole instance that has come to my knowledge of the lion having the daring to attack the rhinoceros, though I have seen it stated in print that he not only frequently assails, but even masters that horned monster.

✓ Once in a time, moreover, the lion kills and eats his brother lion. On only a single occasion, however, has an instance of the kind come to my knowledge. This was when I was on my way to the Lake Ngami. On a certain night we had badly wounded a lion, which retreated growling into the bush, and shortly afterwards a whole troop of lions rushed on their disabled brother, and tore him to pieces.

✓ And once in a time the lion makes a meal of his mate, an instance of which came under my personal notice; it occurred thus:—

Early one morning a herdsman of ours came running up to us in great fright, and announced "that a lion was devouring a lioness." We thought at first that the man must be mistaken, but on proceeding to the spot found his story to be perfectly true, and that only the skull, the large bones, and the skin of the animal were left. On examining the ground more closely, the fresh remains of a young spring-

bok were discovered. We, therefore, conjectured that the lion and lioness being very hungry, and the antelope not proving a sufficient meal for both, they had quarreled, and that he, after killing his wife, had coolly eaten her also. And certainly, a most substantial breakfast it must have been.

The lion is very destructive to the cattle and sheep of the colonists and natives, especially when several of them are in company, and many instances have come to my knowledge where a troop of these beasts have dashed into the fold and destroyed a number of oxen equal to their own. One night, indeed, when on my way from Damara land to the Cape, and close to my bivouac, five lions broke into a kraal belonging to a famous hunter, afterwards in my employ, and slaughtered no fewer than five cows.

But great as are the ravages of the lion amongst the domestic animals of Southern Africa, they are trifling in comparison with those the inhabitants of Algeria have to complain of, which, as will hereafter be shewn, are something terrible.

The lion, as is known, becomes occasionally a regular "man-eater," and when such is the case proves a dreadful scourge to the country. Happily, however, not one lion perhaps in fifty can properly come under the above denomination.

Various reasons are assigned for lions becoming "man-eaters." Some imagine they first acquire the taste for human flesh (which subsequently they are said to prefer to that of all other) to certain tribes

in the interior never burying their dead, but unceremoniously leaving the corpses of their friends exposed in the forest, or on the plain, as the case may be, a prey to wild beasts or the vulture; and I can readily imagine that a lion thus "blooded," so to say, would have little hesitation, when opportunity presented itself, of springing upon and carrying off the traveller or native that came in his way.

But the practice of getting rid of the dead in the way spoken of does not exist in all parts of the interior, where, nevertheless, "man-eaters" are to be found. I am therefore inclined to believe that the habit of certain lions making a meal of a man, when they can get hold of him, arises rather from incapacity on their part to secure their ordinary prey than from anything else; and I have the greater reason to think this is the case, since young lions are seldom found to indulge in human food. When the beast becomes crippled, whether from wounds or old age, and is no longer able to grapple with the wild animals of his native haunts, it is only reasonable to suppose he will seize the first and most favourable opportunity of satisfying his hunger, and this the exposed situation of the native villages too often affords him.

Strangely enough, the lion, it is confidently asserted, would rather dine off a black man than a white, and the cause assigned is somewhat singular. "The beast in question," says Thunberg, "had much rather eat a Hottentot than a Christian

—perhaps because the Hottentot, being besmeared with fat, always stinks,* and because, as he never eats salt or spices, the juices of his body are not so acrid.”

In certain parts of Southern Africa that have been devastated and partially depopulated by bloody intestine wars, lions have become so numerous and daring, and from feeding on the bodies of the slain, have acquired such a taste for human flesh, that the remaining inhabitants, to escape their clutches, have been necessitated to erect their huts in most extraordinary situations.

“Having travelled one hundred miles,” says Moffatt, “five days after leaving Morega we came to the first cattle outposts of the Matabele, when we halted by a fine rivulet. My attention was arrested by a beautiful and gigantic tree, standing in a defile leading into an extensive and woody ravine, between a high range of mountains. Seeing some individuals employed on the ground under its shade, and the conical points of what looked like houses in miniature protruding through its ever-green foliage, I proceeded thither, and found that the tree was inhabited by several families of Bakones, the aborigines of the country. I ascended by the notched trunk, and found, to my amazement, no less than seventeen of these aerial abodes, and three

* This hint, it is to be hoped, will not be altogether thrown away by certain individuals of my acquaintance, not remarkable for their cleanly habits, so that, when they next visit the African wilds, they may be induced, *if only in self-defence*, to take with them a change of linen and a good supply of soap.

others unfinished. On reaching the topmost hut, about thirty feet from the ground, I entered, and sat down. Its only furniture was the hay which covered the floor, a spear, a spoon, and a bowl full of locusts. Not having eaten anything that day, and, from the novelty of my situation, not wishing to return immediately to the waggons, I asked a woman who sat at the door, with a babe at her breast, permission to eat. This she granted with pleasure, and soon brought me some locusts in a powdered state. Several more females came from the neighbouring roosts, stepping from branch to branch to see the stranger, who was to them as great a curiosity as the tree was to him. I then visited the different abodes, which were on several principal branches. The structure of these houses was very simple. An oblong scaffold, about seven feet wide, is formed of straight sticks. On one end of this platform a small cone is formed, also of straight sticks, and thatched with grass. A person can nearly stand upright in it; the diameter of the floor is about six feet. The house stands on the end of the oblong, so as to leave a little square space before the door. On the day previous I had passed several villages, some containing forty houses, all built on poles about seven or eight feet from the ground, in the form of a circle; the ascent and descent is by a knotty branch of a tree placed in front of the house. In the centre of the circle there is always a heap of the bones of game they have killed. Such were the domiciles of the impoverished thousands of the

aborigines of the country, who, having been scattered and plundered by Moselekatse, had neither herd nor stall, but subsisted on locusts, roots, and the chase, They adopted this mode of architecture to escape the lions which abounded in the country. During the day the families descended to the shade beneath to dress their daily food. When the inhabitants increased, they supported the augmented weight on the branches by upright sticks; but when lightened of their load, they removed them for fire-wood."

The lion, as with others of the feline family, seldom attacks his prey openly, and then only when compelled by extreme hunger. For the most part he steals upon it in the manner of a cat, or ambushes himself near to the water, or a pathway frequented by game. At such times he lies crouched on his belly in a thicket, until the animal approaches sufficiently near, when with one prodigious bound he pounces upon it. In most cases he is successful, but should his intended victim escape, as at times happens, from his having miscalculated the distance, he either makes a second, or even a third bound, which, however, usually proves fruitless, or he returns disconcerted to his hiding-place, there to wait for another opportunity.

The bound of the lion, when about to seize his prey, is terrific. Though I for my own part should not have imagined it to exceed twenty-five to thirty feet, yet others estimate it to be very much more. "From the spot where a noble male lion

had lain to where he alighted," says Delegorgue, "measured eighteen* of my paces," and elsewhere the same author, when speaking of another of those beasts, accidentally disturbed by him from its slumbers, informs us:—"He rose, gathered himself up, and bounded forward (presenting to us his broadside), to alight at fifteen paces distance, when he bounded again. He seemed to fly. His mane resembled a pair of wings; but I and my companions were so confounded and amazed at the sight, as to put all thoughts of firing out of our heads. The rapidity of the animal's bounds would, indeed, have rendered the attempt useless—an arrow from the bow, or the falcon when stooping on the quarry, are not more rapid in their flight."

The height to which the lion can leap is also very great—otherwise, why are the pit-falls in Algeria for the capture of this animal, as Gérard tells us is the case, ten metres in depth. Moffatt, indeed, speaks of the beast jumping on to a rock ten to twelve feet in altitude; and Thomson, when describing a lion-hunt, says:—"He (the lion) bounded over the adjacent thicket like a cat over a foot-stool, clearing brake and bushes twelve or fifteen feet high as readily as if they had been tufts of grass." Delegorgue's evidence is to the like effect. After telling us that he had one evening killed a *Cyno blebus*

* I can quite credit Delegorgue's statement as to the extent of ground covered by the lion in its bound; the rather as, with people generally—such at least is the case in Sweden—the pace usually embraces little more than two feet. Moreover, if I mistake not, a horse in England has been known to leap a rivulet thirty-four feet broad.

Gorgon, and had only time to take away the skin and head, and that his Caffirs, who were heavily laden, expressed a desire to secure the flesh of the animal by placing it for the night in the fork of a tree, at an elevation of fourteen feet from the ground, he goes on to say, "I assisted them in the operation, and we returned to camp. The next day, at dawn, my men proceeded to the larder, which they found entirely empty, not a piece of meat remained, all had been carried off; and on the ground were seen prints of lions' feet, proving the numerous vaults they had made to possess themselves of our provisions."

It is all but the universal belief of the natives, and others, in Southern Africa, that the eyes of the lion, when he bounds on his victim, and until he has succeeded in killing it, are hermetically closed, and that at such times a man may walk unconcernedly up to the beast, and shoot, or otherwise slay him, with impunity! As will hereafter be shewn, indeed, it is under these circumstances that the natives of some districts on the Eastern Coast, presuming on the animal's reputed blindness, fearlessly attack him.

The reasons assigned for the lion's thus closing his eyes are various. That most commonly received is that it is to protect those orbs from injury during the death-struggles of the victim, a reason which to me is not altogether satisfactory. That given by M. Delegorgue is possibly more to the purpose. After describing the manner in which the Cape colonists hunt the lion (of which hereafter), and

telling us that in the event of the beast charging the best plan is to sacrifice the horse, he goes on to say, "If the hunter afterwards wishes to approach the furious carnivora, the proper time for the purpose is when it is upon the body of its victim, because during the efforts the lion makes to slay it the muscles of the jaws act in a most powerful manner, while the neighbouring organs remain passive, as if their co-operation were useless. Thus the beast's eyes are closed, and he, indulging in vengeance, sees no more than if he was stone-blind."

Notwithstanding the great strength and prowess of the lion, it still not unfrequently happens that after having seized his intended victim (especially if it be the giraffe, or other of the larger denizens of the wilds) it escapes from his murderous grasp, though in most instances cruelly lacerated.

Delegorgue, for instance, when speaking of the prowess of the lion, says:— "All I can certify to from ocular demonstration is, that I have seen on the back of an old bull-buffalo (*Bos Capivi*) killed by myself, four fearful furrows, four centimetres in depth, reaching from the shoulder to the insertion of the tail, caused by the claws of the beast in question."

Sir Samuel Baker also mentions an instance showing the wonderful powers possessed by the lion. After telling us that Florian, a former hunting associate of his, had been struck dead by a fearful blow on the head from the paw of one of these beasts which he had previously wounded, he goes on to say:— "Great difficulty was experienced in extracting

the claws of the animal, which had penetrated the skull of the unfortunate man.”

It is a common belief that the lion only feeds on animals he himself has slain; but such is not the case, for many instances have come to my personal knowledge that, when half-famished, he will not only greedily devour the leavings of other beasts of prey, but even condescend to carrion.

Animals slain by lions, it is to be observed, are not unfrequently found all but untouched. In localities where game abounds this is easy of explanation, but not so where it is scarce. By some it is conjectured that this abstinence on the part of the beast arises from his having, while destroying his victim, torn open the paunch, or stomach, the contents of which have come in contact with the flesh, thereby imparting to the latter a disagreeable odour, and rendering it anything but palatable. If this be really the fact, the lion is a much more delicate feeder than the natives, whom I have frequently seen cooking their viands in the half liquid and disagreeable matter in question.

The quantity of flesh that a lion in a wild state devours at a meal is something enormous. On more than one occasion, I have known him to dispatch the greater part of a zebra in the course of the night. The lion eating up the lioness, as related, is another proof of the extraordinary capabilities of his capacious and elastic stomach.*

* The regular daily allowance for a full-grown lion at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, London, is eleven pounds of meat, with which the animal would seem to be perfectly satisfied. But of

Moffatt also seems to have been "taken aback" by the gluttony of the lion. After describing an attack made on his party by one of these beasts, on which occasion it not only carried off a cow, but ate up the poor creature within gunshot of the bivouack fire, he goes on to say :

"When it was light we examined the spot, and found, from the foot-marks, that the lion was a large one, and had devoured the cow himself. I had some difficulty in believing this, but was fully convinced by the Baralongs pointing out to me that the foot-marks of the other lions had not come within thirty yards of the spot: two jackals only had approached to lick up any little leavings. The men pursued the "spoor,"* to find the fragments where the lion had deposited them, while he retired to a thicket to sleep during the day. I had often heard how much a large hungry lion could eat, but nothing less than a demonstration would have convinced me that it was possible for him to have eaten the flesh of a good-sized heifer, and many of the bones besides, for scarcely a rib was left, and some of the marrow-bones were broken as with a hammer."†

course the appetite of one in a state of nature, who can only eat his fill occasionally, cannot be compared with that of one imprisoned.

* Gérard, when speaking of the track of the lion, says: "Place your hand upon the foot-marks, and if the claws of the animal are not covered by the fingers when spread out, it is a male and full grown; if your hand covers the track, it is a lioness or a young lion."

† "The excrement of the lion," says Gérard, "is white, and filled with large fragments of bone. If these are of the thickness of one's

The lion in the Cape Colony, and other more inhabited parts of Southern Africa, frequently—as shewn—carries, or drags, his prey to a considerable distance before devouring it; but in the interior of the country, where the population is scanty, and the beast subject to but little molestation, he, for the most part, either feasts on it where it fell, or removes it to some thicket in the immediate vicinity; and after he has satisfied his hunger for the time being, which with a half-famished lion occupies no little time, he either crouches beside it, or in some retired spot near at hand. “Here,” according to Delegorgue, “he keeps guard over the remainder of the carcase, from which both by night and day he drives away all carnivorous animals that would share it with him. As regards quadrupeds, he has little trouble, for they, knowing his powers, obey without reflection, and remain on the watch at twenty, thirty, and forty paces distance, waiting until such time as the ‘Master’ leaves the spot with a firm and grave step, and abandons to them the residue of his royal repast; but those who give him most trouble are the vultures,* who, alighting on the carcase, are always bearing away something in spite of the king of the forest, or the flourish of his formidable paws.”

Notwithstanding the respect usually shewn to the wrist, they are those of a full grown male lion; if smaller, of a lioness or a young lion.”

* Elsewhere Delegorgue, in his interesting work, tells us “that on one occasion he came on the carcase of a newly slain elephant, so thickly covered with vultures that with a single ball he put no fewer than nine of these disgusting birds *hors de combat*.”

monarch of the desert by his inferiors, they sometimes have the impertinence to feed in company with him on the same carcase. I myself have known this to be the case with the dog, the jackal,* and the hyena.

It happens occasionally, however, that the intruder pays dearly for his audacity. It is indeed asserted by more than one experienced hunter that, when the hyena proves troublesome, the lion has been known to bite off all its feet,† and when thus mutilated, leave the poor animal to its fate. Though unable to vouch for the truth of the story, yet, as in some degree corroborative of it, I may mention that I myself, on one occasion, fell in with a hyena walking on his four stumps.

The flesh of the lion has a somewhat bad name with naturalists and others, who, though admitting that the natives of the countries inhabited by the beast occasionally partake of it, describe it as having a strong disagreeable smell and flavour. And M. Delegorgue, when speaking of a lion that he had recently killed, goes so far as to say “that the odour of it was so rank and disgusting that he had not the courage to taste it, but abandoned it to the vultures.” Of course it is not for me to contradict great authorities, but, as stated in the “River

* It is difficult to account for the popular notion as to the jackal being the lion's provider. To my mind it would be far more correct to reverse the adage, and say that the lion caters for the jackal, as it is in great measure on the leavings of his royal friend that this pretty little animal subsists.

† The same refined kind of cruelty has been witnessed amongst a certain species of African ants.

Okovango," "I on one occasion dined off steak *au lion*, and found it very palatable and juicy, not unlike veal, and very white."

In Northern* as in Southern Africa, lion's flesh is eaten by the natives, though in the former rather I believe as a charm. In Algeria, according to Gérard, special value is set upon the *heart* of the animal, which is chopped into small pieces, and given to the children "to make them strong and courageous."† "A lock of hair plucked from the mane of the beast, and worn about the person, is an amulet which will, it is believed, render the wearer unconquerable in battle."

But, after all, why should not the flesh of the lion be both eatable and nutritious? Mr. Charles Darwin writes me that that of the puma, which he once partook of, is very palatable, whence he infers that the lion's may not be bad-tasted. Then again Mr. Lloyd, in his "Scandinavian Adventures," Vol. II. page 7, says:—"The flesh of all the tiger tribe is, in England, considered the worst of carrion; but

* "These Arabs," says Bruce, when speaking of a certain tribe on the frontiers of Algiers and Tunis, "are immensely rich, paying no tribute either to Tunis or Algiers. The pretence for this exemption is a very singular one. By the institution of their founder they are obliged to live upon lions' flesh for their daily food, as far as they can procure it; with this they strictly comply, and in consideration of the utility of this their vow, they are not taxed, like other Arabs, with payments to the State. The consequence of this life is, that they are excellent and well-armed horsemen, exceedingly bold and undaunted hunters."

† Hence possibly the old saw, "wine is composed of women's tongues and lions' hearts, for if a man partakes of a few glasses of the generous liquor he will talk for ever, and if needs be, fight the devil himself."

this is a mistake, as regards the lynx at least, which greatly resembles veal in appearance, and to my personal knowledge, for I have often partaken of it, is very palatable. Grimalkin in the hands of Mr. Soyer would probably prove equally good.”*

In Southern Africa, the skin of the lion, though of little intrinsic value, is, as a trophy, greatly prized by the hunters, and the like is the case, General Dumas tells us, in Algeria.

“Les Arabes,” says he, “croient qu’il est bon de dormir sur un peau de lion; on éloigne ainsi les démons, on conjure le malheur, et on se préserve de certaines maladies.

“Les griffes du lion montées en argent deviennent des ornements pour les femmes, la peau de son front est un talisman que certains hommes placent sur leurs têtes pour maintenir dans leurs cervelles l’audace et l’énergie.”

The lion is a long-lived animal. Buffon and other naturalists, it is true, estimate its age at only

* May not the prejudice against lion’s flesh have more or less originated with people who had only tasted that of beasts ancient as the hills, or of such as had met their death in a way greatly to deteriorate it? That of a young bear, or even of one in its prime, is, as I can certify, very good eating, whether roasted, boiled, or smoked; whereas that of a very old gentleman, or of one shot under peculiar circumstances, will hardly tempt the appetite of the least fastidious; as a proof of this I, on one occasion, killed a large old male after so severe a run on “skedor” in deep snow, that on cutting up the beast twenty-four hours afterwards, all which time he had lain exposed in the forest during very severe weather, his interior fat was found to be in so liquid a state as to necessitate its removal with a coffee cup, and the flesh, as a consequence (which was subsequently smoked), was so tainted as to render it utterly unfit for human food.—Ed.

twenty or thirty years, and Gérard, on the authority of the Arabs, at from thirty to forty; but unless its days be cut short by accident, its existence is much more prolonged than the above authorities imagine. Even when in confinement, it has attained to a most venerable age. The famous lion, Pompey, which died in the Tower of London in 1760, was known to have been there above seventy years; and one brought from the river Gambia, and which also died in that fortress not many years ago, had attained to the venerable age of sixty-three.

It is asserted that when a lion finds himself disabled, and unable to attack his pursuers, he will not unfrequently turn his ire upon himself and mutilate his own body.

Delegorgue's remarks on this subject are both curious and interesting; he says:—

“Certain animals, when they have been mortally wounded, evince a weakness resulting either from their inadequate means of defence, or from the mildness of their disposition. Some utter plaintive cries, the like of which are never heard except at this critical moment. Others shed tears. The clam (*Boselaphus Oreus*), especially, patiently awaits the chasseur, whom it seems to implore instead of opposing to him its formidable horns. Others again simply resign themselves to their fate without showing any signs either of courage or of weakness.

The lion differs from all these. . . . If the vital parts of its body be pierced, so that it is unable to leave the spot, and its enemies keep at a distance, it abandons itself to despair, and its teeth and

claws are turned against its own person; it crushes its paws, and it breaks its talons, as if it wished to be the author of its own annihilation. It is a veritable suicide, but which the weapons provided by Nature do not permit it to consummate."

The fact that the lion, when, disabled by wounds, it is prevented from either attacking or fleeing from its enemies, mutilates itself in the manner described above, is not, I believe, uncommon. Sir Samuel Baker, indeed, records an instance to this effect that came under his own eye; for when describing (as will hereafter be seen) the dying moments of a lioness, he says:—"Occasionally in her rage she bit her own paws violently, and then struck and clawed the ground."*

* Something of the kind described by Delegorgue and Sir Samuel Baker occurs, I take it, with other beasts besides the lion in their death-struggles. Once indeed, I myself saw a large and badly wounded bear rear itself up on its hind legs against a young spruce pine, which it very deeply scored with its fangs; and when at a distance of some thirty or forty paces I killed it whilst in that position.—Ed.

CHAPTER III.

THE LION MONOGAMOUS—HIS GALLANTRY TO HIS MATE—LOVE AND GALLANTRY AMONG LIONS—THE LIONESSE A JILT—COMBATS OF RIVAL SUITORS—THE PAIRING SEASON—PERIOD OF GESTATION—THE CUBS—THEIR SIZE, APPEARANCE, AND COLOUR—DISPARITY IN THE NUMBER OF THE SEXES—THE YOUNG LION'S APPRENTICESHIP—DEPRIVING THE LIONESSE OF HER CUBS.

THE lion is monogamous, and by all accounts most faithful to his mate. "He never leaves her," says Gérard, "unless from compulsion, and entertains for her a most enduring affection. The lion and the lioness usually hunt in company. From the moment the pair leave their den until their return to it, it is always the lioness who proceeds in advance, and when it is her pleasure to halt, he halts also. Arriving near the "douar" that is to furnish a supper, the lioness crouches outside of the fence that protects it, while her mate bounds bravely over the impediment into the midst of the fold, and after helping himself to what he deems best, carries it to his better half. He regards her, whilst feeding, with infinite pleasure, and keeps guard that no ill may

befall her; thinking not of satisfying his own hunger until such times as his wife has eaten her fill. His love is not confined to the pairing season, for at all times, and under all circumstances, he evinces for her the tenderest regard."

But the love and affection thus shewn by the lion for the lioness, would not seem to be always duly reciprocated. Indeed, according to the author just quoted, "she is of a somewhat fickle disposition, for if a stronger and more courageous lion presents himself and solicits her favours, she deserts her spouse, and places herself under the protection of his rival." "What she seeks for in the first instance," Gérard goes on to say, "is a full-grown and adult mate, who is able to rid her of the young lions, her suitors, whose constant combats with each other on her account weary her out." In Algeria, according to Gérard, at the end of January, when adult male lions, strangers to each other, meet at the fountain, or elsewhere, desperate battles, not unfrequently ending in the death of one or both of the combatants, take place, yet it is more especially during the pairing season that these animals exhibit a belligerent disposition.

"It is then not uncommon," says Gérard, in his usual poetical style, "to see a lioness accompanied by three or four young lions, her admirers, who fight desperately amongst themselves for her favours; but as she at length becomes weary of seeing that they are unable to destroy one another on her account, she leads them towards a grand old lion, whose

valour she appreciates on hearing his roarings.

“The lovers bravely play their part, and arrive, with the lioness, in presence of the preferred rival.

“The preliminaries are soon settled, and the result of these battles is always certain. Attacked by the three impudent youngsters, the old lion reviews them without stirring; with the first grasp of his jaws, he dispatches one of his assailants, with the next he crushes the leg of a second, and the third beast is only too happy if he escapes with an eye, leaving the other eye at the end of the claw of the victor.

“The arena free, the noble animal proudly shakes his mane, and then crouches near to the lioness, who, as the first token of affection, licks with a fondling look the wounds he has received on her account.

“When two adult lions meet,” Gérard goes on to say, “the affair does not terminate thus easily. An Arab, of the tribe of Kesenna, related to me a combat of the kind to which he himself was an eye-witness.

“It was during the rutting season with deer, Mohammed, my informant, a great lover of the chase, was one fine moonlight night perched among the branches of an oak standing in the midst of an extensive glade of the wood, and near to a foot-path, awaiting the arrival of a hind he had previously observed in company with several stags.

“Towards midnight he saw a lioness, followed by a full grown fawn-coloured lion, approaching his

ambush. The lioness left the path, advanced up to the tree in which the man was seated, and crouched at the foot of it. The lion in the meanwhile remained stationary in the path-way, and appeared to listen.

“Mohammed now heard in the distance a scarcely distinguishable roaring, to which the lioness responded. The fawn-coloured lion then began to roar most awfully, which so frightened the chasseur that, to prevent himself from falling to the ground, he clung to the branches, and in the act of so doing his gun dropped from out of his hands.

“The nearer the stranger lion approached the spot, the louder roared the lioness. The fawn-coloured lion now became furious, left the pathway and went up to her, apparently to impose silence, and then retraced his steps to the spot he had just quitted, as if to say, ‘Well! let him come, I am quite ready for him!’

“An hour afterwards, a lion, black as a wild boar, made his appearance at the lower end of the glade mentioned. The lioness rose from the ground, seemingly with the intention of going up to him; but the fawn-coloured lion, divining her purpose, bounded past her direct for the enemy. Both lions crouched prior to taking their spring, and then rushing on one another fell together on the sward, never again to rise!

“The duel was long, and terrible to the witness of it.

“Whilst the bones cracked under the jaws of the two powerful combatants, their claws strewed the glade with each others’ entrails, and their roars,

at times subdued, and at others loud, told of their wrath and their sufferings.

“At the commencement of the battle, the lioness was crouched on her belly, and until its termination she evinced, by the wagging of her tail, the pleasure she experienced in seeing these two lions slaughtering each other.

“When all was over, she advanced cautiously up to the corpses, smelt them, then retreated, and that without replying to the somewhat gross epithet (though applicable enough to the occasion) which Mohammed could not refrain from casting at her, in lieu of a bullet, which was out of his power, his gun, as I said, having fallen to the ground.”

The period of gestation with the lioness is about four months (French naturalists say one hundred and eight days), and she usually brings forth her young in the most solitary, inaccessible places. The cubs are from two to four in number, according to the age and strength of the mother, but commonly there are only two, a male and a female. At their birth they are nearly as large as an adult female domestic cat, and their eyes are open, but they continue helpless for several weeks. When newly whelped, the fur is of a woolly or frizzled texture, the shade of colour a little darker than at a more mature age; and they are distinctly clouded or brushed with deep brown, and have a line of the same dark colour running along the centre of the back. About the commencement of the second year these markings begin to disappear. Whilst the cubs are young, they are harm-

less, pretty, and playful. Many are said to die during dentition, more especially females; and this circumstance probably accounts for the disparity observable between the sexes; male lions, it is calculated, being one third more numerous than females.

“During the first days succeeding the birth of the cubs,” says Gérard, who gives us very valuable information respecting the habits of lions during the breeding season, “the mother never quits them for a moment, leaving the father to provide for their wants. It is not until they have attained the age of three months, and the crisis of dentition is passed, that she weans them, absenting herself from the lair during several hours each day, and supplying them with the flesh of sheep carefully divided into small pieces.

“The lion, whose character, when arrived at mature age, is very grave, is not fond of remaining with his ‘children,’ who tire him with their gambols; and in order, therefore, to enjoy his rest undisturbed, as also to be in readiness to come to the aid of his family should it be required, he makes for himself a lair in the vicinity.

“At the age of four to five months, the cubs follow the mother to the skirts of the wood where the lion brings them food.

“At six months, and during a dark night, the whole family change their abode; and from this time up to the period when the cubs separate from their parents they are constantly on the move.

“At eight months, to a year, after their birth,

the cubs commence attacking the flocks of sheep and goats which, during the day-time, chance to approach the neighbourhood of their lair. Sometimes they attack cattle; but they are still so inexperienced that it often happens they wound ten where they kill a single one; and the father, in this case, is necessitated to interfere.

“It is not until the young lions are two years old that they are able to slay a horse, an ox, or a camel by a single grasp of the jaws at the throat, and to leap over the fence, two metres in height, that surrounds the ‘Douar.’

“The period between the first and second year is truly ruinous to the inhabitants. In fact, the leonine family not only kill for their subsistence, but to acquire the art of killing. It is easy to understand what such an apprenticeship must cost those who furnish the materials.

“At the age of three years the cubs leave the parents, that they may propagate their species; but it is not until their eighth year that they attain to their full growth. They have then acquired all their powers, and the males, who are one-third larger than the females, have full manes.

“Whilst the cubs are in their infancy the mother guards them with the tenderest care, and for their support is more daring and ferocious than usual; making excursions with greater boldness, and destroying every animal that falls in her way, which she afterwards carries to her progeny.”

By all accounts, moreover, the lion himself is never so much to be dreaded as when his partner

has a young family. "He then knows no fear," writes Gordon Cumming, "and will face a thousand men. A remarkable instance of this kind came under my own observation, which confirmed the reports I had before heard from the natives. One day, when out elephant-hunting in the territory of the 'Baseleka,' accompanied by 250 men, I was astonished suddenly to behold a majestic lion slowly and steadily advancing towards us with a dignified step and undaunted bearing, the most noble and imposing that can be conceived. Lashing his tail from side to side, and growling haughtily, his terribly expressive eye resolutely fixed upon us, and displaying a show of ivory well calculated to inspire terror amongst the timid 'Becuanas,' he approached. A headlong flight of the 250 men was the immediate result; and, in the confusion of the moment, four couple of my dogs, which they had been leading, were allowed to escape in their couples. These instantly faced the lion, who, finding that by his bold bearing he had succeeded in putting his enemies to flight, now became anxious for the safety of his little family, with which the lioness was retreating in the background. Facing about, he followed after them with a haughty and independent step, growling fiercely at the dogs which trotted along on either side of him."

In Southern Africa, the cubs, when of a tender age, are not infrequently abstracted from the den during the absence of the mother; but the act is accompanied with much danger; for, should the lioness return whilst the man is in the act of de-

priving her of her progeny, or should she meet him whilst bearing them away, the chances are he will have to pay dearly for his temerity.

In Northern Africa, again, where, from the ravages the lion commits amongst the herds of the natives, every man's hand is against him, and he, in consequence, is rendered more than usually savage, the act of robbing the lioness of her whelps—one of somewhat common occurrence—is rendered doubly hazardous. The manner of proceeding on these occasions is, Gérard tells us, as follows:—

“The situation of the lair having been ascertained, the movements of the mother are watched by a scout from a neighbouring tree or high rock, and when she is seen to absent herself from the den, an Arab glides into it, and, after wrapping his burnous around the cubs to stifle their cries, he carries them away; a horseman is commonly near at hand, who places the captives before him, and rides off at speed.

“But thus to deprive the lioness of her young,” Gérard goes on to say, “is very perilous, and often attended with fatal results;” in proof of which he cites the following instance:—

“During the month of March, 1840, a lioness deposited her cubs in a wood called ‘El Guèla,’ situated in the mountains of Mezioun. The chief of the country, Zeiden, made application for assistance to Sedek-ben-Oumbark, sheik of the tribe Beni-Fourraz, his neighbour; and at the appointed day thirty men from each of these tribes assembled in the defile of Mezioun at first dawn.

“These sixty Arabs, after having surrounded the thickets, gave several shouts, and as the lioness did not appear, they entered it and took possession of her two cubs.

“They were retiring noisily, imagining they had nothing more to fear from the mother, when the Sheik, Sedek, who was somewhat behind the rest, perceived the beast coming out of the wood and making directly towards him.

“He instantly called out to his nephew, Mecaoud and his friend Ali-ben-Braham, who ran to his assistance. The lioness, however, instead of attacking the sheik, who was mounted, rushed upon his nephew, who was on foot.

“This man bravely awaited her approach, and did not pull the trigger until the muzzle of his gun touched the beast.

“The piece merely flashed in the pan!

“Mecaoud threw down his gun, and presented to the lioness his left arm, enveloped in his bournous.

“The beast seized hold of his arm and crushed it into a pulp. The brave young man, without retreating a single step, and without uttering a complaint, drew a pistol from under his bournous, and lodged two balls in the lioness’s belly, which compelled her to let go her hold.

“In another moment she rushed upon Ali-ben-Braham, who sent a ball, though without much effect, between her distended jaws. He was seized by the shoulder and thrown to the ground. His right hand is crushed, several of his ribs are laid

bare, and he owed his life solely to the death of the lioness, which expired on his body."

"Ali-Ben-Braham," Gérard goes on to say, "lives still, but is a cripple. Mecaoud died twenty-four days subsequent to the above rencontre."

"After a *coup* of the above nature," observes General Dumas, when speaking of depriving the mother of her offspring in the manner alluded to, the whole country must be on their guard. For seven or eight days together the lion traverses the district in every direction, and all the while his roarings are atrocious. He has become terrible. It will not then be prudent to meet him."

CHAPTER IV.

DARING OF THE LION—SENTINEL CARRIED OFF BY A LION—
 TERRIBLE TRAGEDY—TWO FORMIDABLE “MAN-EATERS”—
 BUSHMAN KILLED BY A LION—UNSUCCESSFUL PURSUIT OF A
 “MAN-KILLER”—BENEFIT CONFERRED ON THE CHILDREN OF
 THE DESERT BY THE DEATH OF THE LION—APPALLING CATAS-
 TROPHE—IRRUPTION OF A LION INTO A KRAAL—DARING SHOT
 OF A LION-HUNTER—AUDACITY OF THE LION.

BUT it is not only during the breeding season, and when the cubs are small, that the lion shows a bold front to the enemy, for at other times, more especially in the night season, he frequently exhibits a degree of courage and audacity that almost exceeds belief.

“The waggons and cattle had been put up for the night,” says the Landrost, Jah Stenberg, in describing a journey of his into the interior, “when about midnight the cattle suddenly got into complete confusion. About thirty paces from the tent stood a lion, which on seeing us walked away deliberately about thirty paces farther, behind a small thorn-bush, carrying something with him which I took to be a young ox. We fired more than sixty shots at the bush. The south-east wind blew strong, the sky was clear, and the moon shone very brightly, so that we could perceive anything at a short dis-

tance. After the cattle had been quieted again, and I had looked over everything, I missed the sentry before the tent. We called as loudly as possible, but in vain, nobody answered, from which I concluded, he was carried off. Three or four men then advanced very cautiously to the bush, which stood right opposite the door of the tent, to see if they could discover anything of the man; but retired helter-skelter, for the lion, who was still there, rose up and began to roar.

“About a hundred shots were again fired at the bush, without our perceiving anything of the beast. This induced one of the men again to approach it with a firebrand in his hand, but as soon as he neared the bush, the lion roared terribly, and leaped at him, on which he threw the firebrand at the animal, and the other people having fired about ten shots at him, he returned immediately to his former station.

“The firebrand which the man had thrown at the lion had fallen in the midst of the bush, and favoured by the wind, it began to burn with a great flame, so that we could see very clearly into it, and through it. We continued our firing into it. The night passed away, and the day began to break, which animated everyone to fire at the lion, because he could not be there without exposing himself entirely. Seven men posted at the farthest waggons watched to take him as he came out. At last, before it became quite light, he walked up the hill with the man in his mouth, when about forty shots were fired without hitting him. He persevered in retaining

his prey amidst fire and shots, and amidst it all carried it securely off."

"When the day was more advanced," the Landrost further informs us, "the lion was tracked to his lair and killed whilst lying over the mangled remains of the poor sentinel."

Scenes of a similar nature to the above have occurred on two several occasions, in the encampment of my friend, Frederick Green. The particulars of the first is from his journal, kindly placed by him at my disposal.

"*October 21, 1858.*—Last night, a terrible tragedy was enacted in my cattle-fold by two daring lions. The night was intensely dark, with occasional rain; and, fearing lions might select such a night to surprise their prey, I sat up watching until a late hour. I had just lain down, remarking to my friend that, in case of a visit from these brutes, the oxen would give the alarm, when on a sudden there arose an awful scream, followed by a death-like groan, such as I shall never forget; the very recollection of it chills my blood. Two lions had entered the enclosures, and succeeded in carrying away a poor fellow, whom they tore to pieces and devoured within a short distance of our camp. We neither could nor dared attempt a rescue. The unfortunate man was lying in his hut, with his wife and two little children, when one of the monsters forced his way through from the back, and seized him, at the same time inflicting two wounds upon the woman. The poor wretch, in his hurried exit, had evidently, in endeavouring to save himself, laid hold of the poles

of the hovel, for the whole back part of the tenement was carried away.

“On making the terrible discovery, a scene ensued which defies description, and which must have been seen to be fully realized. Of course, sleep was afterwards out of the question; and, in order to guard as far as possible against a similar occurrence, we kept up a constant discharge of firearms during the remainder of this woful night.

“This morning, as soon as it was light enough to see, we took up the spoor of the lions, and, within about 200 yards of the kraal, discovered the spot where it was evident the poor man had been destroyed and devoured. The belt he had worn round his waist was alone left to tell of his dreadful fate, though in following up the trail some parts of his leg-bones were afterwards found. We chased the brutes for about twelve miles, when we were compelled to relinquish the pursuit, without having obtained a shot at them—without, indeed, having caught more than one glimpse of them in the distance. I much regretted having started without my horse, which, though useless as a hunter, would undoubtedly have taken me sufficiently near to get a shot, and to lead the pack of dogs up to the enemy.”

On the second day after the fatal accident, I should add, Mr. Green bid farewell to the dreadful place, thinking thereby to get rid of his terrible foes; but they followed on his “spoor;” and on the evening of the third day one of the “man-eaters” once more entered his enclosures. On this

occasion, however, the horrid monster passed by the oxen without molesting them, and entered the sheep kraal and carried off one of its inmates, putting the remainder to flight. "What with the screechings of the terrified women and children," writes my friend, "the hallooings of the men, the rush of the cattle and the sheep, firebrands whizzing through the air, the discharge of the firearms, the growls of the lions, and other discordant noises, the scene was one which baffles description. I levelled my rifle at the marauder as he was passing the waggon, not above five paces distant; but my gun unfortunately missed fire, and, when I again pulled the trigger, he had disappeared in the darkness. This lion was almost immediately joined by his companion, when they set up a roaring duet that lasted, with very little intermission, until break of day. Continued discharges of firearms kept them from doing further mischief."

The particulars of the second catastrophe in my friend's encampment, which occurred at an after-period, he communicated to me by letter in the following words:—

"At about 11 o'clock, p.m., I was startled out of my sleep by a fearful shriek, such as I had only once before heard uttered by a human being. The thought at once struck me that the two notorious 'man-eaters,' who had enacted so horrible a tragedy in my bivouac on a former occasion, were again prowling about, and had perhaps seized some of the Bushmen lately come to pay me a visit, and who were encamped at the back of my kraal. Snatching

up my rifle and pistol, I bounded out of my bed, and soon found my suspicions confirmed by the dismal howls and wailings of several terrified Bushmen, whom I met hastening towards my waggon for protection; and a poor youth, whom we had captured the day before, was giving vent to his distress in piteous lamentations for the loss of his father, the Bushman Chief, whom one of the lions had, he said, destroyed.

“Calling to some of my people to follow, I hurried away in the direction pointed out by the lad. The night, which in itself was intensely dark, received an additional gloom from the shadow of a cluster of thick-boughed trees under which we were encamped. In order, therefore, to throw some light on surrounding objects, we set fire to the temporary huts, and commenced our search. M. Hahn, the missionary, who was of our party, also came to our assistance with a lanthorn. The dogs, meantime, kept up a furious barking; yet with the certain knowledge that the cowardly murderer was only a few paces from us, we could not obtain even a glimpse of him.

“At length, to the horror of us all, we stumbled on the mangled remains of the unfortunate Bushman who had fallen a victim to the monster. One of his arms was bitten off at the shoulder, whilst his hand still convulsively clutched a part of his dress. This, and some portions of his intestines, was all that remained of a man, alive and quite unconscious of his fate only a very few minutes before. The sight was both shocking and sickening in the extreme;

but, as it was now useless to continue a further search in the dark, we returned to our respective bivouacs. Sleep was, of course, out of the question. The dreadful scene haunted my imagination unceasingly, and I resolved, as soon as the day should dawn, to pursue the horrible 'man-eater,' and, if possible, to terminate his existence.

"Accordingly, on the following morning," my friend goes on to say. "Every man possessed of a gun joined in the chase. At a short distance from the camp the brute was discovered; but though we followed him up for a long time, we could never get a shot at him. The cowardly night-prowler took care not to expose himself; and unfortunately only two dogs ventured to face him. Had the whole pack assailed the beast, he would certainly have been brought to bay and despatched. We were on several occasions close upon him, but the denseness of the bush always helped him to escape before we could get a good aim. At length we lost his track, and after endeavouring in vain to recover it, were compelled to face homewards without ridding the country of so dire a "pest."

Though the lion in question escaped Mr. Green for the time, yet it is satisfactory to add that at an after-period this same animal (as there was every reason to believe) met its death at his hands, though this was at a considerable distance from the spot where the melancholy catastrophe, just related, occurred. It was further believed that this beast was one of the two notorious "man-eaters" that

had some time previously carried off one of my friend's people.

These animals were very accurately described by the natives, who said that the smaller of them catered for the larger; and that this daring monster had been known to enter a village and carry off no fewer than three individuals the same night, returning in the day-time to feast on the remains of the victims. They told my friend, moreover, that upwards of one hundred human beings had already fallen a prey to the beasts in question, adding "that the Bushmen, located in the neighbourhood, had been necessitated to fly the country in consequence of so many of their kith and kin having been killed by them."

"A Bushman, whom we found in the vicinity, on our way northward," Mr. Green further wrote, "fully corroborated this statement; and on being interrogated as to whether there were any villages of his countrymen along the Omuramba to the eastward, replied at once that they could not live there, as the lions destroyed so many of them." The Damaras, moreover, when speaking of these formidable foes always said, "Those lions! the smaller alone killing the people, are known throughout all this region, pointing at the same time to the north, south, east, and west, and are the dread of every one."

"Now it was the lesser of the 'man-eaters,'" my friend went on to say, "of which I had so happily rid the country, and I consequently felt more pleased than if I had killed the largest bull-elephant that roams the wastes of Africa. I had

by this act conferred a benefit on my friends, 'the children of the desert,' and had doubtless been the means of saving many from the horrible fate that had of late fallen to the lot of numbers of their intimates and relatives."

Gordon Cumming, again, very graphically describes a like dreadful incident to those just named, and of which, like Mr. Steneberg and Mr. Green, he was himself, so to say, a spectator.

"Having outspanned, we at once set about making a 'kraal' for the cattle, and that of the worst description of thorn trees, as I had now become very particular since my severe loss by lions on the first of the month. I had yet, however, a fearful lesson to learn, as to the nature and character of those beasts, of which I had at one time entertained so little fear; and on this night a horrible tragedy was to be enacted in my little lonely camp of so very awful and appalling a nature as to make the blood curdle in my veins. I worked till near sundown at one side of the 'kraal' with Hendrich, my first waggon-driver, I cutting down the trees with my axe; and he dragging them to the spot. When the 'kraal' was completed, and the cattle secured within it (as were also my two waggons, the horses being made fast to a trekton stretched between the hind wheels of the vehicles), I turned my attention to preparing a pot of barley-broth. For this purpose, I lighted a fire outside of the 'kraal,' between it and the water, close on the river-bank, and under a dense bush grove of shady trees, but made no kind of

fence around this, our sitting place for the evening.

“The Hottentots, without any reason, made their fire about fifty paces from mine; they, according to their usual custom, being satisfied with the shelter of a large dense bush. The evening passed away cheerfully. Soon after it was dark we heard elephants breaking the trees in the forest across the river; and once or twice I strode away into the darkness some distance from the fireside, to stand and listen to them. I little, at that moment, imagined the imminent peril to which I was exposing my life, or thought that a blood thirsty ‘man-eater’ lion was couching near, and only watching his opportunity to consign one of us to a most horrible death. About three hours after the sun went down, I called my men to come and take their coffee and supper, which was ready for them at my fire, and after supper three of them returned before their comrades to their own fireside and lay down: these were John Stofolus, Hendrich, and Ruyter. In a few minutes an ox came out by the gate of the ‘kraal’ and walked round the back of it, Hendrich got up and drove him in again, and then went back to his fireside and lay down. Hendrich and Ruyter lay on one side of the fire under one blanket, and John Stofolus lay on the other. At this moment I was sitting taking some barley-broth, our fire was very small, and the night pitchy dark and windy. Owing to our proximity to the village the wood was very scarce, the Bakalahari having burnt it all in their fires.

“Suddenly the appalling and murderous voice

of an angry, blood-thirsty lion burst upon my ear within a few yards of us, followed by the shrieking of the Hottentots; again and again the murderous roar of attack was repeated. We heard John and Ruyter shriek, 'The lion! the lion!' Still for a few moments we thought he was chasing one of the dogs round the kraal: but next instant John Stofolus rushed into the midst of us almost speechless with fear and terror, his eyes bursting from their sockets, and shrieked out, 'The lion! the lion! he has got Hendrich, he dragged him away from the fire beside me, I struck him with the burning brand upon the head, and he would not let go his hold. Hendrich is dead! O God! Hendrich is dead! Let us take fire and seek him.' On hearing this the rest of my people rushed about, shrieking and yelling as if they were mad. I was angry with them for their folly, and told them that if they did not stand still and keep quiet the lion would have another of us, and that very likely there was a troop of them. I ordered the dogs, which were nearly all fast, to be made loose, and the fire to be increased as far as could be. I then shouted Hendrich's name, but all was still. I told my men that Hendrich was dead, and that a regiment of soldiers could not now help him, and, hunting my dogs forward, had everything brought within the kraal, when we lighted our fire and closed the entrance as well as we could.

“My terrified people sat round the fire with guns in their hands till the day broke, still fancying that every moment the lion would return and spring again into the midst of us. When the dogs were

first let go, the stupid brutes, as dogs often prove when most required, instead of going at the lion, rushed fiercely on one another, and fought desperately for several minutes; after this they got his wind, and, going at him, disclosed to us his position. They kept up a continued barking until the day dawned, the lion occasionally springing after them and driving them in upon the kraal. The horrible monster lay all night within forty yards of us, consuming the wretched man whom he had chosen for his prey. He had dragged him into a little hollow at the back of the thick bush, beside which the fire was kindled, and there he remained until the day dawned, careless of our proximity.

“It appeared that when the unfortunate Hendrich rose to drive in the ox, the lion had watched him to his fireside, and he had scarcely lain down when the brute sprang upon him and Ruyter (for both lay under one blanket) with his appalling murderous roar, and roaring as he lay, grappled him with his fearful claws, and kept biting him on the breast and shoulder, all the while feeling for his neck; having got hold of which, he at once dragged him backwards, round the bush into the dense shade.

“As the lion lay upon the unfortunate man, he faintly cried, ‘Help me, help me! O God! men, help me!’ After which the fearful beast got a hold of his neck, and then all was still, except that his comrades heard the bones of the neck crashing between the teeth of the lion. John Stofolus had lain with his back to the fire on the opposite side, and on hearing the lion he sprang up, and, seizing a

large flaming brand belaboured him on the head with the burning wood; but the brute did not take any notice of him. The Bushman had a narrow escape, the lion having inflicted two gashes in his seat with his claws.

"The next morning, just as the day began to dawn, we heard the lion dragging something up the river-side, under cover of the bank. We drove the cattle out of the kraal, and then proceeded to inspect the scene of the night's awful tragedy. In the hollow, where the lion had lain consuming his prey, we found one leg of the unfortunate Hendrich, bitten off below the knee, the shoe still on the foot, and fragments of the pea-coat lay around. Poor Hendrich! I knew the fragments of that old coat, and had often marked them hanging in the dense covers where the elephant had charged after my unfortunate after-rider. Hendrich was by far the best man I had about my waggon, of a most cheerful disposition, a first-rate waggon-driver, fearless in the field, ever active, willing, and obliging; his loss to us all was very serious. I felt confounded and utterly sick in my heart."

It is satisfactory to add that the poor Hottentot, who met so horrible a death, was revenged on the afternoon of the following day, when Gordon Cumming gallantly attacked and slew the "man-eater."

Happily, I may here remark in parenthesis, a similar calamity to those just recorded never occurred in my own encampment, though on various occasions, during the hours of darkness, lions have prowled about in its immediate vicinity,

making the welkin ring with their horrible roaring. On a certain night, indeed, as was seen by their tracks, they approached to within a dozen paces of the fire of one of my men. On this occasion, they, moreover, killed my two best dogs, who had attacked them, and so cowed the remaining two that for a long time afterwards they would hardly leave my heels. When lions thus visited our bivouac, the Damaras accompanying me were in the habit of making the most hideous noises, cursing and swearing at the beasts—a custom also prevalent amongst the North African Arabs.

“On another occasion at about midnight,” Gordon Cumming elsewhere tells us, “a lion made a most daring attack on my cattle ‘kraal’ charging completely through the thick thorn hedge; he sent the panic-stricken cattle flying in dire confusion, and dashed to the ground a valuable ox, which lay groaning in his powerful grasp. I was awakened by the noise, and instantly directing a troop of the dogs to be let loose, the cowardly beast was put to flight. The poor ox sprang to his feet, and joined his companions, but his fore and hind quarters were so fearfully lacerated that I was necessitated to shoot him on the following morning.”

On a dark and stormy night, it is to be noted, the lion, “the stealthy prowling tyrant of the wilderness,” is ever the most active and daring, and consequently, at such times, it behoves the traveller to be more specially on his guard.

Moffatt also testifies to the daring of the lion.

“On the night of our third day’s journey in the country of the Balalas,” writes the worthy Missionary, “we halted at a pool (*khokhale*), and listened on the lonely plain for the sounds of an inhabitant, but could discover no light, and, amid the darkness, were unable to trace footsteps to the water. We let loose the wearied oxen to drink and graze; but as we were ignorant of the character of the company with which we might have to spend the night, we took a fire-brand, and examined the edges of the pool, to see, from the imprints, what animals were in the habit of drinking there, and with terror discovered many ‘spoor’ of lions. We immediately collected the oxen, and brought them to the waggon, to which we fastened them with the strongest thongs we had, having discovered in their appearance something which indicated that, either from scent or sight, they knew danger was near. The two Barolongs had brought a young cow with them, and though I recommended their making her fast also, they very humorously replied ‘that she was too wise to leave the waggons and oxen, even though a lion should be scented.’ We took a little supper, which was followed by our evening hymn and prayer. I retired only a few minutes to my waggon to prepare for the night, when the whole of the oxen started to their feet. A lion had seized the cow in question only a few steps from their tails, and dragged it to the distance of thirty or forty paces, where we distinctly heard it tearing the animal and breaking its bones, whilst its bellowings were most pitiful. When these were over, I

seized my gun, but as it was too dark to see any object at half the distance, I aimed at the spot where the devouring jaws of the lion were heard. I fired again and again, to which he replied with tremendous roars, at the same time making a rush towards the waggons, so as exceedingly to terrify the oxen. The two Barolongs engaged to take fire-brands, advanced a few yards, and threw them at him so as to afford me a degree of light that I might take aim, the place being bushy. They had scarcely discharged them from their hands when the flame went out, and the enraged animal rushed towards them with such swiftness that I had barely time to turn the gun and fire between the men and the lion, and providentially the ball struck the ground immediately under his head, as we found by examination the following morning. From this surprise he returned, growling fearfully. The men darted through some thorn-bushes, with countenances indicative of the utmost terror. It was now the opinion of all that we had better let him alone if he did not molest us.

“ Having but a scanty supply of wood to keep up a fire, one man crept among the bushes on one side of the pool, while I proceeded for the same purpose on the other side. I had not gone far when, looking upwards to the edge of the small basin, I discerned between me and the sky four animals, whose attention appeared to be directed to me by the noise I made in breaking a dry stick. On closer inspection, I found that the large, round, hairy-headed visitors were lions and retreated on my

hands and feet towards the other side of the pool; when, coming to my waggon-driver, to inform him of our danger, I found him looking, with no little alarm, in an opposite direction, and with good reason, as no fewer than two lions, with a cub, were eyeing us both, apparently as uncertain about us as we were distrustful of them. They appeared, as they always do in the dark, twice the usual size. We thankfully decamped to the waggon, and sat down to keep alive our scanty fire, while we listened to the lion tearing and devouring his prey. When any of the other hungry lions dared to approach, he would pursue them for some paces, with a horrible howl, which made our poor oxen tremble, and produced anything but agreeable sensations in ourselves. We had reason for alarm, lest any of the six lions we saw, fearless of our small fire, might rush in among us. The two Barolongs were grudging the lion his fat meal, and would now and then break the silence with a deep sigh and expressions of regret 'that a vagabond lion should have such a feast on their cow,' which they anticipated would have afforded them many a draught of luscious milk. Before the day dawned, having deposited nearly the whole of the carcase in his stomach, he collected the head, backbone, parts of the legs, the paunch, which he emptied of its contents, and the two clubs which had been thrown at him, and walked off, leaving nothing but some fragments of bones, and one of my balls, which had hit the carcase instead of himself."

Again, "It is now more than two years ago,

and in the very place where we now stand," said Van Wyk, the Dutch colonist, to Professor Lichtenstein, "that I ventured to take one of the most daring shots that ever was hazarded; my wife was sitting within the house near the door, the children were playing about her; and I was without, near to the house, busied in doing something to a waggon, when suddenly, though it was mid-day, an enormous lion appeared, came up and laid himself down in the shade, upon the very threshold of the door. My wife, either frozen with fear, or aware of the danger of any attempt to fly, remained motionless in her place, while the children took refuge in her lap. The cry they uttered attracted my attention, and I hastened towards the door; but my astonishment may well be conceived when I found the entrance to it barred in such a way. Although the animal had not seen me, unarmed as I was, escape seemed almost impossible, yet I glided gently, scarcely knowing what I meant to do, to the side of the house, up to the window of my chamber, where I knew my loaded gun was standing. By a most happy chance I had set it in the corner close by the window, so that I could reach it with my hand; for, as you perceive, the opening is too small to admit of my having got in; and still more fortunately the door of the room was open, so that I could see the whole danger of the scene. The lion was beginning to move, perhaps with the intention of making a spring. There was no longer any time to think; I called softly to the mother not to be alarmed, and, invoking the name of the

Lord, fired my piece. The ball passed directly over my boy's head, and lodged in the forehead of the lion immediately above his eyes, which shot forth, as it were, sparks of fire, and stretched him on the ground, so that he never stirred more. Had I failed in my aim," Van Wyk went on to say, "mother and children were all inevitably lost. Had the boy moved he would have been struck, the least turn in the lion and the shot had not been mortal. To have taken an aim from without was impossible, as the shadow of anyone advancing in the bright sun would have betrayed him, and in addition to all these chances against me, the head of the creature was in some sort protected by the door-post."

Freeman tells a somewhat similar story.

"A native was fearful," says he, "that ere long he himself would be the victim of a lion that haunted the neighbourhood, and had already preyed on more than one of his family, unless he succeeded in getting him killed. He therefore placed a kid near to the door of his house to attract the beast, intending to shoot him while he was attacking the animal. The lion, however, leaped over the kid, as if of no value, or not sufficiently dainty to satisfy his wishes, and then walked deliberately into the house. The man, however, had taken higher views; he had climbed up outside, and was waiting with his loaded gun on the roof, and on the beast walking out of the house he aimed his gun well and shot him dead on the spot, thankful, no doubt, at having saved himself and his kid."

However fabulous it may appear that a lion should actually make his way into a dwelling house, there can be little doubt that this has happened. Once, indeed, as recorded in "Lake Ngami," one of these beasts actually found its way into the church at Richterfeldt. The alarm being given, the Damaras, assegai in hand, rushed to the spot, and seizing him by the tail and ears, dragged him bodily out of the sacred edifice. The poor brate was actually dying of starvation, and offered but a very feeble resistance. I myself saw his skin.

In further proof that the lion is not at all times shy of approaching the abodes of men, I may mention, in parenthesis, that I was informed by Mr. Rath, the Rhenish missionary at Richterfeldt, in Damaraland, that lions, as well as other beasts of prey, not seldom harboured in a tamarind grove near at hand, and that it was no uncommon thing even for lions to proceed from thence into his garden, and to approach to within a few paces of the dwelling-house itself.

In corroboration of Mr. Rath, I may here state that when, many years ago, Mr. Galton and myself were encamped near to the tamarind grove just spoken of, the men on a certain occasion asked and obtained permission to spend the evening with an acquaintance whose kraal was not far distant, and as Mr. Galton was then absent at the Mission House and the dogs had followed our people, I was thus left quite alone. The night, though somewhat warm, was delightfully bright and still. To enjoy the beautiful weather I had taken my bedding out

of the waggon and placed it on the ground alongside the wheels of the vehicle, which stood not more than twenty paces distant from the brake in question. Being a bad sleeper I lay awake until a very late hour. All nature was hushed and silent, and the night so calm that I might have heard the falling of a leaf. Suddenly my attention was drawn to the tamarind clump, whence proceeded a low rustling noise, like that of some animal cautiously making its way through its mazes. Thinking it probable that a hyena or a jackal was about to pay me a visit, I sat up in my bed, and seizing my gun, which I invariably kept within reach, prepared to give the intruder a warm reception. Imagine my surprise, however, when, instead of one or other of these skulking animals, a stately lion stood suddenly before me! In an instant my gun was pointed at his breast, but hoping he would presently turn his broadside towards me, which would have given me a much better chance of destroying him, I refrained from firing. In this expectation, however, I was disappointed, for on perceiving the waggon, he retreated a step or two, and uttering a low growl, vanished the next moment amongst the bushes.

There is something so grand and imposing in the appearance of the king of the beasts in his native wilds, more especially when he stands in an attitude of surprise or defiance, that it is impossible not to be more or less awed in his presence.

To proceed with my story, and further to show the great daring of the lion, I may mention an

incident that occurred when Mr. Galton and myself were travelling in company in Damaraland.

With the exception of resting an hour or two by the way, we had pushed on with the two waggons (each, as is usual in Africa, drawn by twelve oxen) during the night, when at day-break, and just as we had reached the Swakop river, we were suddenly startled by the most tremendous roaring of lions, which, evidently, were close at hand. In a few moments afterwards, two of those magnificent beasts—male and female—emerged from the bushes at about one hundred and fifty paces a-head of us. On perceiving the cavalcade, they gave another terrific roar, of so angry a nature as to cause the greatest consternation amongst the cattle. Those attached to the foremost waggon wheeled round instantaneously; and, before it was possible to prevent them, ran right into the midst of the aftermost team, and I expected every moment to see the vehicles capsized or smashed to atoms.

What with the bellowing of the oxen, the shouting and screaming of the men, the smashing and breaking of yokes, &c., and the continued roar of the lions, the scene was such as to baffle all description.

The lion, himself, after having approached very near to us, again retreated into the bushes; but the lioness seated herself quietly within less than a hundred yards of the waggons, growling most furiously. Throwing the reins over the saddle of 'Spring,' who, by-the-bye, had nearly unseated me on the first appearance of the lions, I sprang

to the ground, and seizing a double-barrelled gun, which I always kept loaded for emergencies, I made towards the beast, intending to punish her for her audacity, when Hans imploringly begged me to desist. "For," said he, "if you do not shoot her dead on the spot, she will be down upon us in an instant."

Allowing myself to be guided by his advice, I refrained from firing, but, nevertheless, took up my position within about fifty paces of, and opposite to, the lioness, as well to draw off her attention from the men, and thus enable them to put the cattle and vehicles to rights, so as to be in readiness to give her a warm reception, should she think proper to charge.

A short time before we were thus unceremoniously attacked, one of the draught oxen, which had always been very wild, managed to escape from the yoke, and a fleet-footed Damara was left behind to bring him on. In the midst of our confusion, we heard cries of distress and loud shouting behind us; and, on looking round, we saw, to our horror, the lion in full chase both of the refractory ox and of the man, who was trying to keep off his fierce pursuer by violently waving the fire-brand which he carried in his hand.* Telling Hans to mind the lioness as well as he could in my absence, I immediately ran to the rescue of the Damara and his charge; but, before I had proceeded far, the ox, catching sight

* In the nights the Damaras invariably carry a fire-brand, which they hold close to their bodies, in order to shelter themselves, in some degree, from the wind and cold.

of the remainder of the herd, made a successful dash right across the lion's path, and fortunately rejoined us in safety. The object of the lion was clearly more the beast than the man; for, upon finding himself thus suddenly baffled, he stopped short, and, with a savage look at us, and an angry growl, bounded out of sight as quick as thought; and by the time I returned to the waggons, the lioness had thought fit to follow her lord's example. Thus, almost without any effort on our side, we were providentially saved from this most extraordinary and dangerous attack.

At the first appearance of the lions, the men took refuge in the waggons, and, long after the danger was over, they trembled violently from fear and apprehension.

As a general rule, a lion, unless previously molested, will seldom attack an ox in the yoke, or when attended by man, but long abstinence makes him desperate.

After considerable trouble and difficulty, we succeeded in re-arranging the oxen, which had become excessively scared. Two or three hours' further travelling brought us, without other mishap, safe to Richterfeldt, where our hair-breadth escape was listened to with the deepest interest.

CHAPTER V.

INFLUENCE OF THE HUMAN EYE UPON THE LION—DIEDRICH MÜLLER—GERT SCHEPER'S ENCOUNTER WITH A LION—MOFFATT—POWER OF THE HUMAN VOICE OVER THE MONARCH OF BEASTS—THE ALGERIAN ARABS—GORDON CUMMING IN DANGER—THE LION AFRAID OF RUSES—CUNNING OF THE LION—ILLUSTRATIONS FROM GREEN, CUMMING, MOFFATT.

IF the human eye be intently fixed on the lion, it is believed to have great influence on him. Numerous instances, indeed, are on record where, owing to a man having determinedly looked the beast in the face, he has not only been deterred from attacking him, but has become so cowed as to have slunk away with his tail between his legs.

Diedrich Müller, one of the most intrepid and successful of South African Nimrods, for example, was one day hunting alone in the "weldt," when he suddenly came upon a lion, which, so far from giving way to him, seemed disposed, from the angry attitude it assumed, to dispute with him the dominion of the desert. Diedrich instantly alighted, and, confident in his merring aim, levelled his mighty roer* at the forehead of the beast, then couched at some fifteen paces' distance, apparently

* The heavy gun in use with the colonists, which carries a ball of several ounces in weight.

in the act of springing on him, and pulled the trigger; but at the instant the hunter fired, his horse, whose bridle was round his arm, started back, and caused him to miss his aim. The lion bounded forward, but stopped within a few paces, confronting Diedrich, who stood defenceless, his gun discharged, and his horse running away. The man and the beast stood for a short time looking each other in the face. At length the lion moved backwards, as if to go away. Diedrich began to reload his gun; the lion, looking over his shoulder, growled and returned. Diedrich stood still. The lion again moved cautiously off, and the Boer proceeded to ram down the bullet. The lion once more looked back and growled angrily; and this occurred repeatedly, until the animal had got to some distance, when he took fairly to his heels, and bounded away.

There can be no doubt that in this instance the resolution of Diedrich saved his life; for had he exhibited the least sign of fear, or given way an inch, the savage beast would have instantly sprung on him, and torn him to pieces.

The encounter of Gert Schepers, a Boer of the Cradock district, with a lion had, however, a less fortunate result. Gert was out hunting with a neighbour, and coming to a fountain surrounded with high reeds, he handed his gun to his comrade whilst he proceeded in search of water, but he had no sooner approached the pool than an enormous lion sprang up close to his side and seized him by the left arm. The man, thus taken by surprise,

and aware that the least motion on his part would insure his instant destruction, stood stock still, and looked full in the face of the beast, on which the latter, unable to withstand his gaze, closed his own eyes, though still holding him fast with his fangs, but without biting him severely. As they stood in position for some moments, Gert beckoned to his companion to approach and shoot the lion in the forehead, which he might easily have done, as the animal still kept his eyes fast closed; but the poltroon, instead of coming to the aid of his friend, retreated to the top of a neighbouring rock.

Had Gert remained quiet for a few moments, the lion, the hunters affirm, would have released his hold and left him uninjured; but he lost patience, and seeing himself abandoned, drew his knife, and with his whole force plunged it into the animal's breast. The thrust was a deadly one; but the enraged lion now strove to grapple with him; the hunter, who was a powerful man, used his utmost efforts to keep it at arm's length, but the beast, in its dying agonies, so dreadfully lacerated his breast and arms as to lay the bones bare. At length they fell together; when Gert's cowardly comrade took courage to advance, and succeeded in carrying his mangled friend to the nearest habitation, where he expired of lockjaw on the third day.

Moffatt, however, I would remark in parenthesis, who probably knows more about the lion and its habits than almost anyone else, does not seem to have much faith in the popular belief as to the lion

becoming cowed, and turning tail, should one look him determinedly in the face, for he says: "Though under ordinary circumstances this expedient may possibly succeed, yet if the beast be accustomed to gorge on human flesh, and that he be hungry, he does not spend time in gazing on the human eye, as some are said to do, but seeks the easiest and most expeditious way of making a meal of a man."

The human voice, as with the human eye, would also seem to make considerable impression on the lion. The Natives of Southern Africa are fully aware of this fact, and when, according to Sir A. Alexander, the Bushmen find the beast devouring his prey, they, to drive him from the carcase, that they themselves may possess it, address him in these words:

"'What are you here for? Have you got anything to eat? You make such a noise I thought you had got something? Don't think to come here and quarrel with us, but go away now and eat flesh.' Thus walking and talking for some time, the men at length sit down facing the lion, when the astonished animal probably moves off, and leaves the remainder of his victim to the Bushmen."

Again, when Jonathan Afrika, a man of great courage and an excellent marksman, who had caused many lions to bite the dust, and who for a time was in my service, was on one occasion riding leisurely along, a fine lion suddenly rushed out of the bushes a short distance in advance of him. Throwing himself quickly off the ox, he gave chase

to the beast, calling out loudly, "Nay, stop a little. To-day we must indeed talk with each other." Whether the lion thought he could not escape, or that he considered his dignity concerned, I shall not presume to say, but, at all events, he stopped to look at his pursuer. No sooner, however, had he turned his head than a well directed ball entered one of his eyes and laid him low in an instant.

The Algerian Arabs, also, General Dumas tells us, when about to assail the lion, and to cause him to come forth from his lair, taunt him, and apply to him the most opprobrious epithets to be found in the Mussulman vocabulary, as for instance,

"There is he who deems himself the bravest of the brave; he dares not appear before men; it is not he, it is not the lion; it is nothing but a cowardly thief; may God confound him."

The Arabs in question would seem to attribute more efficacy to the human voice than even the wild tribes of Southern Africa, for they say that, if a man encounters a lion in the night time, he has only to flourish his sabre, or other weapon that he may have about him (taking care, however, not to strike) in its face, and repeat the following polite and amusing words, when the beast will immediately go his way.

"Oh, the thief, the highway robber; the son of her that never refused (said no); do you want to frighten me; do you not know that I am such a one, son of such a one? Rise, and let me go on my way."

By thus applying the epithet thief to the lion, these men affirm the dignity of the royal beast be-

comes degraded, and he is so filled with shame that he will allow himself to be driven away, or even deprived of his prey, even by women and children.

They say, moreover, that should a robber meet a lion, and that instead of taking to flight, he coolly addresses the beast as follows, no harm will come to him :

“Je ne suis pas ton affaire. Je suis un voleur ; sauve-toi ; passe ton chemin, ou, si tu veux, allons voler ensemble.”

Gordon Cumming, when on one occasion in considerable peril from a lioness, which was in the act of attacking him, essayed on her, in the most approved fashion, both his eye and voice, and would seem to have escaped the clutches of the infuriated beast by the adoption of these expedients.

After informing us he was in the act of pursuing two reitbucks, a male and a female, he goes on to say, “Suddenly I observed two huge yellow lionesses, about one hundred and fifty yards to my left, walking along the edge of the reeds, and holding a course parallel to my own. The reitbucks smelt the lions and lay down, I got very near them, but they started off, and bounded straight away from me. I fired and missed the buck.

“Ruyter came towards me, and I ran forward to obtain a view beyond a slight rise in the ground, to see whether the lionesses had gone. In so doing I came suddenly upon them, within about seventy yards ; they were standing looking at Ruyter, I then very rashly commenced making a rapid ‘stalk’ in upon them, and fired at the nearest,

having only one shot in my rifle. The ball told loudly, and the lioness at which I had fired wheeled right round, and came lashing her tail, showing her teeth, and making that horrid murderous deep growl which an angry lion generally utters. At the same moment her comrade, who seemed better to know that she was in the presence of man, made a hasty retreat into the reeds. The instant the lioness came on, I stood up to my full height, holding my rifle, and my arms extended, and high above my head. This checked her in her course; but on looking round and observing Ruyter slowly advancing, she was still more exasperated, and, fancying that she was being surrounded, she made another forward movement, growling terribly. This was a moment of great danger; I felt my only chance of safety was extreme steadiness, so standing motionless as a rock, with my eyes firmly fixed upon her, I called out in a clear commanding voice, ‘Holloa! old girl, what’s the hurry? Take it easy; holloa! holloa!’ She instantly once more halted, and seemed perplexed, looking round for her comrade. I then thought it prudent to beat a retreat, which I very slowly did. She seemed undecided as to her future movements, and was gazing after me, and snuffing the ground, when I last beheld her.”

At times, however, the human voice has also the effect of rousing the ire of the beast, and the natives, therefore, when desirous of ascertaining his whereabouts, will shout with all their might, which he, interpreting as a challenge, replies to

with a roar, and thus their purpose is gained. A distinguished field-officer, of my acquaintance, in the British service, who has had great experience with lions, assures me that in this manner he has more than once succeeded in discovering the animal's retreat.

When the natives are about to attack the beast, and whilst brandishing their weapons in his face, they will taunt and abuse him in the most unmeasured terms. The like is the case when they wish to drive the lion from his prey! On one occasion, indeed, as will be hereafter related, I myself was an eye-witness to their thus possessing themselves of his spoils.

Whether or not the human eye and the human voice have the effect on the lion commonly attributed to them, I am unable from my own experiences, either to confirm or contradict; what, however, I can testify to is this, that the natives of South Africa universally assert that the beast, from fear of being circumvented in some way or other, is often seized with a sudden panic, and retreats hastily.

Delegorgue when speaking on this subject says: "They have assured me that so long as a man remains in an upright position, the lion little fears him, but if he suddenly seats himself, or throws himself flat on the ground in the long grass (here some three feet high) and is consequently altogether lost to view, the beast, owing to his dreading a *ruse* of some kind, or that the enemy is about getting into his rear, immediately takes the alarm and hurriedly moves off. Of this fact the Bushmen are

well aware, and make their attacks accordingly.

“I don't know whether it is allowable for me to assume,” Delegorgue goes on to remark, “that the lion is really taken somewhat aback by a man thus suddenly altering his position, or concealing himself, but this I can say, that on many occasions I have adopted the expedients named, and in no one instance has the beast remained on the spot. Moreover, when I have unwittingly kneeled down to avoid the branches of trees that intercepted my view of the lion, couched at only a few paces distance, that I might take a better aim, I have always seen him seized with an irresistible panic; and independently of the instances to the like effect that have come under my personal notice, thousands of facts of a similar kind have been related to me by *chasseurs* older and more experienced than myself.”

“Again, on one occasion,” said my friend, Frederick Green, “a lion sprung at a woman who had run away from an exasperated husband's blows and threats, and had lain down beside a small bush. He, however, fell short of his mark, and seeing she did not move, from dread no doubt, the coward, from fear of a *ruse* probably, dared not attack her, but kept walking round and round the poor creature, now utterly paralysed with fright. This he continued to do for a long time; but at last, finding that his intended victim remained motionless, he took himself off. Had the woman in this case attempted to stir,” my friend went on to say, “there cannot be the slightest doubt her fate would instantly have been sealed. Indeed it is pretty well known that

a lion will not willingly attack any living thing whilst on its guard and aware of his presence.

“The very next day,” my friend added, “I shot the beast in question.”

In many of the Assyrian sculptures deposited in the British Museum, we find the lion depicted not only as an object of the chase, but as an emblem of wisdom. If cunning and sagacity may be called wisdom, it cannot be denied that this beast possesses those qualities in a high degree; and if one tenth of the stories told of him be true, he would almost bear away the palm of wiliness from the fox.

“ Let cavillers deny
That brutes have reason; sure 'tis something more,
'Tis heaven directs, and stratagem inspires
Beyond the short extent of human thought.”

Amongst the many instances of the royal beast's cunning, that related to me by Mr. Green is not, perhaps, the least curious.

He and young Bonfield had one night ensconced themselves in a “screen”* to wait for elephants. About nine o'clock, there being then no moon, Green saw an animal, the outline of it rather, which after a little consideration he concluded to be a lion; and when shortly afterwards, it repassed the “screen” he no longer entertained any doubts as to its identity. Later in the evening the beast passed and repassed their hiding-place repeatedly;

* That is, a small circular enclosure, six to eight feet in diameter, the walls, usually consisting of loose stones, being about two feet in height.

but owing to the branches of an overhanging tree, this they only found out by his tracks on the following morning. After a while, however, he would appear to have tired of this system of reconnoitering, and walked over to the water, where he couched facing the "screen." Now and then he would advance towards them, and then retreat; then he would crouch low, as if waiting to see them move, at times raising his head. Seeing that this manœuvre did not intimidate the enemy, he had recourse to an extraordinary expedient. He rose suddenly, and whilst running hither and thither, he set up the most hideous noise, neither a roar nor a growl, but something between the two. This, nevertheless, availed him not, for Green and Bonfield bravely kept their ground; but Green admitted that it was very nervous work, as the brute evidently meant mischief.

Again the lion returned to his ambush, repeating precisely his former tactics. Green would not fire except from the direst necessity, as he knew the report of his gun must necessarily frighten the elephants for which he was waiting, should they happen to be in the neighbourhood; but, at last, finding the wily enemy resolved to hold his ground, he determined attempting to oust him.

The lion was evidently at this time couched, and though the reflection of the moon against the sky was then just perceptible, yet the darkness in the valley was still so great that very little more than his outline could be made out. However, taking as good an aim as the circumstance admitted, my

friend pulled the trigger, upon which the beast gave a tremendous bound, actually clearing a portion of the water by which he was lying, followed by a terrific growling and snarling. Bonfield called out, "The lion is struck!" but Green hardly thought so, as his aim could not have been very accurate.

Shortly afterwards they returned to camp; but, scarcely had they reached it before the dogs began to bark most furiously; and next morning, as seen by the tracks, it was found to have been a lion which they had challenged. The brute, it seemed, had actually followed their 'spoor' from the screen.

Green at first thought it must have been their late enemy; but, on returning to the "vley," they found distinct traces of a second lion. It, moreover, turned out that Bonfield was right when he asserted that the one at which Green had fired was struck; for they not only found blood on the ground, but pieces of the beast's fangs and jawbone. An inch or two higher or lower would probably have killed him.

Again, the lioness, when accompanied by her progeny, and when danger threatens, is said not unfrequently to resort to very cunning expedients to insure their safety, of which Gérard relates a somewhat remarkable instance.

"During the month of November, 1846," he says, "it was reported to me that a lion had killed a horse at the bottom of a deep ravine; but, on examining the tracks of the animal, I came to the conclusion that it must have been a lioness. I watched at the foot of a mastie tree.

"The first night nothing; the second night

nothing; the third night, however, at an early hour, the mother, accompanied by her cubs, which were pretty well grown, made her appearance.

“One of the cubs had already scented the prostrate horse, which was lying, belly upwards, in the bed of the ravine, and at once made up to the carcase. The mother had couched, and was watching its proceedings, and, whilst looking about her on all sides, perceived me. Our eyes had hardly met, however, when, with a bound, she threw herself on her cub, as if about to devour it. The poor creature at once took to flight, and nothing remained before me but the horse.

“A novice would have said to himself, ‘Why did I not fire?’ and would have considered the game as lost. I knew that the game was not yet played, and that it would not be easy to win it.

“Suddenly, to my left, and almost behind me, I heard a noise as of a mouse rustling amongst the bushes; and, directing my attention to that side, I first perceived two great paws, then a long moustache, and, finally, an enormous nose.

“The gun was to the shoulder, the finger to the trigger; and at the instant that the eyes, fixed and flashing, became visible, an ingot of iron departed and did its work.”

It is said that, should the lion, in making his spring at a deer or other animal, fall short of or pass over the victim, as not unfrequently happens, he usually gives up further pursuit, and returns sulkily, growling, to his ambush, there to lie in wait for another opportunity.

At times, however, it is asserted that, prior to so doing, he carefully, step by step, measures the ground, so that he may not again miscalculate the distance; and certainly the following incidents, related by Moffatt, give, it must be confessed, some countenance to the extraordinary statement.

“Passing along a vale,” says the reverend gentleman, “we came to a spot where the lion appeared to have been exercising himself in the way of leaping. As the natives are very expert in tracing the manœuvres of animals by their foot-marks, it was soon discovered that a large lion had crept towards a short black stump, very like the human form, and, when within about a dozen yards, had bounded towards its supposed prey, but, to its mortification, fell short of it by a foot or two. According to the testimony of a native who had been watching the beast’s proceedings, and who joined us soon afterwards, the lion, after this failure, lay for some time steadfastly eyeing the stump in question. He then arose, smelt the object, and returned to the spot from which he commenced his first leap, and leaped four successive times, till at last he placed his paw on what, in the first instance, he had imagined to be his prize.”

“On another occasion,” Moffatt goes on to say, “when Africaner, a famous native chieftain, and an attendant, were travelling near a hill, from the foot of which jutted out an isolated and precipitous rock of some ten or twelve feet in height, they observed a number of zebras following a track that passed around the foot of the rock in question. A lion was at the same time observed creeping towards the zebras, and knowing that if he could at one leap

mount the rock, his next bound would be on to the back of one or other of the poor animals, he made the attempt; but, whether from the distance or the height of the rock, he fell short of his mark, and his head alone rested upon the top of the stone, when he had the mortification of seeing the large stallion, who is always in the rear to defend the troop, and whom he had intended to victimize, gallop past him not only unscathed, but switching his tail in the air as if in derision of the enemy. His majesty then tried a second and a third leap at the rock, and at length succeeded in fairly mounting it. In the meantime two other lions came up, and seemed to talk and roar away about something, while the old lion led them round the rock and round it again; then he made another grand leap, to show them what he and they must do next time. ‘They evidently talked to each other,’ Africaner added, with the most perfect gravity; ‘but, though loud enough, I could not understand a word they said;’ and, fearing lest we ourselves should be the next objects of their skill, we crept away and left them in council.”

Impossible as it may seem that the lion should practice vaulting, that he may properly judge the distance his victim may be from him when he makes his bound, as stated by Moffatt, yet, singularly enough, similar stories are told of the fox in Mr. Lloyd’s “Scandinavian Adventures,” vol. ii., page 51, where we read:—

“A certain Jagare, who was one morning keeping watch in the forest, saw a fox cautiously making his approaches towards the stump of an old tree;

when sufficiently near, he took a high and determined jump on to the top of it, and, after looking around a while, hopped to the ground again. After Reynard had repeated this knightly exercise several times, he went his way; but presently returned to the spot, bearing in his mouth a pretty large and heavy piece of dry oak; and thus burdened, and, as it would seem, for the purpose of testing his vaulting powers, he renewed his leaps on to the stump. After a time, however, and when he found that, weighted as he was, he could make the ascent with facility, he desisted from further efforts, dropped the piece of wood from his mouth, and, coiling himself up upon the top of the stump, remained motionless, as if dead.

“At the approach of evening, an old sow, accompanied by her progeny, five or six in number, issued from a neighbouring thicket, and, pursuing their usual track, passed near to the stump in question. Two of her sucklings were somewhat behind the rest, and, just as they neared his ambush, Mechel* darted down from his perch upon one of them, and in the twinkling of an eye bore it in triumph on to the fastness he had so providently prepared beforehand. Confounded at the shrieks of her offspring, the old sow returned in fury to the spot, and, until a late hour in the evening, made repeated desperate efforts to storm the murderous stronghold; but the fox took the matter very coolly, and devoured the pig under, or rather above, the very nose of its mother, who at length, with the greatest reluctance,

* The nickname of the fox in Sweden.

and without being able to revenge itself on the crafty adversary, was forced to beat a retreat."

A notion prevails in South Africa that, when several lions are in company, and they are chased, one of the number (the duty being taken in turn) acts as sentinel, and watches the movements of the pursuers.

Something of this kind once came under my own observation; but I speak guardedly, because the peculiar manner in which the beasts conducted themselves, on the occasion I am about to relate, might not impossibly have arisen rather from parental affection than any other cause. The circumstances were these:—

One day, when quite alone and on foot, I was "stalking" a herd of pullahs, on the banks of the river Tioge. Suddenly I found myself in the midst of a troop of lions—a family party, consisting of father and mother and two or three well-grown cubs. All of them, old as well as young, had a distinct greyish-white ring round the neck; they were, as I believe, identical with the "blue necks" of the Boers, mentioned in Chapter I., page 5, which are described as being of a very savage disposition. On seeing me, they all hastily retreated. The beasts had, however, so novel and peculiar a look about them, that, although the danger of following them up in so dense a brake as I was then in, was considerable, I determined on doing so. Whilst thus occupied, I several times sighted either the old lions or the lioness, who evidently kept well in the rear of the cubs for their better protection, and who presently greeted me with an angry growl. But

eventually I lost sight of the troop altogether, and that without opportunity having offered of getting a favourable shot (for to fire at random would have been sheer madness) at any one individual of the party.

The death of the lion, as will be seen hereafter, is at times compassed by means of the spring-gun. It not unfrequently happens, however, that, although the piece, when examined, still remains on the full cock, the bait, usually an animal that he himself has killed, is found to have disappeared. This, as shown by the foot-marks, is the handiwork of the beast himself; for, instead of breasting the string or wire (the trigger, in short) in crossing the entrance to the little enclosure in which the decoy is laid, he has cautiously crept under it; and thus, without in any manner endangering his own person, has obtained possession of the coveted prize.

The fox of the Arctic regions, Dr. Ray tells me, resorts to a still more ingenious plan of getting possession of the bait, and that with even less chance of harm to himself. Having scented the delicacy, Reynard cautiously approaches the trap, and scrapes a hole in the snow immediately beneath it, and of sufficient depth to conceal himself. This he then enters, and excavating upwards, until he comes to the plate on which the bait is placed, he pulls boldly at it, and after the trap has sprung harmlessly over his head, he takes possession of the prize, and devours it at his leisure.

Hereafter, when speaking of the manner in which the lion usually hunts his prey, I shall have more to say regarding the cunning of that beast.

CHAPTER VI.

DAY AND NIGHT HAUNTS OF THE LION—THE LION AND LAMB LYING DOWN TOGETHER—LIONS HUNTING IN COMPANY—ADVENTURE IN PURSUIT OF GNOOS—THE LION'S PREY—BRINGING DOWN THE GIRAFFE—A PRECONCERTED PLOT—DOMESTICATION OF THE LION—AN UNPROFITABLE CUSTOMER FOR THE BUTCHERS—CAPACITY FOR INSTRUCTION—RESPECT FOR HIS KEEPER—TEMPER IN CONFINEMENT—SCANDINAVIAN LYNX.

THE lion is essentially a nocturnal animal. Even the Royal Psalmist makes reference to this matter, CIV., verses 20, 21, 22. "Thou makest darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens."

During the day, the lion lies concealed on the mountain side or beneath the shade of some umbrageous tree or wide-spreading bush. He is also partial to lofty reeds or long rank yellow grass, such as occur in low lying "vleys." From these, his haunts, he sallies forth when the sun goes down and commences his nightly prowls.

Though his habits are in the main nocturnal, yet in wild and desolate regions, where he is subject to

but little molestation, I have often encountered him, even when the day has been well advanced, either in pursuit of game, or devouring the carcase of some animal he has slain during the past night, but of which time had not permitted him to eat his fill.

He may, moreover, be seen in the day-time fraternising, so to say, with the various species of antelope, which in numbers, literally innumerable, feed amicably together on the extensive prairies, or savannahs, intersecting the forests of Southern Africa. Scenes of this kind, which remind us of what we read in the Bible, as to “the lion and the lamb lying down together,” are not unfamiliar to the traveller, but by no one better or more graphically described than by Delegorgue, who says :

“Hardly had we finished our labours,” in allusion to the flaying of a lion the party had just killed, “when we saw three other large lions, with grave mien and imposing presence, pacing to and fro amongst the herds of gnoos, &c., pasturing everywhere around us. The nearest of the lions was within two hundred and fifty paces of the waggon. He did not badly represent a Caffre cheiftain counting his flock. The agile gnoos, without exhibiting the slightest fear, remained stationary, some within forty and others sixty paces of the master of these wilds; others, again, actually caracolled about him. I confess that this sort of confidence would have been looked on by me as temerity, had I not been well aware that the lion only bounds, and is incapable of contending in speed with the antelope.

We contemplated this scene for more than an hour, in which these kings of animals never compromised their dignity in the slightest degree."

Though the lion, properly speaking, is not a gregarious animal, he is still, not unfrequently, met with in smaller or larger troops. Indeed, I myself have seen six or seven together, all of whom, so far as I could judge, were full grown, or nearly so; and Freeman, after telling us that "it was a lion country in which he was then travelling, but that none had attacked his party, or had even the curiosity to come to it," goes on to say, "A farmer, in passing lately the same road as ourselves, saw ten of those animals in company; and another had the gratification to count thirty, a sight that would have thrown Gordon Cumming into ecstasies, and many others into fits."

Lions, let people say what they will to the contrary, hunt in companies; and on these occasions, as will hereafter be shown, often display much subtlety and cunning, playing, as it were, into each others' hands. In many instances, it is true, the troop simply consists of the several members of the same family, but in others, beyond all doubt, adult males and females congregate together for the better circumvention of their prey.

On one occasion, indeed, two adult lions and a lioness were my companions, so to say, in a *chasse*. The circumstances were as follows:

"Whilst out hunting early one morning, I espied a small troop of gnooks, quietly grazing at a bend of the river. Cautiously approaching them under

shelter of the intervening ground, they suddenly tossed their heads, switched their tails, scraped the earth impatiently with their hoofs, and sniffed the air. I was puzzled how to account for this unusual agitation, as, from my position, I was certain they could not have discovered me. But I had not much time for conjecture; for the next instant I was startled by the growl of some animal close to me. On looking in the direction whence it proceeded, I discovered, to my utter astonishment, two lions and a lioness on the rising ground just above me; and, as it seemed, they also were on the look-out for the gnoos. I instinctively levelled my piece at the head of the nearest of the beasts; but a moment's reflection convinced me that the odds were too great, and I, therefore, thought it best to reserve my fire, so as to be in readiness to receive them, should they charge. After having regarded me for a few seconds, however, they growlingly disappeared behind a sandhill.

“By this time, the gnoos had become aware of the lions, and were making off at the top of their speed. Being anxious to obtain a shot at them, I followed on their tracks; but soon found, to my dismay, that my three royal friends, with jaws distended, and uttering furious growls, were following a course parallel to mine. Though I must confess I did not at all like their looks, as only excessive hunger could have induced them, in broad day, to seek for victims, I nevertheless continued to follow the tracks of the antelopes until they led me into the bush, where I presently lost them, as well as myself.

On first seeing the gnoos, I left my henchman, “Bill,” a Damara lad, who carried my spare gun, at some distance behind, with directions to follow on my track according to circumstances. Now that the gnoos were lost to me, I shouted loudly to the youth, and also discharged my gun more than once, but was unable to elicit a reply. Thinking, however, that he might have returned to our encampment (which was at no great distance) I also repaired there. But “Bill” had not been heard of. The harassing suspicion at once crossed my mind that the lions had eaten him. Without a moment’s delay, I hurried back to the spot where I had last seen the beasts, but all my endeavours to find the poor fellow were unavailing. What with my anxiety on his account, and my exertions under a broiling sun (for if the weather was frosty at night, it calcined one by day), I was unable to proceed farther, and sat down on the ground to wait for the arrival of the waggons, which were now moving forward. Just at this moment, the Damara, to my inexpressible delight, emerged from the bush. His story was soon told. He had, like myself, lost his way, and it was long before he was able to recover the right track.”

Again : late one evening I had badly wounded a lion, and at an early hour on the succeeding morning was following the bloody tracks of the beast, in the hope of putting an end to his career. Presently we came upon the “spoor” of a whole troop of lions, and also that of a solitary giraffe. So many tracks confused us; and whilst endeavouring to

pick out from the rest those of the wounded lion, I observed my native attendants suddenly rush forward, and the next instant the jungle re-echoed with shouts of triumph. Thinking they had discovered the lion we were in pursuit of, I also hurried forward; but imagine my surprise, on emerging into an opening in the jungle, when I saw, not a dead lion, as I expected, but five living lions (two males and three females), two of whom were in the act of pulling down a splendid giraffe, the other three watching, close at hand, and with devouring looks, the deadly strife!

The scene was of so imposing a nature that, for the moment, I forgot I carried a gun. The natives, however, in anticipation of a glorious gorge, dashed madly forward, and, with the most piercing shrieks and yells, compelled the lions to beat a hasty retreat.

When I reached the giraffe, now stretched at full length on the sand, it made a few ineffectual attempts to raise its neck; its body heaved and quivered for a while, and then the poor animal was dead. It had received several deep gashes about the flanks and chest, from the claws and teeth of its fierce assailants. The strong and tough muscles about the neck were also bitten through.

All thoughts of pursuing the wounded lion were now out of the question. My natives remained gorging on the carcass of the cameleopard until it was devoured. A day or two afterwards, however, I had the good fortune to fall in with my royal antagonist, and finish him without much difficulty.

A somewhat similar scene—though the quarry was a widely different one—was witnessed by Messrs. Oswell and Vardon, the two well-known South African travellers and sportsmen, from whose own mouths I had the story. They were one day pursuing a wounded buffalo, on the shady banks of the river Limpopo, when, to their great amazement, three full-grown lions suddenly emerged from the bush, and made a simultaneous attack on the retreating animal, who, notwithstanding his disabled state, was not mastered by the beasts until after a desperate and sanguinary battle; but though the lions were the victors, they paid dearly for their audacity, as two out of the three were killed by my friends whilst lying on the very body of the struggling and dying victim.

Gordon Cumming also testifies to lions hunting in troops. After telling us that “it is a common thing to come upon a full-grown lion and lioness associated with three or four large ones, nearly full-grown,” he goes on to say: “At other times adult males will be found associating and hunting together in a happy state of friendship. Two, three, or four full-grown male lions may thus be discovered consorting together.”

Delegorgue also bears witness to lions hunting in company, as likewise to the great cunning they often evince on these occasions. After telling us “that during the winter, in the months of June, July, and August, when the grass is trampled down or burnt by fire, a single lion cannot possibly suc-

ceed in the chase, except at night," he goes on to say:—

"At that season (the winter), therefore, one not unfrequently sees those beasts in the day-time hunting in large companies. The larger portion, after forming a line, surround and drive the game towards the gorges, the defiles, and such passes in the wood as are dense and difficult to traverse, where one or more of the troop station themselves. Such are the battues, conducted according to rule, and without noise; the emanations proceeding from the lions, who always keep to windward of the quarry, being sufficient to constrain the animals to retreat before them.

"On two several occasions, and that with only a few minutes' intervals between them," Delegorgue goes on to say, "I and my chasseurs came suddenly (the dense brake having previously intercepted our view) on such a line of lions; twenty at first, thirty afterwards. A rhinoceros which we were 'stalking' appeared to be their specially-coveted object. Unfortunately our presence deranged their plan of attack, and their presence constrained us to abandon our first intention; and thus the rhinoceros owed its safety to the ideas which simultaneously took possession of two of its most formidable enemies."

Gordon Cumming fully corroborates what Delegorgue says as to the cunning the lion displays when hunting in company.

"I had," he writes, "lain about twenty minutes in the waggon after my people had all started, and was occupied in reading a book, when suddenly I

heard the oxen come trotting along in front of the vehicle, as if sharply driven. On raising my head from my pillow, I perceived a lioness following within twenty yards of them, and next moment her mate, a remarkable-looking lion, with a shaggy mane which swept the ground, appeared in the yellow grass in front of the oxen, waiting to put them to flight. The plot had evidently been pre-concerted between the pair, this being the usual manner in which the lion attacks the buffalo. Fortunately, the oxen would not run for them, and the lions seemed surprised at the confidence of their game."

Elsewhere it is stated that when lions are "trooped," and chased, or when they apprehend danger, one of the number acts as sentinel to the rest; and if we are to give credit to what Moffatt tells us, "on the authority of Africauer" (the famous Namaqua chief spoken of a few pages back) "and other men of God, and men who have been experienced Nimrods," lions, on the occasion of these their hunts, are also in the habit of selecting a leader.

"The old lion," said the chieftain in question, "when with his 'children' (as the natives call his whelps, though they be nearly as big as himself) of course, acts in this capacity; but when numbers of lions are together, and happen to come on game, the oldest or ablest creeps up to the object, whilst the others crouch on the grass. If he be successful, as is generally the case, he retires from the victim, and lies down to breathe and rest, for perhaps a

quarter of an hour. In the meantime, the other lions draw around him, and lie down at a respectful distance. When the chief one, or leader, has had his rest, he commences feeding on the abdomen and breast, and after making sad havoc with these, and the tit-bits of the carcass, he will take a second rest, none of the others in the interim presuming to move. Having had a second gorge, he retires finally from the victim. The other lions, intently watching his movements, then rush on to the remainder, and it is soon devoured. At other times, if it happens to be a young lion that seizes the prey, and that an older one afterwards comes up, the younger at once retires until the elder has dined. "This," the worthy Missionary adds, "was what Africaner called 'better manners than those of the Namaquas.'"

Lions, if captured when quite young, and treated with kindness, become readily domesticated, and greatly attached to their owners, whom they will follow everywhere like dogs.

On entering, one day, the temporary hut of a trader, in the vicinity of Lake Ngami, I imagined I saw two fiery eyeballs glancing at me from under the bed, but at the time I took no further notice of the circumstance. A short while afterwards, however, some natives made their appearance, when, to my surprise, a lion, about eight or nine months old, suddenly sprang forward with a growl. In making a similar movement from a waggon, some little time previously, the beast had the misfortune to tumble off the vehicle, and so injured his spine as to become a cripple for life. He was much attached

to his master, and lived on the most affectionate terms with the dogs and other domestic animals.

Again: "On my first visit to Omer Pacha of Hillah," says Layard, in his "Nineveh and Babylon," "he presented me with two lions. One was nearly of full size, and was well known in the bazaar and thoroughfares of Hillah, through which he was allowed to wander unrestrained. The inhabitants could accuse him of no other objectionable habit than that of taking possession of the stalls of the butchers, who, on his approach, made a hasty retreat, leaving him in undisturbed possession of their stores, until he had satisfied his hunger and deemed it time to depart. He would also wait the coming of the large '*kuffias*,' or wicker boats, of the fishermen; and, driving away their owners, would help himself to a kind of large barbel, for which he appeared to have a decided relish. For this act of depredation, the beast was perhaps less to be blamed than the Pacha, who rather encouraged a mode of obtaining daily rations which, although of questionable honesty, relieved him from butchers' bills. When no longer hungry, he would stretch himself in the sun, and allow the Arab boys to take such liberties with him as, in their mischief, they might devise. He was taller and larger than a St. Bernard's dog, and like the lion generally found on the banks of the rivers of Mesopotamia."

The lion, when in confinement, is very capable of instruction. The performances on the stage of Van Amburgh's pet beast we have all witnessed. Other lions have also shown a degree of tameness and

familiarity that is quite wonderful; none more so, perhaps, than the one shown in a travelling menagerie at Amsterdam, some years ago.

“After he had been pulled about, and made to show his teeth,” says an eye-witness, “he was required to exhibit. Two young men in fancy dresses entered the spacious cage; and, in the meantime, the lion, apparently perfectly aware of what he had to do, walked composedly round. He was now made to jump over a rope held at different heights; next through a hoop and a barrel, and again through the same covered with paper. All this he did freely, compressing himself to go through the narrow space, and alighting gracefully. His next feat was to repeat the leap through the hoop and barrel, with the paper set on fire. This he evidently disliked, but, with some coaxing, went through it. The animals were now all fed, but the lion had not yet completed his share in the night’s entertainment, and was required to show his forbearance by parting with his food. The keeper entered the cage, and took it repeatedly from him, with no further resistance than that expressed by a short clutch and growl; his countenance had, however, lost its serenity, but how long his good temper would have continued, after being so far tampered with, is somewhat doubtful.”

A remarkable instance of the fear—or rather, perhaps, respect—that lions, such at least as are publicly exhibited, entertain for the men who feed and tend them, is related by Major Hamilton Smith:—

“A keeper of wild beasts at New York,” says the

gallant officer, "had provided himself, on the approach of winter, with a fur-cap. The novelty of the costume attracted the notice of the lion, which, making a sudden clutch, tore the cap off his head, as he passed the cage; but, perceiving that the keeper was the person whose head he had thus unceremoniously uncovered, he immediately lay down. The same animal," the Major adds, "once hearing some noise under its cage, passed its paw through the bar, and actually hauled up the keeper, who was cleaning beneath; but, as soon as he perceived that he had thus ill-used his master, he instantly lay down upon his back, in an attitude of complete submission."*

Independent of the fear and respect the lion usually entertains for the man by whom he is fed and cared for, he would seem at times to entertain a real affection for him, and, when occasion offers, to evince his gratitude in an unmistakable way. A remarkable instance to this effect is related by Montgomery Martin, in the case of a "huge pet lion," to which he himself was an eye-witness.

"This was on board H.M.S. 'Ariadne.' The animal, who was named 'Prince,' had been reared from a cub by Captain Marshall, the commander of the frigate, and as he was quite tame, he was allowed the run of the ship. He was good friends with the sailors, and in particular with the marine drummer, whom he delighted to seize by the shoulder-knot and pull on his back.

"Things went on thus pleasantly for a while; but

* Griffiths Cuvier.

a slave-ship having been captured, and some of its unfortunate inmates transferred to the 'Ariadne' for conveyance to the Mauritius, 'Prince's' manners became quite altered. He soon tore one of the slaves down, and, until they were disembarked, it was necessary to keep him in durance vile, instead of allowing him to scamper about the deck like a huge playful cat.

“ ‘Prince’ had a keeper to whom he was much attached; the man got drunk one day, and as the Captain never forgave this crime, was ordered to be flogged; the grating was rigged on the main deck, opposite ‘Prince’s’ den, a large barred-up place, the pillars very strong and covered with iron. When the keeper began to strip, ‘Prince’ rose gloomily from his couch and got as near to his friend as possible; on beholding the man’s bare back he walked hastily round the den, and when he saw the boatswain inflict the first lash, his eyes sparkled with fire, and his sides resounded with the strong and quick lashings of his tail; at last, when the blood began to flow from the unfortunate man’s back, and the clotted ‘cats’ jerked their gory knots close to the lion’s den, his fury became tremendous. He roared with a voice of thunder, shook the strong bars of his prison as if they had been osiers, and finding his efforts to break loose unavailing, he rolled and shrieked in a manner the most terrific that it is possible to conceive. The Captain, fearing he might break loose, ordered the marines to load and present at ‘Prince;’ this threat redoubled his rage, and at last the Captain, (whether from fear or

clemency I will not say) desired the keeper to be cast off and go to his friend. It is impossible to describe the joy evinced by the lion; he licked with care the mangled and bleeding back of the cruelly treated seaman, caressed him with his paws, which he folded around the man as if to defy any one renewing a similar treatment, and it was only after several hours that 'Prince' would allow the keeper to quit his protection, and return among those who had so ill-used him."

The lion, moreover, on meeting again after lengthened absence with his former master or keeper, not unfrequently evinces the greatest possible pleasure. This was remarkably shown in the case of an animal named "Hubert," reared from infancy by M. Gérard, but from whom he had been long separated. The touching scene that occurred when they again met, which was at the *Jardin des Plantes*, in Paris, is thus described by the bold hunter.

"On entering the gallery called *des bêtes féroces*, I was surprised at the state of the cages in which the animals are condemned to live in fatal inactivity. I was painfully impressed, especially by the pestilential odour they exhale, causing a corrupt atmosphere, which the hyenas, dirty and impure beasts if ever there were any, may perhaps endure, but which must necessarily destroy the lions and panthers, those splendid animals, with their neat, well polished coats, who are cleanliness itself.

"While still under the painful influence which had oppressed me at my entrance, I was slowly progressing towards my lion's cage.

“He was lying down, half asleep, staring vacantly on the persons who had preceded me. All of a sudden he raises his head; his eyes are dilated; a nervous movement contracts every muscle of his face; the tip of his tail trembles; he has seen the spahi uniform, but he has not yet recognised his old master. In the meantime his anxious glance was surveying me from head to foot, as if he was striving to recall some remembrance. I came close to him, and, unable longer to contain my emotion, I stretched out my hand to him through the bars of his cage.

“This was indeed a truly touching moment for me and for all those present. Without ceasing to devour me with his eyes, Hubert applied his nose to my hand and began to inhale deeply, while at each inspiration his eye became more clear, more soft, more affectionate. Under the uniform, which he had at once recognised, he was now beginning to recognise the friend; and I saw that one word would suffice to dispel every remaining doubt.

“‘Hubert,’ I said, caressing him, ‘my old soldier.’

“It was enough. With one furious bound he sprang against the iron bars of his prison, which groaned and shook again under this powerful shock.

“My friends, frightened at the movement, had drawn back hastily, entreating me to do the same.

“Noble animal! who spreads terror and awe even in the rapturous bursts of affection!

“Hubert was standing up, clinging to the bars, endeavouring to break the obstacle which separated

us. In this position he looked truly magnificent, roaring with mingled joy and anger. His powerful tongue was licking in blissful happiness the hand I had given up to him, whilst his enormous paws were softly trying to draw me towards him.

“If anyone else attempted to come near, Hubert broke out into a most appalling fury; but as soon as they retired he became calm and affectionate as before.

“I cannot express how painful our parting was on that day. Twenty times I returned to try to make him comprehend that he should see me again, and every time I withdrew he shook the whole gallery with his tremendous bounds and roars.”

When in confinement, however, the temper of the lion is somewhat capricious; and submissive as he may be, as a rule, to his master or keeper, but little at times would seem to rouse his anger, when, from the most docile, he all at once becomes the most savage and ferocious of beasts, of which many lamentable instances are on record.

Labat, for instance, makes mention of a gentleman who kept a lion in his chamber and employed a servant to attend it, but the latter, as usual, mixed his caresses with blows. This ill-judged association continued for some time. One morning the gentleman was awakened by an unusual noise in his room, and drawing the curtains, he perceived it to proceed from the lion, which was growling over the body of the unhappy man, whom he had just killed, and whose head he had separated from his body. The terror and confusion of the gentleman may be readily conceived;

he flew out of the room, and, with the assistance of some people, had the animal secured from doing further mischief.

Capriciousness of temper is not, however, confined to the lion. There is probably no wild beast more amusing than the bear when young, and yet I have seen him, under the impulse of sudden fits of passion, striking and injuring his best friends.

As stated in "Lake Ngami," when at Hull, on my way to Africa, I had with me a collection of birds and four-footed animals from Scandinavia, which, through the kindness of the Secretary, I was permitted to place in the Zoological Gardens there. Amongst other animals were two brown bears—twins—somewhat more than a year old, and playful as kittens when together. Indeed no greater punishment could be inflicted upon these beasts than to disunite them, for however short a time. Still there was a marked contrast in their dispositions. One of them was good-tempered and gentle as a lamb, while the other frequently exhibited signs of a sulky and treacherous character. Tempted by an offer for the former of these animals, I consented, after much hesitation, to his being separated from his brother.

It was long before I forgave myself this act. On the following day, on my proceeding, as usual, to inspect the collection, one of the keepers ran up to me, in the greatest haste, exclaiming, "Sir, I am glad you are come, for your bear has gone mad!" He then told me that during the night the beast had destroyed his den, and was found

in the morning roaming wild about the garden. Luckily the keeper managed to seize him just as he was escaping into the country, and, with the help of several others, succeeded in shutting him up again. The bear, however, refused his food, and raved in so fearful a manner that, unless he could be quieted, it was clear he would do some mischief.

On my arrival at his den, I found the poor brute in a most furious state, tearing the wooden floor with his claws, and gnawing the barricaded front with his teeth. I had no sooner opened the door than he sprang furiously at me, and struck me repeated blows with his powerful paws. As, however, I had reared him from a cub, we had too often measured our strength together for me to fear him now, and I soon made him retreat into the corner of his prison, where he remained howling in the most heart-rending manner. It was a most sickening sight to behold the poor creature with his eyes bloodshot, and protruding from the sockets, his mouth and chest white with foam, and his body encrusted with dirt. I am not ashamed to confess that at one time I felt my own eyes moistened. Neither blows nor kind words were of any effect; they only served to irritate and infuriate him; and I saw clearly that the only remedy would be, either to shoot him or restore him to his brother's companionship. I chose the latter alternative; and the purchaser of the other bear, my kind friend, Sir Henry Hunloke, on being informed of the circumstance, consented to take this one also.

The temper of the northern lynx, again, like that of the bear and lion, is not always to be depended on. Once I reared three beautiful specimens of this animal. As they were very tame and playful, I and my deceased brother were accustomed to take them into the room, where they performed the most extravagant antics. One day, whilst thus amusing ourselves, I observed one of the young brutes seize my brother by the neck, but as he kept laughing, I at first imagined it was only merely playing with him. All of a sudden, however, my brother became silent, sighed, uttered sounds of distress, and at length burst into tears. Rushing up to him, I discovered, to my horror, that the lynx was clinging like a leech to the back of the ear of the poor boy, and rapidly drawing away his life-blood. Happily, however, and before the brute had inflicted any serious mischief, I succeeded in separating him from his intended victim.

The natives of Southern Africa, I may here remark, entertain many very singular notions, or superstitions if you will, regarding the lion. Amongst the rest, that when that beast finds himself unable to bear away his victim to some solitary place where he can satisfy his hunger in quiet, he repairs to a certain bush, at the root of which bulbs, possessed of peculiar virtues, are said to grow; and after partaking of these wonderful succulents his strength and vigour are believed to be increased tenfold, and he is enabled to accomplish his task with the greatest possible ease and facility.

Another of their notions is that though the lion from its great strength is enabled to bear away on his back an ox, or one of the larger of the antelope tribe, in like manner as the fox a goose—yet, if it happens to be a sheep that he has slain, he is incapable, from some unexplained cause, of thus removing the animal from the spot, but is necessitated to drag it along the ground.

Singularly enough, the like belief prevails amongst the Arabs of Algeria, who, according to General Dumas, account for this peculiarity in the following amusing manner:—

“In relating what his strength enabled him to effect, the lion said one day:

“‘*An cha Allah!*’—that is, if it pleases God,—‘I shall carry off the horse without inconvenience.

“‘*An cha Allah!* whenever I please I shall bear away a heifer, and her weight will not prevent me from bounding or running.’

“When, however, he caught the sheep, he put it so under him that he forgot the religious formula: ‘*If it pleases God!*’ and God, to punish him, decreed that he should never be able to carry away the sheep otherwise than *by dragging it along the ground.*”

During his journeyings in Great Namaqua-land, Sir James Alexander was told by the natives that the Bush-women have it in their power to change their forms into lions, hyænas, and other beasts of prey. The following legend illustrates this superstition:—

“Once on a time, a certain Namaqua was travelling in company with a Bushwoman carrying a child on her back. They had proceeded some distance

on their journey, when a troop of wild horses (zebras), appeared, and the man said to the woman, 'I am hungry; and as I know you can turn yourself into a lion, do so now, and catch us a wild horse, that we may eat.'

"The woman answered, 'You'll be afraid.'

"'No, no,' said the man. 'I am afraid of dying of hunger, but not of you.'

"Whilst he was speaking, hair began to appear at the back of the woman's neck, her nails assumed the appearance of claws, and her features altered. She set down the child.

"The man alarmed at the change, climbed a tree close by, while the woman glared at him fearfully; and, going to one side, she threw off her skin petticoat, when a perfect lion rushed out into the plain. It bounded and crept among the bushes towards the wild horses; and, springing on one of them, it fell, and the lion lapped its blood. The lion then came back to where the child was crying, and the man called from the tree, 'Enough! enough! Don't hurt me. Put off your lion's shape. I'll never ask to see this again.'

"The lion looked at him and growled. 'I'll remain here till I die,' exclaimed the man, 'if you don't become a woman again.' The mane and tail began to disappear, the lion went towards the bush where the skin petticoat lay; it was slipped on, and the woman in her proper shape took up the child. The man descended, partook of the horse's flesh, but never again asked the woman to catch game for him."

With the Bechuanas, legends regarding the lion are especially rife:—

“ ‘How dare you roar?’ said one day that beast to the ostrich. ‘Why, because I can kill game like yourself!’ was the proud rejoinder. ‘I should like to see that,’ said his offended majesty. ‘Very well, you shall;’ and pointing to a herd of zebras just then appearing in view, he continued: ‘You see those animals?’ and with that the ostrich set off at full speed, and ere many minutes had elapsed, the brave bird was in the midst of the troop kicking violently to the right and left, and with such a good will that he laid two of his victims prostrate with so many blows. On seeing this, the lion felt both surprised and annoyed, and, in his turn, attacked the zebras; but all his efforts proved vain. Notwithstanding his bad luck, however, he did not despise partaking of his rival’s spoils, who, however, abstained from eating. ‘How,’ said the lion; ‘don’t you eat meat?’ ‘Oh, I am not particularly fond of it; nevertheless, if you have any to spare, just hand me a piece of the liver.’ Having at last satisfied his hunger, the lion laid himself down, feigning to sleep. In this position he perceived the ostrich picking away, and gulping down sundry buds and gravel pebbles. ‘Aha,’ thought he, ‘you have got no teeth; now we shall soon see who is master!’ with that his Majesty sprung to his feet, and pouncing on his unsuspecting acquaintance, he endeavoured to slay him. But he had reckoned without mine host, for the ostrich laid about him so lustily with his powerful legs, that ere long he suc-

ceeded in dispatching his treacherous acquaintance.

“The low booming, so peculiar to the ostrich, and which even experienced ears are apt to mistake for the subdued growl of the lion, is supposed to have been the consequence of this successful victory over the most dreaded of the denizens of the forest.”

Amongst other curious legends treasured up by the Bechuanas is that relating to the lizard and the chameleon, which runs as follows:—

“Thus spoke Morimo, the great spirit, to Chameleon, viz. :—‘Go to men and say, As I die and am born again, so shall you die and be born again;’ but Morimo feeling impatient to have his message speedily delivered, sent for the lizard, charging him with the same errand. The lizard soon overtook the sluggish chameleon, and passing him on the road came and said to man: ‘You shall die.’ Soon afterwards the chameleon also reached his destination, and delivered his friendly message; but man refused to credit it, saying: ‘We are bound to believe the first word.’ But in revenge they killed both the lizard and the chameleon; the former on account of his unfortunate message, and the latter because he was so slow; and this is the reason why they always destroy these animals, whenever encountered.”

Another of their legends runs thus:—“The steinbock once took the liberty to ridicule the tortoise, on account of its sluggish movements, when the latter indignantly exclaimed: ‘I can get on just as well as you, and challenge you to try your speed with me.’ Though, of course, incredulous as to the truth of the bold assertion, the swift antelope agreed

to the match, and a certain day and place were appointed for the rendezvous. In the meantime, the tortoise sent to all her friends and acquaintances, informing them of the pending match, and requested that they and their kindred would place themselves, at short intervals, all along a certain line of country—that agreed upon as the scene for the coming race. The match was begun; after a while, the antelope, after proceeding at the top of his speed for a time, came to a halt, at the same time calling out: ‘Where are you, friend?’ ‘Here, here!’ screamed the tortoise from amongst the grass. Off started again the astonished steinbock at even greater speed, and on repeating his question at intervals, he always receives the same reply—‘Here, here!’ On, on went the puzzled beast, until at last it dropped dead from exhaustion, and thus the sluggish tortoise easily overcame his immensely more swift but less strategic antagonist.”

There is also another version of this story, in which the steinbock, after having run some distance, and not perceiving his friend, lay down to sleep—the sun at the time being very hot—in which situation the sluggish tortoise passed him; and when the antelope awoke, his opponent had already reached the end of their common journey.

Regarding the sun again, certain of the Bechuanas entertain very singular notions, they believing that the luminary which sets in the evening so suddenly is, during the course of the ensuing night, transferred to the eastern hemisphere; but no one has yet seen the phenomenon.

CHAPTER VIII.

LION-HUNTING IN SOUTH AFRICA—CHASE BY THE COLONISTS—
 THE LION'S LAIR—THOMPSON'S DESCRIPTION OF A HUNT—A
 MAGNANIMOUS LION—NAMAQUA MODE OF HUNTING—NARROW
 ESCAPE OF MR. ORWELL—A FIELD-OFFICER IN DANGER—
 SALT-PANS—A SPORTSMAN'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE
 MONARCH OF THE FOREST—LIONS AND DOGS.

A WORD now as to the manner in which the lion is killed in South Africa. Speaking generally, however, the value of the beast's skin is so trivial, and the danger of attacking him far from slight, that unless he be a notorious "man-eater," or has committed depredations amongst the cattle, he is, comparatively speaking, but little sought after either by the Boers or natives.

With the colonists, the *chasse* of the lion is conducted both on foot and on horseback; and the latter, being considered the safer and better plan, is, for the most part, adopted. But whether mounted or not, the hunters are almost always accompanied by a number of dogs, who not only materially aid in discovering the retreat of the beast, but by perseveringly attacking him, tend, in great measure, to draw off his attention from the men.

Several individuals usually take part in the hunt.

The "spoor" of the beast having been discovered, it is followed up to its lair, which, though at times amongst reeds, rank grass, and the like, is, for the most part, in a dense thicket. When the hunters have approached to within easy gun-shot of where the beast is crouched, or at bay to the dogs, they, if on horseback, dismount, and after wheeling their steeds about, and "knee-haltering" them, draw up in line, and, at a given signal, pour a broadside into the luckless animal. If they are good shots, and the distance inconsiderable, as is generally the case, the lion is usually killed outright—or at least placed *hors de combat*; but should their aim have been so far erring that he has still the use of his legs, he is said almost invariably to "charge." In this case, the hunters themselves find a pretty safe refuge behind the horses which the lion almost invariably attacks in the first instance, and one or other of which are commonly either severely lacerated, or, it may be, pays the penalty of its life; and whilst the enraged beast is thus occupied with his victim, the hunters, who usually escape scot-free, put an end to his existence.

The better, however, to show the manner in which the lion is hunted by the colonists, I will give Thompson's description of a chase after that animal, in which he himself took part:

"I was then residing," he writes, "on my farm, or location, at Barion's River, in the neighbourhood of which numerous heads of large game, and consequently beasts of prey, are abundant. One night a lion, who had previously purloined a few sheep out

of the kraal, came down and killed my riding-horse about a hundred yards from the door of my cabin. Knowing that when he does not carry off his prey, he usually conceals himself in the vicinity, and is, moreover, very apt to be dangerously prowling about the place in search of more game, I resolved to have him destroyed, or dislodged, without delay. I therefore sent a messenger round the location, to invite all who were willing to assist in the foray, to repair to the place of rendezvous as speedily as possible.

“In an hour, every man of the party, with the exception of two pluckless fellows, who were kept at home by the women, appeared ready mounted and armed. We were also reinforced by about a dozen of the bastard Hottentots, who resided at that time upon our territory as tenants or herdsmen; an active and enterprising, though rather an unsteady race of men.

“The first point was to track the lion to his covert. This was effected by a few of the Hottentots on foot, commencing from the spot where the horse was killed. They followed the spoor through grass and gravel, and brushwood, with astonishing care and dexterity, where an inexperienced eye could discern neither foot-print nor mark of any kind, until, at length, we fairly tracked him into a large ‘*bosch*,’ or straggling thicket of brushwood and evergreens, about a mile distant.

“The next object was to drive him out of this retreat, in order to attack him in a close phalanx, with more safety and effect. The approved mode, in such cases, is to torment him with dogs till he

abandons his covert, and stands at bay in the open plain. The whole band of hunters then march forward together, and fire deliberately one by one. If he does not speedily fall, but grows angry, and turns upon his enemies, they must stand close together, and turn their horses rear outward—some holding them fast by the bridles, while the others kneel to take a steady aim at the lion as he approaches, sometimes up to the very horses' heels, crouching every now and then, as if to measure the distance and strength of his enemies. This is the moment to shoot him fairly in the forehead, or some other mortal part. If they continue to wound him ineffectually, till he waxes furious and desperate, or if the horses, startled by his terrific roar, grow frantic with terror, and burst loose, the business becomes rather serious, and may end in mischief, especially if all the party are not men of average coolness and experience. The frontier Boers are, however, generally such excellent marksmen, and withal so cool and deliberate, that they seldom fail to shoot him dead as soon as they get within a fair distance.

“In the present instance, we did not manage matters quite so scientifically. The Bastards, after recounting to us all these and other sage laws of lion-hunting, were themselves the first to depart from them. Finding that with the few indifferent hounds we had made but little impression on the enemy, they divided themselves into two or three parties, and rode round the jungle, firing into the spot where the dogs were barking round him—but

without effect. At length, after some hours spent in thus beating about the bush, the Scottish blood of some of my countrymen began to get impatient, and three of them announced their determination to break in and beard the lion in his den, provided three of the Bastards (who were superior marksmen) would support them, and follow up their fire, should the enemy venture to give battle. Accordingly, in they went (in spite of the warnings of some more prudent men), to within fifteen to twenty paces of the spot where the animal lay concealed. He was couched among the roots of a large evergreen, but with a small space of open ground on one side of it; and they fancied, on approaching, that they saw him distinctly lying glaring at them under the foliage. Charging the Bastards to remain firm, and level fair, should they miss, the Scottish champions let fly together, and struck, not the lion, as it afterwards proved, but a great block of red stone, beyond which he was actually lying. Whether any of the shot grazed him is uncertain; but with no other warning than a furious growl, forth he bolted from the bush. The rascally Bastards, in place of pouring in their volley upon him, instantly turned and ran helter-skelter, leaving him to do his pleasure on the defenceless Scots, who, with empty guns, were tumbling over each other in their hurry to escape the clutch of the rampant savage. In a twinkling he was upon them, and with one stroke of his paw dashed the nearest to the ground. The scene was terrific! There stood the lion, with his foot upon the prostrate foe, looking round in

conscious pride upon the bands of his assailants, and with a port the most noble and imposing that can be conceived. It was the most magnificent sight I ever witnessed. The danger of our friends, however, rendered it at the moment too terrible to enjoy either the grand or the ludicrous part of the picture. We expected, every moment, to see one or more of them torn in pieces; nor, though the rest of the party were standing within fifty paces, with their guns cocked and levelled, durst we fire for their assistance. One was lying under the lion's feet, and the other scrambling towards us in such a way as to intercept our aim upon him. All this passed far more rapidly than I have described it; but, luckily, the lion, after steadily surveying us for a few seconds, seemed willing to be quit of us on fair terms; and, with a fortunate forbearance, turned calmly away; and, driving the snarling dogs like rats from his heels, bounded over the adjoining thicket like a cat over a footstool, clearing bushes twelve or fifteen feet high, as readily as if they had been tufts of grass; and, abandoning the jungle, retreated towards the mountains.

“After ascertaining the state of our rescued comrade, who fortunately had sustained no other injury than a slight scratch on the back, and a severe bruise on the ribs, from the force with which the animal had dashed him to the ground, we renewed the chase, with Hottentots and hounds in full cry.

In a short time we again came up with the enemy, and found him standing at bay under an old mimosa tree, by the side of a mountain stream

which we had distinguished by the name of Douglas Water. The dogs were barking round, but afraid to approach him, for he was now beginning to growl fiercely, and brandish his tail in a manner that showed that he was meditating mischief. Some of the Hottentots, by taking a circuit between him and the mountain, crossed the stream and stationed themselves on the top of a precipice overhanging the spot where he stood at bay, whilst others of them took up a position on the opposite side of the glen, and whilst the poor fellow was thus placed between two fires, which occupied his attention and prevented his retreat, we kept battering at him until he fell covered with wounds and glory.”

The Namaqua Hottentots who border on the Cape Colony, and amongst whom there are many half-breeds, when they hunt the lion are usually on foot, and, as with the Boers, several in company. But the *chasse* with these men is, I am assured, conducted in so extraordinary and cautious a manner as to be utterly devoid of either danger or excitement. They never dream of firing until a distant, safe, and convenient position has been found, when they all sit down comfortably together, so that the attack, or rather the defence, is only made from one side.

Though the colonists and their neighbours the Namaquas usually hunt the lion, as shown, in large parties, and are thus enabled to oppose to the beast a regular battery, yet at other times only a single individual—most commonly a foreigner who has visited Africa for the sake of sport—takes part

in the *chasse*. Indeed, provided the country be tolerably open, and the man well mounted, he ought to make pretty sure of his game.

On these occasions the hunter usually reserves his fire until such times as the lion crouches, or stands at bay to the dogs, which if he be hard pressed soon occurs. The man then reins up within easy distance of, and in a parallel line with the beast, and, without dismounting, discharges his piece, taking care at the same instant to dig his spurs into the sides of his steed, and to ride off at full speed, for if life be left in the lion he is pretty sure to "charge."

Hence the Chasseur must be careful not to approach the brute too closely when he is about to deliver his fire, for its speed is such, for a short distance at least, that unless the horse has a pretty good start, the issue becomes somewhat doubtful. Indeed, from being in too close proximity to the lion, when he made his rush, more than one of my friends have been placed in the most dangerous and critical positions.

Mr. Oswell, for example, was one day pursuing a lioness, who after a while took refuge in a dense thicket. The dogs attacked her gallantly, but though her growls were loud and many, the bushes prevented my friend from obtaining a sight of her. Presently, however, having passed some little distance beyond the brake where she was couched, he was attracted by a noise behind him, and on looking round, saw the enraged beast bounding towards him. Being on Mr. Oswell's right side, he was, unfortunately, unable to fire; but even had it been other-

wise he would hardly have had time, for in a second or two he felt his horse stagger under him, and, on turning his head, saw the lioness perched on the hind quarters of the poor animal. Happily for my friend, the horse, at the instant of the attack, swerved to one side, and coming in contact with a thick thorn-bush, both the rider and the furious brute were swept from off its back to the ground. The concussion stunned Mr. Oswell, and he had no recollection of what afterwards occurred. As the lioness, however, did not molest him in any way, the presumption is that, what with the fall and the onset of the dogs, she became confused, and again betook herself to cover.

Another friend of mine, a distinguished field-officer in Her Britannic Majesty's Service, but whose name I am not at liberty to mention, had also a very narrow escape from a lioness, and that under very extraordinary circumstances. He had fired at the beast (having previously killed its mate), but from the unsteadiness of his horse he was unable to take a correct aim, and the ball had merely grazed her shoulder. She instantly charged with the usual demonstrations of fury, and though he urged his jaded steed to the utmost of its powers, the lioness gained rapidly upon him; at last, indeed, she approached so near that he was prepared to strike her on the head with the butt end of his rifle. At this critical moment, however, to his great surprise and delight, the enraged brute suddenly stopped short in her course, and lay down on her belly, for which singular freak my friend was utterly unable to

account. He conjectured, however, that she was so exhausted by the severe chase that, when about to make her last bound, which might not improbably have proved fatal, her strength utterly failed her.

“Returning one afternoon with Maphooh,” says Harris, (than whom no man more frequently attacked when alone the lord of the Indian and African wilds,) “to a koodoo that I had shot, in order to take up the head, which I had concealed in a bush, I was surprised to find an enormous lion feasting upon the carcass; an odious assemblage of eager vultures, as usual, garrisoned the trees, waiting their turn when the gorged monarch should make way for them. Immediately upon my appearance he walked heavily off, expressing, by a stifled growl, his displeasure at being thus unceremoniously disturbed at dinner. It was not destined, however, that our acquaintance should cease here; for, passing the scene of this introductory interview the following morning, Richardson and myself were suddenly made aware of the monster’s presence by perceiving a pair of gooseberry eyes glaring upon us from beneath a shady bush; and instantly upon reining up our horses, the grim savage bolted out with a roar like thunder, and bounded across the plain with the agility of a greyhound. The luxuriant beauty of his shaggy black mane, which almost swept the ground, tempted us, contrary to established rule, to give him battle, with the design of obtaining possession of his spoils; and he no sooner felt himself hotly pursued than he faced about, and stood at bay in a

mimosa grove, measuring the strength of his assailants with a port the most noble and imposing. Disliking our appearance, however, and not relishing the smell of gunpowder, he soon abandoned the grove, and took up his position on the summit of an adjacent stony hill, the base of which being thickly clothed with thorn-trees, we could only obtain a view of him from the distance of three hundred yards. Crouched on this fortified pinnacle, like the sculptured figure at the entrance of a nobleman's park, the enemy disdainfully surveyed us for several minutes, daring us to approach, with an air of conscious power and pride which well beseemed his grizzly form. As the rifle-balls struck the ground nearer and nearer at each discharge, his wrath, as indicated by his glistening eyes, increased roar, and impatient switching of his tail, was clearly getting the mastery over his prudence. Presently a shot broke his leg. Down he came upon the other three with reckless impetuosity, his tail straight out and whirling on its axis, his mane bristling on end, and his eyeballs flashing rage and vengeance. Unable, however, to overtake our horses, he shortly retreated under a heavy fire, limping and discomfited, to his stronghold. Again we bombarded him, and, again exasperated, he rushed into the plain with headlong fury, the blood now streaming from his open jaws, and dyeing his mane with crimson. It was a gallant charge, but it was to be his last. A well-directed shot arrested him in full career; he pitched upon his skull, and throwing a complete summersault, subsided amid a cloud of dust."

In certain parts of Southern Africa, the face of the country is studded with pit-like hollows, or basins, called, "salt-pans." Though many of these are of limited extent, others, again, occupy a vast extent of ground.* Some are covered with a saline incrustation (hence their designation), whilst others, from the moisture of the soil—for in the rainy season they are flooded—are luxuriantly overgrown with rank grass, reeds, &c. These "salt-pans," provided there be game in the vicinity for them to prey on, are often the resorts and strongholds of lions. Here they breed and rear their young, and if left undisturbed, not only multiply greatly, but become much attached to their wild home, from which, at times, there is great difficulty in dislodging them.

It was from one of these, their fortresses, that the field-officer, spoken of a few pages back, dislodged on one occasion, by the aid of a number of natives, the discharge of fire-arms, shouting, and the burning of the reeds, no fewer than thirteen lions, causing them to take refuge in the country beyond, which was pretty open, and here, single handed, when mounted, he shot six, that were full grown. The cubs, he, like a true sportsman, would not condescend to molest in any way.

Gordon Cumming, as is known, also killed numbers of lions single-handed, so to say. He thus describes his first encounter with the king, or rather queen, of beasts:—

* The Nwelvei, situated to the eastward of Lake Ngami, is said to be a hundred miles long with an average breadth of fifteen miles.

“Suddenly I observed a number of vultures seated on the plain, about a quarter of a mile ahead of us, and close beside them stood a huge lioness, consuming a blesblok which she had killed. She was assisted in her repast by about a dozen jackals, which were feasting along with her in the most friendly and confidential manner. Directing my followers’ attention to the spot, I remarked, ‘I see the lion;’ to which they replied, ‘Whar? whar? Yah, Almaytig; dat is he;’ and instantly reining in their steeds, and wheeling about, they pressed their heels to their horses’ sides, and were preparing to betake themselves to flight. I asked them what they were going to do? To which they answered, ‘We have not yet placed caps on our rifles.’ This was true; but while this short conversation was passing, the lioness had observed us. Raising her full, round face, she overhauled us for a few seconds, and then set off at a smart canter towards a range of mountains some miles to the northward; the whole troop of jackals also started off in another direction; there was, therefore, no time to think of caps. The first move was to bring her to bay, and not a second was to be lost. Spurring my good and lively steed, and shouting to my men to follow, I flew across the plain, and, being fortunately mounted on Colesberg, the flower of my stud, I gained upon her at every stride. This was to me a joyful moment, and I at once made up my mind that she or I must die.

“The lioness having had a long start of me, we went over a considerable extent of ground before I

came up with her. She was a full-grown beast, and the bare and level nature of the plain added to her imposing appearance. Finding that I gained upon her, she reduced her pace from a canter to a trot, carrying her tail stuck out behind her, and slewed a little to one side. I shouted loudly to her to halt, as I wished to speak with her, upon which she suddenly pulled up, and sat on her haunches like a dog, with her back towards me, not even deigning to look round. She then appeared to say to herself, 'Does this fellow know whom he is after?' Having thus sat for half a minute, as if involved in thought, she sprang to her feet, and, facing about, stood looking at me for a few seconds, moving her tail slowly from side to side, showing her teeth, and growling fiercely. She next made a short run forward, making a loud rumbling noise like thunder. This she did to intimidate me; but, finding that I did not flinch an inch, nor seem to heed her hostile demonstrations, she quietly stretched out her massive arms, and lay down on the grass. My Hottentots now coming up, we all three dismounted, and drawing our rifles from their holsters, we looked to see if the powder was in the nipples, and put on our caps. While this was doing the lioness sat up, and showed evident symptoms of uneasiness. She looked first at us, and then behind her, as if to see if the coast was clear; after which she made a short run towards us, uttering her deep-drawn murderous growl. Having secured the three horses to one another by their reins, we led them on as if we intended to pass her, in the hope of obtaining a

broadside. But this she carefully avoided to expose, presenting only her full front. I had given Stofulus my Moore rifle, with orders to shoot her if she should spring upon me, but on no account to fire before me. Kleinberg was to stand ready to hand me my Purdey rifle, in case the two-grooved Dixon should not prove sufficient. My men, as yet, had been steady, but they were in a precious stew, their faces having assumed a ghastly paleness; and I had a painful feeling that I could place no reliance on them.

“Now, then, for it, neck or nothing! She is within sixty yards of us, and she keeps advancing. We turned the horses’ tails to her. I knelt on one side, and, taking a steady aim at her breast, let fly. The ball cracked loudly on her tawny hide, and crippled her in the shoulder, upon which she “charged” with an appalling roar, and in the twinkling of an eye was in the midst of us. At this moment Stofulus’s rifle exploded in his hand, and Kleinberg, whom I had ordered to stand ready by me, danced about like a duck in a gale of wind. The lioness sprang upon Colesberg, and fearfully lacerated his ribs and haunches with her horrid teeth and claws; the worst wound was on his haunch, which exhibited a sickening, yawning gash, more than twelve inches long, almost laying bare the very bone. I was very cool and steady, and did not feel in the least degree nervous, having fortunately great confidence in my own shooting; but I must confess, when the whole affair was over, I felt that it was a very awful situation, and attended

with extreme peril, as I had no friend with me on whom I could rely.

“When the lioness sprang on Colesberg, I stood out from the horses, ready with my second barrel for the first chance she should give me of a clear shot. This she quickly did; for, seemingly satisfied with the revenge she had now taken, she quitted Colesberg, and, slewing her tail to one side, trotted sulkily past within a few paces of me, taking one step to the left. I pitched my rifle to my shoulder, and in another second the lioness was stretched on the plain. In the struggles of death she half turned on her back, and stretched her neck and fore-arms convulsively, when she fell back to her former position; her mighty arms hung powerless by her side, her lower jaw fell, blood streamed from her mouth, and she expired. At the moment I fired my second shot, Stofulus, who hardly knew whether he was alive or dead, allowed the three horses to escape. These galloped frantically across the plain, on which he and Kleinberg instantly started after them, leaving me standing alone and unarmed within a few paces of the lioness, which they, from their anxiety to be out of the way, evidently considered quite capable of doing further mischief.

“Such is ever the case with these worthies, and with nearly all the natives of South Africa. No reliance can be placed on them. They will to a certainty forsake their master in the most dastardly manner in the hour of peril, and leave him in the lurch. A stranger, however, hearing these fellows

recounting their own gallant adventures, when sitting in the evening along with their comrades round a blazing fire, or under the influence of their adored 'Cape smoke,' or native brandy, might fancy them to be the bravest of the brave.

"Having skinned the lioness and cut off her head, we placed her trophies upon Beauty, and held for the camp. Before we had proceeded a hundred yards from the carcass, upwards of sixty vultures, whom the lioness had often fed, were feasting on her remains.

"We led Colesberg slowly home, where having washed his wounds, and carefully stitched them together, I ordered the cold-water cure to be adopted. Under this treatment his hurts soon healed, and he eventually recovered."

Again writes Gordon Cumming, "Just as Swint had milked the cows, and was driving them from the wooded peninsula in which we lay, athwart the open ground, to graze with my other cattle in the forest beyond, he beheld four majestic lions walking slowly across the "vley" a few hundred yards below my camp, and disappear over the river's bank, at a favourite drinking-place. These mighty monarchs of the waste had been holding a prolonged repast over the carcasses of some zebras killed by Present, and had now come down to the river to slake their thirst.

"This being reported, I instantly saddled up two horses, and directing my boys to lead after me as quickly as possible my small remaining pack of dogs, I rode forth, accompanied by Carey carrying a

spare gun, to give battle to the four grim lions. As I rode out of the peninsula, they showed themselves on the bank of the river, and, guessing that their first move would be a disgraceful flight, I determined to ride so as to make them think that I had not observed them, until I should be able to cut off their retreat from the river, across the open vley, to the endless forest beyond. That point being gained, I knew that they, still doubtful of my having observed them, would hold their ground on the river's bank until the dogs came up, when I could more advantageously make the attack.

“ I cantered along, holding as if I meant to pass the lions at a distance of a quarter of a mile, until I was opposite to them, when I altered my course, and inclined a little nearer. The lions then showed symptoms of uneasiness; they rose to their feet, and overhauling us for half a minute, disappeared over the bank. They reappeared, however, directly a little further down; and finding that their present position was bare, they walked majestically along the top of the bank to a spot a few hundred yards lower, where it was well wooded. Here they seemed half inclined to await my attack; two stretched out their massive arms and lay down in the grass, and the other two sat up like dogs on their haunches. Deeming it probable that when my dogs came up and I approached, they would still retreat and make a bolt across the open vley, I directed Carey to canter forward and take up the ground in the centre of the vley about four hundred yards in advance, whereby the lions would be compelled either to give us battle

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or swim the river, which, although narrow, I knew they would be very reluctant to do.

“I now sat in my saddle anxiously awaiting the arrival of the dogs; and while thus momentarily disengaged, I was much struck with the majestic and truly appalling appearance which these four noble lions exhibited. They were all full grown immense males, and I felt, I must confess, a little nervous, and very uncertain as to what might be the issue of the attack.

“When the dogs came up I rode straight in towards the lions. They sprang to their feet, and trotted slowly down along the bank of the river, once or twice halting and facing about for half a minute. Immediately below them, there was a small well determined bend of the stream, forming a sort of peninsula. Into this bend they disappeared, and the next moment I was upon them with my dogs.

“They had taken shelter in a dense angle of the peninsula, well sheltered by high trees and reeds. Into this retreat the dogs at once boldly followed them, making a loud barking, that was instantly followed by the terrible voices of the lions, which turned about and charged to the edge of the cover. Next moment, however, I heard them plunge into the river, when I sprang from my horse, and running to the top of the bank, saw three of them ascending the opposite bank, the dogs following. One of them bounded away across the open plain at top speed, but the other two, finding themselves followed by the dogs, immediately turned to bay. It was now my turn, so taking them coolly right

and left with my little rifle, I made the most glorious double shot that a sportsman's heart could desire, disabling them both in the shoulder before they were even aware of my position. Then snatching my other gun from Carey, who that moment had ridden up to my assistance, I finished the first lion with a shot about the heart, and brought the second to a stand-still by disabling him in his hind quarters. He quickly crept into a dense, wide, dark green bush, in which for a long time it was impossible to obtain a glimpse of him. At length a clod of earth falling near his hiding-place, he made a move which disclosed to me his position, and I finished him with three more shots, all along the middle of his back. Carey swam across the river to flog off the dogs; and when these came through to me, I beat up the peninsula in quest of the fourth lion, which had, however made off. We then crossed the river a little higher up, and proceeded to inspect the noble prizes I had won. Both lions were well up in their years. I kept the skin and skull of the finest specimen, but only the claws and the tail of the other, one of whose canine teeth was worn down to the socket with caries, which seemed very much to have effected his general condition."

Pages might be filled with somewhat similar exploits to the above of Gordon Cumming; but I shall confine myself to narrating two of his *chasses*, as proving in a remarkable manner the truth of my statement in the first chapter, as to the little chance dogs, however numerous and courageous they may be, have against the lord of the forest.

After telling us that "he was traversing the country beyond the Hart River, where the grass was tall and rank, and where copses of considerable size of thorn-trees and grey-leaved bushes were scattered over the landscape," he goes on to say :—

"It was a still and secluded spot! I observed several vultures soaring over one of the covers in question, within a quarter of a mile of the waggons, and thinking it very probable that they were attracted by some lion devouring his prey, I ordered a couple of horses to be saddled, and rode towards the place with one after-rider and about a dozen of my dogs. I was right in my conjecture; for, as I cantered along, I had the satisfaction to behold a majestic old black-maned lion walking parallel to me, and within a hundred yards. He had not yet observed me; he looked so dark that at the first glance I mistook him in the long grass for a blue wildebeest; next moment, however, he turned his large, full, imposing face to me, and I knew that it was he. Shouting to the dogs with all my might, I at once dashed towards him, followed by my after-rider at a respectful distance, carrying my rifle.

"The lion, as I expected, was panic-stricken, and took to his heels, bounding through the long grass at top speed. The dogs went at him in gallant style, I following not far behind them, and yelling to encourage my pack. The lion, finding we had the speed of him, reduced his pace to a sulky trot, and the dogs came up and followed barking within a few yards on each side of him. In half a minute more I had passed ahead, and halted my horse for a

shot; but looking round for my after-rider, who carried my rifle, I beheld him slowly approaching with pallid countenance at least a hundred yards behind. The lion faced about, and springing on Shepherd, one of my favourite dogs, he lay for several seconds upon him, and having bitten him so that he could not rise, he continued his course. A few moments after he knocked over another dog, called Virgin, which escaped with a slight scratch. The lion had now gained the edge of a small cover, and Booi, coming up at a very easy pace, handed me my rifle. In another minute the noble beast came to bay in a thick bush, and, facing round, lay down to await our attack. I then rode up to within twelve yards of him, and halting my horse, I ended the grim lion's career with a single ball behind the shoulder, cutting the main arteries close to the heart. On receiving the ball his head dropped to the ground, and gasping for a moment, he expired. I dismounted, and, plucking a lock of hair from his mane, I placed it in my bosom and returned to camp, having been absent barely ten minutes.

“After breakfast a party went to inspect the lion, and bring home his trophies. On proceeding to seek for Shepherd, the dog which the lion had knocked over in the chase, I found him with his back broken and his bowels protruding from a gash in the stomach; I was therefore obliged to end his miseries with a ball.”

Again, and after saying that information had been brought him by one of his people that a lion had been seen in the neighbourhood of his bivouack,

the distinguished Nimrod in question writes as follows :—

“ I rode directly for the spot where the beast was supposed to be, and drawing near to it, two savage lionesses sat up in the grass and growled fiercely at us. An unlucky belt of reeds, about sixty yards long and twenty broad, intervened between me and the lionesses, and on perceiving their danger, they at once dashed into this cover.” Then followed the most woeful cutting up and destruction among my best and most valuable dogs (thirty in number). The lionesses had it all their own way. In vain I rode round and round the small cover, endeavouring to obtain a peep of them, which would have enabled me to put a speedy conclusion to the murderous work within. The reeds were so tall and dense that, although the lionesses were often at bay within eight or ten yards of me, it was impossible to see them. At length one came outside the cover on the opposite side, when I fired a shot from the saddle. My horse was unsteady, nevertheless I wounded her, and acknowledging the shot with angry growls, she re-entered the reeds.

“ A number of the dogs, which had gone after a herd of blue wildebeests, now returned, and, coming down through the long grass, started a third lioness, which came growling down into the cover and joined her comrades. This was the signal for my united pack to make a bold sally into the centre of the lion's den, when they were savagely met by the three lionesses, who rushed furiously up and down, knocking the dogs about with just as much facility

as three cats would have disposed of the same number of mice. For several minutes nothing was to be heard but the crashing of the reeds, the growling of the lions, and the barking and shrieking of the mangled pack; it was truly a most painful moment to my feelings. Carey, who had come up to assist me, remarked to me that ‘there was an *awful massacre going on among the dogs;*’ and he was right. Night now setting in put an end to this horrid work, and, with feelings of remorse and deep regret at my folly in not having at once called off my poor dogs, I wended my way to camp. On numbering the slain, three of my best hounds were found to have forfeited their lives in the unequal contest, and seven or eight more were very badly wounded, exposing the most fearful gashes, from which several of them never recovered.”

CHAPTER IX.

LION-CHASE BY NATIVES—HABIT OF THE LION WHEN SEIZING HIS PREY—THE CAFFRE MODE OF KILLING THE LION—THE SHIELD—THE RING—RING-HUNT ON A GRAND SCALE—BUSHMAN METHOD OF KILLING THE LION—RESCUE OF A LION-HUNTER—DARING HUNTERS—PURSUIT OF THE LION BY THE AGAGEIRS.

TO proceed. By the natives of Southern Africa—of the interior at least—the lion is generally hunted on foot, and where fire-arms are wanting, as is generally the case, the men are seldom otherwise armed than with the assegais and the bow and arrow. As with the Colonists and Europeans, however, they are for the most part accompanied by numerous dogs, which are undoubtedly a great protection.

Their manner of conducting the *chasse* of this beast varies somewhat; and, in certain districts methods, both singular and curious, are adopted for the furtherance of his destruction.

As said in the first chapter, it is the general belief among the natives that when the lion is in the act of seizing its victim, and until such times as he has deprived it of life, he, for some reason or other, closes his eyes. Of this fact, the Caffres, bordering

on the Cape Colony, Delegorgue tells us, are perfectly well aware. And should the beast be met with at such times, they, presuming on his blindness, fearlessly attack him. Their plan of proceeding is as ingenious as daring :—

“ One of them, carrying a large shield of a concave form, made of thick buffalo hide, approaches the animal boldly, and hurls at him an assegai, or javelin. The lion bounds on the aggressor, but the man in the meanwhile has thrown himself at full length on the ground, covered by his buckler. Whilst the beast is trying the effect of his claws and teeth on the concave side of the shield, where they make no impression, he loses a favourable opportunity. He redoubles his efforts. And in the meantime the armed men surround him, and pierce his body with numerous assegais, all of which he fancies he receives from the individual lying beneath the shield. The assailants retire, the lion grows faint, and soon falls beside the Caffre with the buckler, who takes care not to move until the terrible brute has ceased to exhibit signs of life.”

In other parts of the country the natives form a ring, in the old Scottish fashion, around the lion, and attack him on all sides.

Harris, when speaking of a hunt of this kind, says :—“ In accordance with African caprice, which assigns a parasol to the male instead of the female sex, the sons of the desert are on these occasions provided with a long pointed staff, surmounted with black ostrich feathers, which then prove very serviceable ; for being stuck in the ground at the

proper moment, they divert the attention of the charging beast from the object of his vengeance, and thus enable the rest of the party to rush on and destroy him with their assegais."

By the native chieftains the "ring-hunts" in question are at times conducted on a very grand scale, both as regards the number of men taking part in them, and the extent of ground embraced by the cordon.

"On these occasions," says Harris, when speaking of the redoubtable Moselekatse, "he is attended by a retinue of several thousands of his subjects, who extend themselves in a circle, enclosing many miles of country, and gradually converging so as to bring incredible numbers of wild animals within a small focus. Still advancing, the ring at length becomes a thick and continuous line of men, hemming in the game on all sides, which, in desperate efforts to escape, displays the most daring and dangerous exhibition of sport that can be conceived. As the scene closes, the spears of the warriors deal death around them, affording a picture thrilling to the sportsman, and striking in the extreme."

The chieftain just named, I may mention in parenthesis, was possessed of enormous herds of horned cattle, many of which were pastured at long distances from his own residence, and, as with cattle everywhere else in the wilds of Africa, were not unfrequently attacked by lions. "When such was the case," says Harris (and Moffatt, at page 543, testifies to the like effect), "the death either of the beasts, or of one or more of the guardians of the

herd, whose lives are held of no account whatever, invariably ensued. Armed only with the assegai and shield, these men rush on the marauder, and should they prove the victors, they retire from the conflict, bearing the head and feet of the lion to their royal master. These are left to decompose within the fence of the imperial kraal, which, as I have already explained, is strewed with the bones of wild animals."

Elsewhere the gallant officer tells us:—"No one dare present himself before this dreaded ruler who has been wounded in an ignoble part in battle, or who has failed in his duty to the very letter."

Again, the Bushmen, when they wish to be quit of the lion—which is not always the case, as on the remains of his victims they in certain districts depend in some measure for their food—resort to a singular expedient to attain their ends.

"It has been remarked by these men," says Dr. Phillips, the Missionary, "that the lion generally kills and devours his prey either at an early hour in the morning or at sunset. When, therefore, they purpose slaying the beast, they notice at sun-rise where the springboks are grazing, and if they then appear alarmed and run off, they conclude the animals have been attacked by the lion. Marking accurately the spot where the alarm took place, they, about eleven o'clock of the day, when the sun is powerful, and the enemy they seek is supposed to be fast asleep, carefully examine the ground, and finding the beast in a state of unguarded security, they lodge a poisoned arrow in his breast. The moment

the lion is thus struck, he springs from his lair, and bounds off as helpless as the stricken deer. The work is done! The shaft of death has pierced his heart, without even breaking the slumbers of the lioness, which may have been lying beside him. And in the course of a few hours, or even less (the Bushmen knowing where to look for him) he is found either dead, or in the agonies of death."

Another expedient adopted by the natives of certain parts of Africa for the destruction of the lion, or rather in aid thereof, which, from its singularity, is deserving of notice, is thus related by Freeman, at page 336 of his interesting work:—

After telling us "that when the beast has become accustomed to human flesh, he will not willingly eat anything else; and that when a neighbourhood has been infested by a 'man-eater,' the people form themselves into a band, and proceed in search of the royal foe, whom they beard in his very den," he goes on to say, "Standing close by one another, the lion would make his spring, every man of course hoping he might escape the attack, when instantly others would dash forward *and seize the beast's tail, lifting it up close to the body with all their might,* thus not only *astonishing* the animal, and absolutely taking him off his guard, but rendering his efforts powerless for the moment, whilst others, again, closed in with their spears, and at once stabbed the monster through and through. All this was done," Freeman adds, "not for the exciting pleasure of a lion-hunt, nor as an exhibition of prowess, but to rid the vicinity of their villages of a dreadful enemy,

and to save themselves from becoming, in turn, the breakfast or supper of the monster of the desert."

Elsewhere, Freeman confesses to having long been incredulous as to the truth of what has been just stated; but that he subsequently met a Mr. Lemare, who formerly resided at Mortito, and was familiar with the Kallihari country, "who assured him that the remarkable accounts circulated as to people of that part of Africa *catching lions by the tail*, was a fact; that he himself knew the method to prevail; and that it was certainly not uncommon amongst the natives."

Fabulous as what has just been related may appear to some, yet its truth is fully corroborated by Sir A. Alexander, who, after speaking of the wonderful intrepidity and desperate courage the N—— often display when attacking wild beasts, goes on to say:—

"Thus, I saw a man of the name of Lynx, who had had his hand crushed by a lion that had killed one of his cattle. Now, it is the custom in the land to let those beasts alone, unless they destroy persons or property; but if they do, it is always understood that a hunt must take place. So Lynx, with three of his cousins, went forth to attack the governor.

"They tracked him to a bush, and were preparing their guns for the encounter, when the lion rushed out unexpectedly—on which the three cousins fled, leaving Lynx, who was immediately overthrown by the brute, to his fate. The monster seized the unfortunate man by the left arm, and was dragging him off to destroy him at his leisure, when

the runaways, seeing his predicament, returned. One jumped on to the back of the lion, and pulled stoutly at his ears to make him let go his hold; another hung on by the tail to stop him; whilst the third, watching his opportunity, sent a ball through his forehead. The animal then quitted Lynx's arm, but, in his death agonies, crushed his hand with his teeth. The dying bite of a beast of prey," Sir A. Alexander adds, "is always the worst."

In parts of Africa—in Abyssinia at least—the elephant, as will hereafter be shown, is circumvented (hamstrung) by certain famous hunters called Aggajeers, with the sword alone, and that both on horseback and on foot. This I can well understand; but that these men, when armed only with that weapon, should be in the habit of thus attacking and slaying the lion—as that distinguished traveller and sportsman, Sir Samuel Baker, assures us is the case—seems almost incomprehensible. He himself, however, when in company with several of these daring Nimrods, once took part in a chase of the kind; and as his story is well and spiritedly told, I give it to the reader in his own words:

"We had crossed the river, and, as we passed through an opening in the belt of jungle on the banks, and entered on a plain interspersed with clumps of bush, we perceived, at about two hundred yards distance, a magnificent lion, whose shaggy mane gave him a colossal appearance, as he stalked quietly along the flat sandy ground towards the place of his daily retreat. The Aggajeers whispered "*El Assut*," (the lion), and instinctively the swords

flashed from their sheaths. In an instant the horses were at full speed, sweeping over the level ground. The lion had not observed us, but on hearing the sound of the hoofs, he halted and raised his head, regarding us for a moment with wonder, as we rapidly decreased our distance, when, thinking retreat advisable, he bounded off, followed by the excited hunters, as hard as the horses could be pressed. Having obtained a good start, we had gained upon him, and we kept up the pace until we arrived within about eighty yards of the lion, who, although he appeared to fly easily along like a cat, did not equal the speed of the horses. It was a beautiful sight; Aggahr was an exceedingly fast horse, and having formerly belonged to one of the Hamran hunters, he thoroughly understood his work. His gallop was perfection, and his long steady stride was as easy to himself as to his rider; there was no necessity to guide him, as he followed an animal like a greyhound, and sailed between the stems of the numerous trees, carefully avoiding their trunks, and choosing his route where the branches allowed ample room for the rider to pass beneath. In about five minutes we had run the lion straight across the plain, through several open strips of mimosa, and we were now within a few yards of him, but unfortunately, just as Taher and Abou Do dashed forward in the endeavour to ride upon either flank, he sprang down a precipitous ravine, and disappeared in the thick thorns.

“This ravine formed a broad bottom, which, covered with dense green nabbuk, continued for a

great distance, and effectually saved the lion. I was much disappointed, as we should have had a glorious fight, and I had long sought for an opportunity of witnessing an attack on the lion with the sword. The Aggajeers were equally annoyed, and they explained that they should have been certain to kill him. Their plan was to ride upon either flank, at a few yards distance, when he would have charged one man, who would have dashed away, while the other hunter would have slashed the lion through the back with his sword. They declared that a good hunter should be able to protect himself by a back-handed blow with his sword, should the lion attack the horse from behind; but that the great danger in a lion-hunt arose, when the animal took refuge in a solitary bush, and turned to bay. In such instances, the hunters surrounded the bush, and rode directly towards him, when he generally sprang out upon some man or horse, and was then cut down immediately by the sabre of the next hunter. The Aggajeers declared that, in the event of an actual fight, the death of the lion was sure although one or more men or horses might be wounded, or perhaps killed."

Though Sir Samuel Baker was never fortunate enough to see the lion vanquished by the sabre alone, yet several of these noble beasts fell to his deadly rifle, and amongst them more than one that he "bearded in its very den," a feat not so very often performed even by the boldest of Nimrods. After telling us that on a certain night they were serenaded

in all quarters by lions, one of whom actually visited his camp, he goes on to say,

“Being resolved to circumvent one or other of these beasts, I, on the following morning, therefore took Taher Noor, with Hadji Ali and Hassan, two of my trusty Tokrooris, and went straight to the spot where I left the carcass of the buffalo I had shot on the preceding day. As I had expected, nothing remained, not even a bone, the ground was much trampled, and tracks of lions were upon the sand, but the body of the buffalo had been dragged into the thorny jungle. I was determined, if possible, to get a shot; therefore, I followed carefully the track left by the carcass, which had formed a path in the withered grass. Unfortunately the lions had dragged the buffalo down wind, therefore, after I had arrived within the thick nabbuk and high grass I came to the conclusion that my only chance would be to make a long circuit, and to creep up wind through the thorns, until I should be advised by my nose of the position of the carcass, which would by this time be in a state of putrefaction, and the lions would most probably be with the body. Accordingly, I struck off to my left, and continuing straight forward for some hundred yards, I again struck into the thick jungle, and came round to the wind. Success depended on extreme caution, therefore I advised my three men to keep close behind me with the spare rifles, as I carried my single-barrelled Beattie. This rifle was extremely accurate, therefore I had chosen it for this close work, when I expected to get a shot at the eye or the forehead

of a lion crouching in the bush. Softly and with difficulty I crept forward, followed closely by my men, through the high withered grass, beneath the dense green nabbuk bushes, peering through the thick covert, with nerves strung to the full pitch, and the finger on the trigger, ready for any emergency. We had thus advanced for about half an hour, during which I frequently applied my nose to within a foot of the ground to catch the scent, when a sudden puff of wind brought the unmistakable smell of decomposing flesh. For a moment I halted, and looking round to my men, I made a sign that we were near to the carcass, and that they were to be ready with the rifles. Again I crept forward, bending, and sometimes crawling, beneath the thorns, to avoid the slightest noise. As I approached the scent became stronger; until at length I felt that I must be close to the carcass. This was highly exciting. Fully prepared for a quick shot, I stealthily crept on. A tremendous roar in the dense thorns within a few feet of me suddenly brought the rifle to my shoulder; almost on the same instant I observed the three-quarter figure of either a lion or a lioness within three yards of me, on the other side of the bush, under which I had been creeping, the foliage concealed the head, but I could almost have touched the shoulder with my rifle. Much depended upon the bullet, and I fired exactly through the centre of the shoulder. Another tremendous roar, and a crash in the bushes as the animal made a bound forward, was succeeded by a similar roar, as another lion took the exact position of the last,

and stood wondering at the report of the rifle, and seeking for the cause of this intrusion. This was a grand lion with a shaggy mane; but I was unloaded. Keeping my eyes fixed on the beast, I stretched my hand back for a spare rifle; the lion remained standing, but gazing up wind with his head raised, snuffing in the air for a scent of the enemy. No rifle was put into my hand. I looked back for an instant, and saw my Tokrooris faltering about five yards behind me. I looked daggers at them, gnashing my teeth and shaking my fist. They saw the lion, and Taher Noor, snatching a rifle from Hadji Ali, was just about to bring it, when Hassan, ashamed, ran forward—the lion disappeared at the same moment. Never was such a fine chance lost through the indecision of the gun-bearers, and I made a vow never to carry a single-barrelled rifle again when hunting large game. If I had had my dear little Fletcher 24, I should have nailed the lion to a certainty. However, there was not much time for reflection. Where was the first lion? Some remains of the buffalo lay upon my right, and I expected to find the lion most probably crouching in the thorns somewhere near us. Having reloaded, I took one of my Reilly No. 10 rifle, and listened attentively for a sound. Presently I heard within a few yards a low growl. Taher Noor drew his sword, and with his shield before him, he searched for the lion, while I crept forward towards the sound, which was repeated. A loud roar, accompanied by a rush in the jungle, showed us a glimpse of the lion, as he bounded off within ten or twelve

yards, but I had no chance to fire. Again the low growl was repeated, and upon quietly creeping towards the spot, I saw a splendid animal crouched upon the ground, among the withered and broken grass. The lioness lay dying with the bullet wound in the shoulder. Occasionally, in her rage, she bit her own paw violently, and then struck and clawed the ground. A pool of blood lay by her side. She was about ten yards from us, and I instructed my men to throw a clod of earth at her, (there were no stones), to prove whether she could rise, while I stood ready with my rifle. She merely replied with a dull roar, and I terminated her misery by a ball through the head. She was a beautiful animal, the patch of the bullet was sticking in the wound, she was shot through both shoulders."

But the most singular plan of circumventing the lion—not practised in Southern Africa, it is true, and which, therefore, by rights, should not find a place in these pages—is that described by Layard in his "Nineveh and Babylon."

"The Maidan Arabs," says he, "boast of capturing the lion in the following manner, and trustworthy persons have assured me they have seen the feat performed. A man having bound his right arm with strips of tamarish, and holding in his hand a strong piece of the same wood, about a foot or more in length, that has been hardened in the fire and sharpened at both ends, will advance boldly into the animal's lair. When the lion springs upon him, he forces the wood between its jaws, which will then be held open, whilst he can despatch the astonished beast at his

leisure with the pistol which he holds in his left hand."

* With every submission to Mr. Layard, I take the above to be a fable. If the lion quietly walked up to a man on his hind legs, as the bear is at times said to do, it might be possible to gag him, but when we recollect that the lion is accustomed to bound on his prey, that is, with a force almost sufficient to upset the Monument, the thing seems to me all but impracticable. Besides, is a man's life to depend on a pistol, and that in his left hand? Why, twenty to thirty balls, and those tolerably well placed, are often insufficient, as has been already shown, or will be shown in these pages, to kill the beast. Layard, to my notions, had much better stick to his excavations rather than attempt to stick such fictions into the public.—Ed.

CHAPTER X.

SHOOTING THE LION BY NIGHT—A NOT VERY ENVIABLE SITUATION—PERILOUS POSITION—THE WOUNDED LION—EXCITING HUNTING SCENE—NIGHT-SHOOTING—GORDON CUMMING'S EXPERIENCES—THE LION IN THE DARK—LIONS WATERING—THE MELBODA-ARAB LION HUNTERS—THE SPRING-GUN—THE PITFALL.

BESIDES openly attacking the lion by day, the colonists and others not unfrequently shoot him during the night season, either whilst devouring the remains of a deer or other animal that he himself has slain, or the carcass of one laid out in the wilderness to decoy him, or it may be at the fountain when he repairs to it to quench his thirst.

I myself have had more than one adventure with lions when watching during the hours of darkness in my "screen," (of a similar nature to that described in a note at page 84) for elephants and other large game.

On one occasion, I must confess to having felt rather uncomfortable. I had posted myself in a dense mimosa brake, commanding the approach to a certain river at a point much frequented by wild animals and flanked by an immense pit-fall. The darkness was deepened by surrounding thick foliage and high river-banks. Indeed, so black was the night that I could not discern even the muzzle of

my gun. The gloominess of my solitude was increased by the occasional "Qua-qua!" of the night heron, which made the succeeding hush more dreary, during which even the falling of leaves and the rustling of insects among dry grass were hailed as a relief to the oppressive silence. To a man in a savage wilderness, and without a companion, silence, especially when combined with utter privation of light, is inexpressibly solemn. It strikes the mind not merely as a negation, but as a threatening presence. It seems ominous. I shall never forget the loneliness and sense of desolation I felt on this occasion. It was past midnight, and still no game appeared.

Suddenly, I fancied I heard the purr and breathing of an animal close behind me; but, as no other indications of any living thing ensued, I attributed the sounds to a heated imagination. All at once, however, the dismal stillness was disturbed by the quick steps of a troop of pallahs, descending the stony slope leading direct to my ambush. Stooping as low as possible, in order to catch their outline, I awaited their arrival with my gun on full cock. Nearer and nearer they came, till at last I fancied the leader was on the verge of the pit-fall; but, just at that moment, there was a low, stifled growl, a rush, and then a faint cry as of some dying animal. All was again silent. Though the impenetrable darkness prevented me from seeing anything, I could no longer doubt that I was in the immediate vicinity of a lion. I freely acknowledge that I felt awed, well knowing that were he to attack me I should be completely at his mercy. My situation

was critical in the extreme. Straining eyes and ears to discover the beast's whereabouts, I held my breath in fearful suspense, whilst every nerve was strung to the highest pitch. Presently I heard, to my astonishment, the report of a gun within fifty paces of my hiding-place; then a second and a third shot. This made matters worse; for I now became apprehensive that the men, not aware of my presence, might direct their fire towards me. I therefore sprang to my feet, and vociferated—"Who's there?" "Sir! the lion—the lion!" replied Eyebrecht, the interpreter, for it was no other. The next instant he stood trembling before me. He had it appears been sent by the chief Amral to call me back (he entertaining great apprehensions for my personal safety, several of his people having recently been either killed or cruelly mangled by lions, then unusually numerous in the country, when on the watch in the night time for game)—but had encountered the beast in his path, and fired in order to frighten him away.

Early next morning a number of Hottentots came to examine the ground, when, as I had expected, we found the foot-prints of a lion at the very back of my "screen," and scarcely distant the length of the gun-barrel from where my own person had been, where he had evidently been crouching previously to leaping on the pallah (whose cry I had heard in the night); but which, though wounded, had effected its escape. How far the beast intended me mischief is hard to say, but in any case my situation had not been an enviable one.

At a subsequent period I was placed in an even more trying position. Journeying in a very lonely part of the country, and accompanied only by a single native, I arrived one day at a fountain situated in a defile, amongst some craggy rocks. The water issued from different places amongst these cliffs, forming little pools here and there; and though the place was difficult of access, elephants, and other large game, were in the habit of flocking to the water nightly. As the stony nature of the ground afforded excellent 'ambuscades,' and being much in want of provision, I determined to watch the pools in question for a night or two.

The first night was a failure; but in the second, I succeeded in killing a white rhinoceros. After this, though I watched long and well, nothing appeared, and at last sleep overtook me. How long I slumbered I know not; but all of a sudden I thought, or dreamt, that I was in danger. From much night-watching my hearing and sight had gradually acquired such an acuteness that, even in sleep, I was able to retain a certain consciousness of what was passing around me; and it is probable that I was indebted to this remarkable faculty for the preservation of my life on the present occasion. At first, I could not divest myself of fear; and, for a while, my senses were too confused to enable me to form any accurate notion of the imagined danger. Gradually, however, consciousness returned, and I could distinctly hear the breathing of an animal close to my face, accompanied by a purr like that of a cat. Only one animal I knew existed in *those parts*,

capable of producing the sound; and I at once came to the conclusion that a lion was actually smelling at my person.

If a man had ever cause for dread, I think I certainly had on this occasion. I became seriously alarmed. My first impulse was to get hold of my gun, which was lying ready cocked immediately before me, and the next to raise myself partially from my recumbent position. In doing so, I made as little noise as possible; but slight though it might be, it was sufficient to attract the notice of the beast, who uttered a gruff kind of growl, too well known to be misunderstood. Following with my eyes the direction of the sound, I endeavoured to discover the lion, but could only make out a large dark mass looming through the night-mist. Scarcely knowing what I was about, I instinctively levelled my gun at the beast. My finger was on the trigger; for a moment I hesitated; but, by a sudden impulse, pulled it, and the next instant, the surrounding rocks rang with the report, followed by roarings from the beast, as if in the agonies of death. Well knowing what a wounded lion is capable of, and how utterly helpless I was, I regretted my rashness. The wounded beast, who at times seemed to be within a few paces of the "screen," and at others at some little distance, was rolling on, and tearing up, the ground, in convulsive agonies. How long this struggle between life and death lasted is hard to say, but to me it appeared an age. Gradually, however, and to my great relief, his roars and moans subsided, and after a while ceased altogether.

Dawn at length appeared; but it was not until after some time, and then with much caution, that I ventured to ascertain the fate of the lion, whom, to my great satisfaction, I found dead within fifty yards of my place of concealment. The beast was of an average size; but, unfortunately, the hyænas and jackals had played sad havoc with his skin.

Some time previously, my men had also shot a lion in this identical spot; but owing to his fearful growls, whilst dying, they thought it best to de-camp at once without ascertaining his fate.

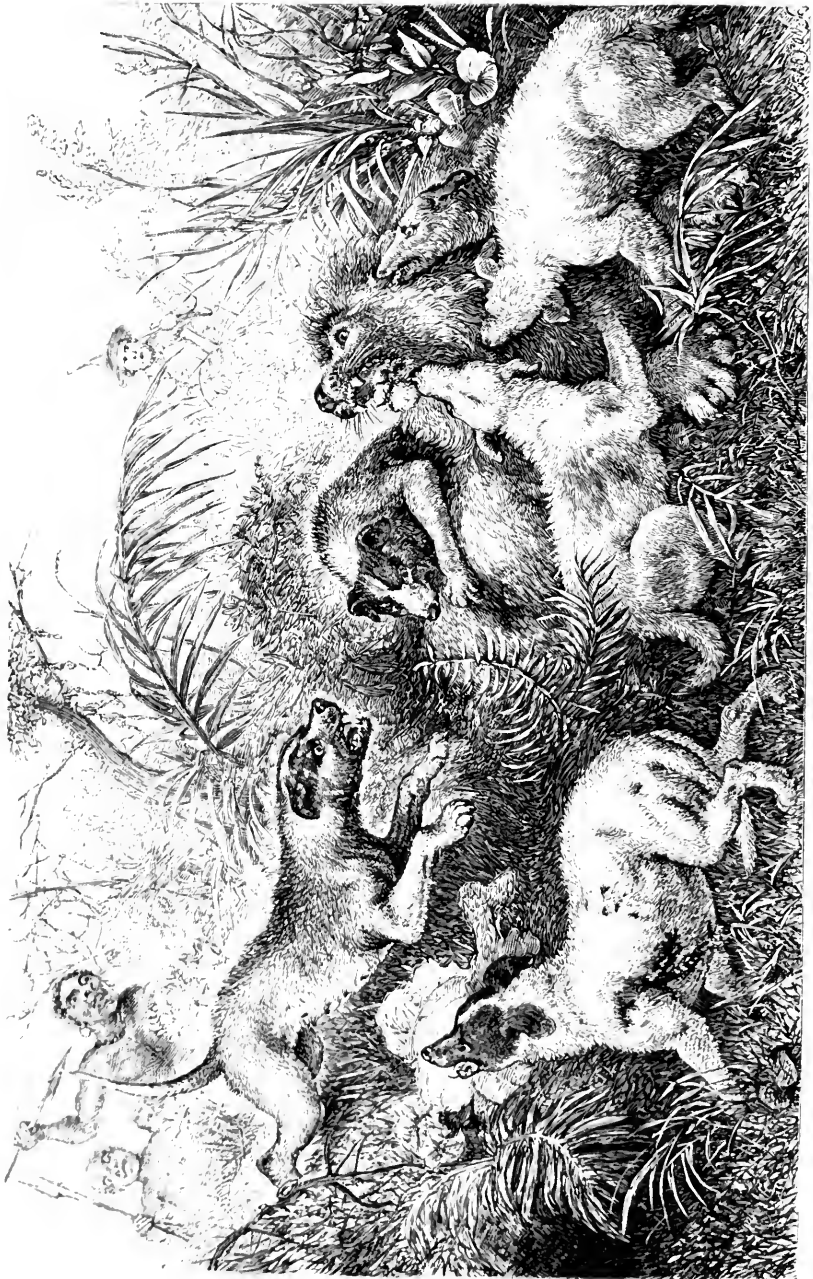
On another occasion, when ensconced alone in my "screen," I had a little adventure with lions, which exhibited these beasts in a somewhat new light.

In the early part of the night I had observed several animals gliding noiselessly to the water, but considerably out of range. Not being able to make them out, I slipped quietly out of my ambush, and approached the spot where they were drinking. From the nature of the ground I was enabled to approach them unperceived, yet was incapable to distinguish the species. Still, from the sound of lapping at the water, I concluded they were hyænas before me, and as one of them was leaving the "vley" I fired. The bullet took effect, and, uttering a growl, the beast disappeared. Whereupon I muttered to myself, "Surely they cannot be lions?"

The remaining two beasts had, in the meantime, ceased drinking, and were moving lazily away, when a low shrill whistle from me at once arrested their steps. I levelled at the foremost and pulled the trig-

ger, but in vain this time, as my ball went too high—in short, right over the object aimed at. The animal, however, did not budge an inch, and I now saw clearly a lion before me. Rising to my feet, I shouted in order to drive him off; but he remained stationary. I did not at all like his appearance, and hastened at once back to my place of concealment to reload.

When again quite ready, and on the look-out for him, I found that both he and his companions were gone. Almost immediately afterwards, however, two lions, which I imagined to be the same, approached the water. Having drunk their fill they were about to retrace their steps, when suddenly (my person being purposely exposed to view), they espied me, and after eyeing me for a few seconds, one of them, the largest, made straight for my "screen." This seemed strange; but to make sure of his intentions, I shouted loudly when the brute was within about forty yards of me. To my utter surprise, he, instead of moving off, came quickly on till at a distance of twenty-five paces, or thereabouts, when he suddenly couched, evidently preparing to spring on me. Dropping the double-barrelled gun, which I held in my hand at the moment, I seized the elephant rifle, levelled, took a very steady aim at his breast, and fired. The bullet sped true, and I thought I had killed him outright, as he rolled over and over on the ground several times; but not so, for, presently, he scrambled up and decamped. However, I had no doubt in my own mind that the wound he had received would prove fatal. On receiving the



LION ATTACKED BY DOGS.

shot, he gave a startling growl, and in making his escape was joined by his comrade, who, while the duel was pending, had remained a passive spectator.

At daybreak we took up the spoor of the stricken animal, and had only proceeded about two hundred yards when the dogs gave tongue at a small brake, where, immediately afterwards, I saw a stately lion rise to his feet and limp forward two or three paces. But the exertion was too much for him; he halted, and turning half round looked fiercely at his assailants. Not being myself in a favourable position, I shouted to my men to fire. Kamapjee responded to the call, and the beast dropped to rise no more.

In an instant the dogs were clinging to his ears, throat, head, &c. The brute, who was still alive, grappled bravely with his assailants. Immediately afterwards, half-a-dozen assegais were quivering in his body, and a hundred more would soon have been similarly sheathed, had I not promptly ridden up and stopped the Damaras, who were rushing in crowds, like so many maniacs, upon the prostrate foe. I wished the dogs to finish the beast and they did so: but three of the best of them were wounded in the scuffle, though only one seriously.

The lion, a male, proved a first-rate prize, in excellent condition, and of giant proportions, but possessed of scarcely any mane. His head was very beautiful—a perfect picture. My aim on the preceding night, we now found, had been most perfect. The bullet had entered exactly the centre of his chest, and after traversing the entire length of his body,

had passed out through his right haunch. It was, therefore, to me matter of wonder that he had so long survived his wound.

This was decidedly the most exciting hunting scene I ever witnessed. Besides my own people, more than one hundred Damaras, (chiefly belonging to a caravan bound for the Ovampo country, and whose encampment was next to my own), were in the field vociferating frightfully, and waving and darting their ox-tailed plumaged assegais about with a ferocity and earnestness that would have made a stranger think they were preparing for some dreadful battle. Nearly as many more men, to say nothing of a host of women and children, were seen hastening towards us from the two camps, which were in full view. Indeed, before the lion had breathed his last, more than three hundred human beings were on the spot.

Having given the needful orders as to the disposal of our prize, we took up the trail of the other lion who, to judge from the quantity of blood lost, must have been seriously wounded. Tracking him for about half a mile, we came up with him in a dense bush. Scared, however, by the tremendous noise made by the Damaras, and not having a sufficient number of dogs left, the greater part having returned home, to bring him to bay, he managed to escape us. Once, indeed, we caught sight of the beast whilst he was crossing a small opening, but here the cover becoming thicker than ever we lost him. The chase, though a short one, was exceedingly animate; and had I been alone, that is, with

merely my own people about me, it is very likely I should have succeeded in dispatching this animal also, apparently a lioness of huge stature.

Gordon Cumming, who frequently sojourned in districts where, as it would appear, lions were more than usually numerous, seems to have devoted much time to night shooting, and to have killed, among a multitude of other animals, several of those beasts. And as his adventures on more than one of these occasions were of an interesting nature, and are graphically and spiritedly told, I have taken leave to transfer a few to these pages.

After describing the death of three buffaloes, which one night that he passed in his "shooting-box,"* as he calls it, fell to his deadly rifle, he goes on to say :

"Hardly had the remainder of the herd (of buffaloes) retreated when the sound of teeth tearing at the carcases of the slain was heard. At first I fancied it was the hyænas, and fired a shot to scare them from the flesh. All was then still; and, being anxious to inspect the heads of the buffaloes, I went boldly forward, taking the native (my companion) along with me. We were within about five yards of the nearest buffalo, when I observed a yellow mass lying alongside of him, and at the same instant a lion gave a deep growl. I thought it was all over with me. The native shouted '*Tao,*' and springing

* Somewhat of a misnomer; the same consisting, as he elsewhere tells us, "of a hedge of bushes some three feet in height, on the top of which were placed dead clean old branches, all being firmly lashed together with strips of the thorn-bush, so as to form a clear rest for the rifles."

away, instantly commenced blowing shrilly through a charmed piece of bone, which he wore on his necklace. I retreated to the man; and we then knelt down. The lion continued his meal, tearing away at the buffalo, and growling at his wife and family, whom I found next day, by the spoor, had accompanied him. Knowing that he would not molest me if I left him alone, I proposed to the native to go to our hole and lie down, but he would not hear of it, and entreated me to fire at the lion. I fired three different shots where I thought I saw him, but without any effect; he would not so much as for a moment cease munching the buffalo.

“I then proceeded to lie down, and was soon asleep, the native keeping watch over our destinies. Some time after midnight more lions were heard coming on from other directions, and my old friend commenced roaring so loudly, that the native thought proper to awake me.

“The first old lion now wanted to drink, and whilst roaring terribly, held right away for my two unfortunate steeds, which were tethered at no great distance. I felt rather alarmed for their safety; but, trusting that the lion had had flesh enough for one night, I lay still, and listened with an attentive ear. In a few minutes, to my utter horror, I heard him spring upon one of the steeds with an angry growl, and dash him to the earth; the steed gave a slight groan, and all was still; I listened to hear the sound of teeth, but all continued silent.

“Soon after this ‘Tao’ was once more to be heard munching the buffalo. In a few minutes he came

forward, and stood on the bank close above us, and roared most terribly, walking up and down, as if meditating some mischief. I now thought it high time to make a fire, and quickly collecting some dry reeds and little sticks, in half a minute we had a cheerful blaze.

“The lion, which had not yet got our wind, came forward at once, to find out what the deuce was up; but, not seeing to his entire satisfaction from the top of the bank, he was proceeding to descend by a game-path in the river-bed within a few yards of us. I happened at the very moment to go to this spot to fetch more wood, and being entirely concealed from the lion’s view above by the intervening high reeds, we actually met face to face.

“The first notice I got was his sudden spring to one side, accompanied by repeated angry growls, whilst I involuntarily made a convulsive spring backwards, at the same time giving a fearful shriek, such as I never remember uttering before. I fancied just as he growled that he was coming upon me; we now heaped on more wood, and kept up a very strong fire until the day dawned, the lions feasting beside us all the time, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the little native, who, with a true Bechuana spirit, lamenting the loss of so much good flesh, kept continually shouting and pelting them with flaming brands.

“The next morning, when it was light, I arose and inspected the buffaloes. The three that had fallen were fine old cows, and two of them were partly consumed by the lions. The ground all

around was packed flat with the spoor of the latter. One particular spoor was nearly as large as that of a *borele*, or black rhinoceros.

“ I then proceeded to inspect the steeds ; the sand around them was also covered with the lion’s spoor. He had sprung upon the old grey, but had done him no further injury than scratching his back through the skin ; perhaps the beast had been scared by the rheims, or, on discovering his spare condition, had preferred the buffalo.”

“ Owing to the tawny colour with which Nature has endowed the lion,” Gordon Cumming goes on to say, “ he is perfectly invisible in the dark, and although I have often heard them lapping water under my very nose, not twenty yards from me, I could not possibly make out so much as the outline of their forms

“ One thing conspicuous about them is their eyes, which, on a dark night, glow like two balls of fire.

“ And when a thirsty lion comes to the water,” he further tells us, “ he stretches out his massive arms, lies down on his breast to drink, and makes a loud lapping noise in drinking, not to be mistaken. He continues lapping up the water for a long while, and four or five times during the proceeding, he pauses for half a minute as if to take breath.”

Further on he remarks, “ I remember a fact connected with the lion’s hour of drinking peculiar to themselves—they seemed unwilling to visit the fountain with good moonlight. Thus, when the moon rose early, the lions deferred their hour of watering

until late in the morning, and when the moon rose late, they drank at a very early hour of the night. By this acute system many a grisly lion saved his bacon, and is now luxuriating in the forests of South Africa, which had otherwise fallen to the barrels of my trusty 'Westley Richards.'"

In Northern Africa the lion, according to Gérard, is also shot in the night time, and that from the *Melbida*, signifying a place of refuge, which he thus describes :

"It consists," he says, "of a hole dug in the ground, of some three or four metres in length, by one in depth, which hole is covered over with logs of wood; and above these, again, are piled the earth that has been thrown up in making the excavation. At the end of the 'melbida' facing the pathway, are five or six loop-holes for guns, and at the other end is a small aperture to admit the chasseurs, which is afterwards closed by a large stone. As it would be difficult to take aim at the lion when merely passing the 'melbida,' the Arabs are accustomed to place a hog, slaughtered for the purpose, in the pathway in front of the loopholes, and when the beast halts to smell at the carcass, the men fire simultaneously.

"It is seldom the lion is killed outright; most commonly, he, on receiving the balls, bounds in the direction of, and over the 'melbida,' little suspecting that the enemy he seeks lies concealed beneath his feet. Afterwards, and when his strength is exhausted by ferocious bounds on all sides, he makes for the nearest thicket."

If, however, what ——, tells us be gospel, thus to shoot the lion from the ‘melbida’ must be a somewhat perilous affair, for when speaking of that in use with the Bedouin Arabs, which, from the description, would seem to be very similar to the Algerian one he says, “Sometimes, however, after the beast has been wounded, he throws himself upon the ‘melbida,’ and breaks with his huge claws the planks that cover it, and devours the hunter whom he finds hidden behind them.”

The lion is also destroyed in Southern Africa by means of the spring-gun, but the manner in which this is set differs somewhat. According to Hans, an old follower of mine in the desert, and whose long experience with wild animals entitles him to be looked upon as an authority—the best manner of proceeding is as follows :

“A circular piece of ground of some extent is in the first instance fenced in with thorn-bushes, leaving one or more narrow openings for the admission of the lion. The bait—in preference the animal he himself has killed—is laid in the middle of the little enclosure in question. At the side of each of the openings in the fence a gun is placed cross-wise. The string attached to the trigger, after having been passed across the opening, and fastened to a tree or bush on the opposite side, should be somewhat slack. The best way of ascertaining its proper tension is to put it back with the hand until both ends are opposite the elbow. With regard to the height of the gun above the ground, measure the distance that your thumb and middle finger

will span above the knee. When the gun is level with this, and the string adjusted as above, the ball will penetrate the lion's heart."

As regards South Africa, at least, the lion is seldom or never taken in the pit-fall. That these beasts occasionally find their way into such as are intended for the giraffe, and other large game, is true, but by the aid of their claws they would invariably seem to dig themselves out.

An amusing incident of this kind occurred near to the place where my friend, Frederick Green, had on one occasion "unyoked." The lion found himself engulfed in the one compartment of a *double pit-fall*, (similar to that into which I myself and my horse—as elsewhere related—were one fine day precipitated), whilst in the other compartment was an ostrich. But in this case the beast took the matter very coolly—for it was not until he had devoured the greater part of his fellow-prisoner that he took the trouble to extricate himself from the toils.

Delegorgue again testifies to the inutility of the pit-fall, of such at least as are in use in Southern Africa, for the capture of the lion. "On one occasion," he writes, "we found two of these devices in near proximity to each other. In the one was a young pallah, living and unhurt, which bounded so high on seeing us that we could touch its head with our hands, notwithstanding the abyss was fifteen feet in depth. On the brink of the other, which was empty, were visible traces of a large lion that had assuredly taken possession of another pallah."

But in Northern Africa—in Algeria—the lion,

according to Gérard, is not unfrequently taken in the pit-fall, but then it is constructed specially for the capture of that beast, "some being," as he says, "as much as ten metres in depth, with a diameter of four or five metres, and narrower above than below."

Various as are the means adopted by the natives of Southern Africa to rid themselves of the lion, they are still not unmindful of the old saw, "Prevention is better than cure," and the Namaquas, therefore, when encamping in a place known to be frequented by those beasts, are in the habit of sprinkling the powder of a certain plant over the cattle before turning them loose, believing that no harm will then befall them. Absurd as the custom may appear, is it nevertheless not impossible that the lion may shun the odour of the powder in question, as fleas are said to shun that of penny-royal?

CHAPTER XI.

LION-HUNTING IN INDIA—ADVENTURES—MAJOR CHARLES DELA-
 MAINE'S FIRST LION-STORY—MARKERS—BEATING THE PATCH—
 LION AND ELEPHANT—DESPERATE STRUGGLE—DESPERATE
 POSITION OF A MAHOUT—GALLANT CHARGE OF WOUNDED
 LION—MAJOR DELAMAINE'S SECOND LION-STORY—PERILOUS
 ADVENTURE—LION-HUNTING BY ROYALTY IN INDIA.

FROM the works of Gérard, Harris, Gordon Cumming, Delegorgue, Sir Samuel Baker, and a host of others, to say nothing of my own humble contributions, on the wild sports of Africa, it is pretty well known in what manner lion-hunting is conducted on that continent. We are more in the dark, however, as to the way in which it is usually managed in India, in certain portions of which, it is said, the lion is found in considerable numbers; and though perhaps somewhat out of place in these pages, yet, as the subject is interesting to sportsmen, at least, I venture to mention two very remarkable lion-hunts kindly placed at my disposal by Mr. Lloyd, who in a note to me says:—

“For the accompanying most interesting narratives I am indebted to my friend, Major Charles Delamaïne of the Indian Army, to quote the words of the lamented Sir Charles Napier (under whom

he commanded the 3rd Light Dragoons at the famous battle of Hyderabad), "one of the best and bravest of our cavalry officers," and whose exploits in the jungle, moreover, have seldom been equalled, and never, I believe surpassed. Usually he pursued the lion on horseback, and if the country was fairly open, he in most cases came off the victor. One day, indeed, he thus slew either three or four of these beasts, and all were full grown. His plan of proceedings was similar to that described as occasionally adopted in Southern Africa, viz., to rein up his horse when within easy range of the lion, and then to give fire, and away. On several occasions, however, he was in considerable personal jeopardy. Once, in particular, he only escaped as by a miracle, for having wounded a large lioness, the infuriated animal immediately charged, and so nearly closed with him that, when making her last bound, her fore-paws actually touched the tail of the steed.

"The Major was also in the habit of shooting lions and tigers in the night-time from a 'screen,' or other place of ambush, and at such times met with singular and striking adventures." Mr. Lloyd, in short, describes his friend as the first lion and tiger hunter of his day, and says that, if all his sporting deeds were recorded, the exploits of other lion-slayers would sink into insignificance.

"The narration of his first adventure," Mr. Lloyd goes on to say, "was written by me to the Major's dictation, and as he subsequently perused the manuscript, its accuracy cannot be called into question,

but the second, as may be observed by a note appended to it, he wrote himself at my request.

THE MAJOR'S FIRST LION STORY.

“When quartered at Dessa, in Guzzerat, Major (then Lieutenant) Delamaine, and Captain Harris,* went out on one occasion near to the village of Barnun-Warra, for the purpose of killing a large lion that during three or four years had infested the country thereabouts, and in the while had not only destroyed much cattle but five of the inhabitants.

“The gentlemen were mounted on separate elephants, and each was provided with at least three guns, or rifles, and they were attended by from fifteen to twenty natives on foot.

“The lion had been ‘marked down,’ in the early part of the morning, in the wooded banks of a tank, bordering on the cultivated lands of the village, which cover he had for some time haunted. The country in the vicinity was flat, and in general free from jungle.

“The beast was believed to have his lair in a patch of copse-wood where, from the jungle having been some years previously cut away by the natives for stakes and the like, the young trees had grown up again so close and tangled, as to be almost impenetrable. But the ‘patch’ was of no great extent, its area, perhaps, not exceeding that of Grosvenor Square. The other parts of the wood surround-

* As elsewhere said, the late Sir Cornwallis Harris, one of the first of Indian sportsmen, and well known for his interesting works on Abyssinia, and the wild sports of Southern Africa.

ing the tank were in a state of nature, consisting of bushes and timber trees.

“On reaching the ground, the natives were stationed as ‘markers’ in the trees thereabouts. But it was not until the party had ‘beaten’ the ‘patch’ with the elephants for a considerable time that the lion was discovered to be on foot, and some further time elapsed before he was viewed as he was stealing away from the brake, along a sort of hedge-row, for the more open country beyond. Major Delamaine, who was some forty or fifty paces from the beast, then fired, and severely wounded him in the body.

“On receiving the ball, the lion immediately faced about, and ‘charged’ the Major’s elephant, but the nerves of the latter having been recently shaken by wounds inflicted by a royal tiger, turned tail, and regularly bolted. In the scurry through the jungle, one of the Major’s guns, having been caught by a tree, fell from the howdah, and was broken, a loss, as the sequel proved, that might have been attended with very disastrous consequences.

“But the lion soon gave up the chase, and retraced his steps to the ‘patch’ from whence he had been started. Here he was followed by Captain Harris alone, the Major’s elephant, from its late fright, having become too unsteady to be taken into thick cover.

“The Captain soon found and fired at the beast, which in its turn instantly sprang at, and made a fair lodgment on the head of the Captain’s elephant, but the latter being a large and powerful animal,

and accustomed to the *chasse*, almost instantly shook off its fierce assailant, who fell with violence to the ground. This desperate mode of attack and reprisal was on both sides repeated in more than one instance, and this, moreover, within view of Major Delamaine, who, though prevented—for the reason mentioned—from taking part in the conflict, was, from the outside of the brake, intently watching the proceedings of his friend. But after a time, whether from having left the “patch,” or from having concealed himself, the beast was no longer to be found.

“It was at the period of the monsoon, and just as the hunters were ‘at fault,’ there came on a heavy shower of rain, when, principally for the sake of the guns, it was deemed best to retire for shelter to some trees in the more open country at a few hundred paces distance.

“The storm soon passed over, but being doubtful whether their guns might not be wet, it was thought advisable to discharge them. This was no sooner done, however, than the lion began to roar terrifically, and continued doing so for some time, in the direction of the late scene of conflict, from which it was pretty evident, that, though they had been unable to find him in the ‘patch,’ he had been harboured there the whole time.

“When reloaded, the party therefore returned to the ‘patch,’ and were informed by one of the ‘markers’ that, on the report of the guns, the lion had rushed roaring from thence into the more open country, evidently for the purpose of venting his rage on the first object that came across his path.

On proceeding a little further they were hailed by another 'marker,' who told them that the brute was crouched in a cluster of brambles, of very limited extent, about twenty paces from the very tree in which he himself was perched.

"As the country was pretty open around the thicket in question, the sportsmen were enabled to reconnoitre it rather narrowly, and that without taking the elephants into the very thick of it, which was deemed inadvisable, as, had those animals come directly upon the lion, they might have been scared and rendered unmanageable. But the brute was not perceptible.

"From the cover being so limited in extent, it appeared almost an impossibility that the lion could be there, the rather, as the elephants, so remarkable for their fine sense of smelling, did not seem at all aware of his presence, and it was in consequence imagined that the man must be mistaken. But as he persisted in his story, it was determined to fire a shot into the thicket, which was accordingly done, though without any result.

"When a lion, which has been wounded and hotly pursued, has 'lain up,' or hidden himself, for a time, his position is generally known either by his roaring, panting, or hard breathing; but in this instance there were no indications of the kind, which, coupled with the shot having failed of effect, confirmed their previous impression, and they were, therefore, on the point of moving off elsewhere.

"But as the 'marker' continued asseverating from his tree that the beast was positively lying in the very brake near to which they were standing, it

was determined to try a second shot, which was fired by Captain Harris's man, who was seated at the back of his master's howdah.

"This had the desired effect, for the gun was hardly discharged, when the lion, with a tremendous roar, sprang up from his lurking place, and in a second was once more on the head of Captain Harris's elephant. But he was almost immediately shaken off, when he retreated to the same brake from whence he had issued, where, as before, he was no longer discernible.

"A shot was therefore directed towards the spot where he was supposed to lie, when he again charged the Captain's elephant, and, on being dislodged, slowly trotted off towards the 'patch' that harboured him in the first instance.*

"During the *mêlée* just described, Major Delamaine, from the apprehension of hitting some one, had been deterred from firing; but as the lion was retreating, he discharged both barrels of his double gun, and broke one of the hind legs of the beast.

"On receiving the wound, the lion immediately turned and rushing at the Major's elephant, sprang

* It seems singular that during the several lodgments made by the lion on the head of the elephant, its "mahout," or driver, whose seat is on the neck of the latter, should not have been destroyed, or at least grievously injured by the beast, but the poor fellow's safety was probably attributable to the ponderous ears of the elephant screening him from its sight. The "mahout" and the lion, however, when the latter is lodged on the head of the elephant, come so nearly in contact, that the Major, as he told me, has, on more occasions than one, seen the man strike the brute on the head with the iron rod, about twelve inches in length, that he carries in his hand to direct the movements of the elephant.—Ed.

up on to his hind-quarters, and fixed his fangs into the thick part of the tail. The poor animal perfectly screamed from the extreme torture, which was little to be wondered at, as this unfortunate appendage had only a week previously been cruelly lacerated by a huge tiger. The elephant now swayed to and fro to such a degree that the Major had difficulty in retaining his seat in the howdah; and was much less able to take an accurate aim at the lion, which indeed, screened as the beast was by the protruding rump of the elephant, would have been scarcely practicable. The Major, besides, had only one barrel remaining, and it, therefore, behoved him to be most cautious that his last charge was not ineffectually expended.

“This trying scene continued for two or three minutes, during which the Major anxiously looked out for Captain Harris. But, unluckily, the Captain’s elephant had been rendered unmanageable by the maltreatment it had itself received from the lion, and it was not, therefore, in the Captain’s power to render aid to his friend.

“The appearance of the lion at this time, maddened as he was with pain and rage, the Major described as most awful.

“At length the beast’s long continued attacks on the elephant caused the poor animal evidently to give away, and to sink behind; and, had the affair continued a short time longer, there is no doubt it would have been on its haunches, and the Major at the mercy of the fierce assailant.

“Finding matters in this very critical state, it

became needful for the Major to risk everything. Leaning, therefore, over the back of the howdah, and clinging to it with the one hand, he, with the other discharged his rifle, a very heavy one, at the head of the lion (the piece at the time oscillating, or swinging, in a manner corresponding with the rolling of the elephant) and as luck would have it, the ball, after crashing the beast's jaw-bone subsequently threaded the whole length of its body.

“This caused the lion to let go his hold, and for a few seconds he appeared partially paralysed, but recovering himself, he slowly retreated towards the thicker cover.

“Subsequently he was again attacked by the party, and in two or three instances charged them as gallantly as ever; but as he was always received with a heavy fire, an end was at length put to his existence, though not until from twenty to thirty balls had been lodged in his body.

“The hunt lasted altogether from three to four hours, during which time the Major himself saw the lion four several times at least on the head of Captain Harris's elephant, and once, as he had good reason to remember, on the haunches of the animal ridden by himself.

“The Major described this lion as the most gallant that he, in his very numerous conflicts with those animals, had ever encountered; and if the lion was brave, it must be admitted his assailants were equally intrepid. The Major considered the beast as the largest he had ever been in at the death of, its dimensions, stick measurement, being three

feet ten inches from heel to shoulder, and ten feet four inches from nose to tail.”

MAJOR DELAMAINE'S SECOND LION STORY.

“In 1831, the regiment was stationed at Rajkote, in the province of Guzzerat, and the villagers having brought in word that some lions frequented a small jungle in the vicinity of the village of Bamurwar, twenty miles from the camp, the puggies (trackers) and elephants were sent forward, and Lieutenant Woodhouse, myself, and Lieutenant Laing followed the next morning.

“On our arrival at the tents, the puggies informed us that they could find a ‘pug’ or track, of two days old, but none whatever of the preceding night, so that there seemed little chance of our meeting with sport. In the absence, however, of something better to do, it was agreed, notwithstanding the discouraging report, to take the field and place ourselves in luck’s way. Accordingly the start was made, and we soon reached the ground.

“It was a tolerably extensive jungle; on one side running into small valleys and clefts in the hills, and altogether a strong and tempting looking piece of cover. “Woodhouse and myself, when alone, seldom both mounted the elephant together, except in cover quite impracticable for horses, the object then being the better keeping the chase in sight in the event of its running. On the present occasion, however, Woodhouse saying he preferred horseback, Laing and I got on the elephant; and men being properly disposed in the trees around, we entered the jungle to beat at random.

“Strange to say, we had hardly proceeded one hundred yards, when two fine lions, young males, but full grown, rose close before us, and one of them fell instantly under the fire from the howdah.

“The other lion fled, and was for some time lost; but being at length viewed by some of the men posted in the trees, and signalled as far ahead, I left the elephant, and, accompanied by Woodhouse, galloped in the direction pointed out. The intelligence, however, proved false, and the alarm being soon after given in another quarter, we forthwith proceeded towards the spot indicated.

“It so chanced that whilst we were winding our way, as best we could, through the jungle, I passed near the place where his Majesty had established himself, and he immediately took after me in the most vicious manner, and from the thickness of the cover and the broken nature of the ground, I had the greatest possible difficulty in evading him. At one time, indeed, he was not more than ten or twelve paces from me.

“He was now lost for a considerable time, perhaps two hours, during which, as the wood was dense, Woodhouse and I, having mounted the elephant, had searched everywhere for him.

“At last he was discovered at the extreme end of the cover crouched close under a ‘peloo-bush,’ and, apparently, quite ready for business. This was soon verified, for, on being fired at, he instantly charged, and planted himself on the head of our elephant. From this elevated position, however, he, after receiving our fire, was soon shaken off by

the poor animal that bore us. Afterwards he retired to a large thick bush, where, though we were certain he was concealed in it, he could not readily be seen.

“To look into this bush, it was necessary to get nearer to it, but it was with the greatest difficulty the elephant could be induced to approach it. At length, however, we got her (it was a female) to within ten or twelve yards of the bush, when the lion, before he could be viewed, again bounded forth, and the elephant swerving to one side, he formed a lodgment upon her croup, and wounded the unfortunate creature very severely, coming also to tolerably close quarters with Woodhouse, who was seated in the hinder part of the ‘howdah.’

“The lion again took refuge in a thicket, but as the elephant was now so dreadfully frightened that she would on no terms approach the spot where she knew the enemy to be, it became a matter of debate how the beast was next to be attacked? Woodhouse proposed, and it was agreed to by Laing (who had now joined us) and myself, that we should proceed on foot.

“All three, therefore, entered the thicket together, and crept under the bushes, the branches of which reached nearly to the ground, and when we got sight of the lion, fired several shots into him at from thirty to forty yards distance. Fortunately for us, in our cramped situation, he did not charge, but only answered each ball with a grunt, and at last retired before us, so that we again lost sight of him.

“Subsequently, after having for a long time

unsuccessfully searched the jungle, Laing and myself mounted the elephant, that we might investigate certain thick patches which—whilst on foot—we had been unable properly to explore, for the cunning animal would go anywhere freely, excepting, as just said, the places where she was aware the lion was crouched.

“Whilst thus occupied, Woodhouse, who was on foot, and about fifty yards from us, discovered our foe a short way off in a bush, and immediately opened his battery. Having three guns, he fired three or four shots, each of which, as before, was greeted with a grunt; but the animal evinced no disposition to act on the offensive.

“Woodhouse then exclaimed, ‘D—— the brute, he must be done up now! I shall walk into him.’

“I said, ‘Don’t trust him, for you see he disregards all shot! better let me come.’ So saying I left the elephant and joined him, taking my double-barrelled rifle in my hand. Woodhouse pointed out the lion to me; I saw the yellow object lying in the bush, but he was too much obscured for us to discover his plight, or to see any particular part where we might hope to strike him vitally.

“After a few words with Woodhouse as to the probability of the lion being forthcoming, I said, ‘I’ll fire one of my barrels and ascertain the point.’ I did so accordingly, when to my surprise and dismay he rushed forth as fresh as when we first viewed him and came directly upon us—it was the business of a moment. There was a little bush just

in front of us, and we both instinctively stooped, or rather bobbed, behind it. The beast came on, however, round the side where Woodhouse was. He could oppose to him only an unloaded gun, which he had in his hand; but the lion seizing him at once by the wrist, and clawing him on the shoulder, he fell directly, the brute remaining on the top of him, biting his arm! I had another barrel left, and I instantly placed the muzzle within two inches of his side, in the region of the heart, and discharged it. It was a heavy gun and of large bore (14), but he took no notice whatever of the shot. Woodhouse now said, 'There is another barrel,' alluding to one of his own. There were three guns lying around which I took up, and, one after the other, cocked and snapped at the beast's head, but with no result. It afterwards appeared, however, that one of them, though really loaded, wanted the copper cap.

"I had now no other alternative than to proceed in quest of my other gun. To attempt to knock a brute of that description on the head would, I well knew, have been worse than useless, his brain being too well protected to be at all affected by any blow in my power to inflict.

"It took me some little time to obtain and load my gun; for the elephant, hearing the roaring, had carried off Laing, and the other people had fled. I, however, at last got my 'Joe Manton' fowling-piece. It was only of 19 bore, but carried ball well, and with this I returned towards the spot where Woodhouse lay. Laing accompanied me, but from his inexperience in the *chasse*, and want of expert-

ness in the use of fire-arms, I reckoned little upon the assistance I might derive from him in case of need. Good will was not, however, wanting, and we advanced side by side to the rescue.

“Poor Woodhouse, I expected to find him dead, and I must say I thought it was a bad business as regards myself; for the brute, independent of the natural ferocity of his disposition, seemed to possess a charmed life, the shot not crippling him in the slightest degree. And let it not for a moment be supposed that the guns employed were light, or ill directed. All was right in these respects, as was fully shown in the sequel.

“There was dry grass of from one and a half to two feet in height, with scattered bushes at the spot where the accident occurred, and I did not know exactly where Woodhouse lay, but advancing, and looking earnestly around, I was delighted to hear his voice at my left, saying, ‘Come in the other direction,’ afraid, doubtless, that, from our relative positions, my shot might strike him. My attention was instantly drawn to the spot whence the voice came, and I saw at that moment the lion’s head rising just above the grass at twenty or twenty-five yards distance—he saluting me at the same time with one of his pleasant growls, and evidently coming on. There was no time for hesitation, and in spite of Woodhouse’s caution, I seized the opportunity, and with steady aim pulled the trigger that was most likely to decide his fate as well as my own. The result was instantaneous—the beast’s head dropped like a stone—he was indeed stone dead, the ball having passed in between the eyes to the very brain.

“I ran up in time to see Woodhouse draw his arm from the brute’s jaws. He was, poor fellow, more composed than could be expected. His arm was mashed to a pulp—his thumb hanging by a bit of skin, and the hand otherwise dreadfully bitten through. I had him conveyed to our tent, and having splinted the arm, at night he was taken into camp, where medical aid awaited him.

“The lion, on being brought to the village, was found to have received from twenty-five to thirty-balls, many of them in the head but none, with the exception of the last, had actually penetrated the brain.”*

C. DELAMAINE.

In India lions were formerly more numerous than at the present day; and the *chasse* of those beasts was the favourite sport of the native Princes. The great ambition of the Mogul, in the time of Aurungzebe was, when mounted, to kill a lion, as such an event not only gratified his pride, but was looked on as a favourable prognostic for the realm. Bernier, after telling us that hunting that animal was the most perilous of amusements, and peculiarly royal, as, except by special permission, the king and princes were the only persons per-

* To this narrative of his adventure the Major appended the following note.

“London, 10th March, 1846.

“My dear Lloyd.

“You have nearly killed me. I don’t get home till very late, and then have an hour or two ‘at the old lion’ to undergo.

“Yours truly,

“C. D——.”

mitted to engage in it, thus describes the way in which matters were conducted.

“As a preliminary step, an ass is tied near the spot where the game-keepers have ascertained the lion retires. The wretched animal is soon devoured, and after so ample a meal the lion never seeks for other prey, but without molesting either oxen, sheep, or shepherd, goes in quest of water, and, after quenching his thirst, returns to his former place of retirement. He sleeps until the next morning, when he finds and devours another ass which the gamekeepers have brought to the same spot. In this way they contrive, during several days, by alluring the lion, to attach him to one place, and when information is received of the king's approach, they fasten to the spot where so many others have been sacrificed, an ass, down whose throat a large quantity of opium has been forced. This last meal is intended to produce a soporific effect upon the lion. The next operation is to spread large nets, made on purpose, which are gradually drawn closer, in the manner practised in hunting Nil-ghaus. Everything being in this state of preparation, the king arrives on an elephant barbed with iron, attended by the grand Master of the hunt, some omrahs mounted on elephants, a great number of gourre-berdars on horseback, and of game-keepers on foot, armed with half pikes. He immediately approaches the net on the outside, and fires at the lion with a large musketoon. The wounded animal makes a spring at the elephant, according to the invariable practice of lions, but is arrested by the net; and the king

continues to discharge his musketoon until the lion is at length killed.

“It happened, however, during the last hunt, that the enraged animal leaped over the net, rushed upon a cavalier, whose horse he killed, and then effected his escape for a time. Being pursued by the huntsmen, he was at length found, and again enclosed in nets. The whole army was on that occasion subjected to great inconveniences, and thrown into a considerable degree of confusion. We remained three or four days patrolling in a country intersected with torrents from the mountains, and covered with underwood and long grass that nearly concealed the camels. No bazaars had been formed, and there were no towns or villages near the army. Happy those who, during this scene of disorder, could satisfy the cravings of hunger! Shall I explain the weighty reason for this long detention in such abominable quarters? You must know then, that it is considered a favourable omen when the king kills a lion, as the escape of that animal is portentous of infinite evil to the State. Accordingly, the termination of the hunt is attended with much grave ceremony. The king being seated in the general assemblage of the omrahs, the dead lion is brought before him, and when the carcass has been accurately measured and minutely examined, it is recorded in the royal archives that such a king on such a day slew a lion of such a size and with such a skin, teeth were of such a length, and claws of such dimensions.”

We find in the Annals of Hindoostan, that the

lion was occasionally hunted without these precautions. Bernier gives us a remarkable instance. Aurungzebe, who was gratified by displays of personal courage, and who had distinguished himself when a youth by attacking an elephant single-handed, commanded his son, Sultan Mauzam, in a full assembly of omrahs, to kill a lion which had descended from the mountains, and was then laying waste the surrounding country. The grand master of the hunt ventured to hope that Sultan Mauzam might be permitted to avail himself of those capacious nets which are ordinarily made use of in so perilous a chase. "He shall attack the lion without nets," sternly replied the king, "when I was prince I thought not of such precautions!" An order given in so decisive a tone could not be disobeyed. The Prince declined not the fearful undertaking. He encountered and overcame the tremendous beast, with the loss of only two or three men; some horses were mangled, and the wounded lion bounded on the head of the Sultan's elephant."

CHAPTER XII.

NUMBER OF PERSONS KILLED AND MUTILATED BY LIONS IN AFRICA—REMARKABLE ESCAPE FROM A LION'S JAWS—MIGHTY NIMRODS—PIET'S ADVENTURE WITH A LION—DANGERS OF THE TRAVELLER IN AFRICA—WONDERFUL ESCAPE OF A NATIVE FROM A LION—MOFFATT THE MISSIONARY IN JEOPARDY—BARBARITIES OF THE MATABILE—VARIOUS ADVENTURES WITH LIONS—THE PRISONERS.

IN South Africa, though many individuals are annually killed by lions, they bear no proportion to the number of the wounded. One would have supposed when such powerful and ferocious animals once had a poor fellow in his power that it was all over with him; but this is not the case, for probably three out of four of those he seizes escape with life, though often, it is true, sadly mutilated. Why or wherefore this happens it is not for me to say, but that such is the fact is indisputable! My statement is moreover, in degree, evidenced by the numerous individuals the traveller meets who have been in the clutches of, and maltreated, by the beast.

And many have had narrow escapes from lions, I myself among the rest. The circumstances were these. One day, when eating my humble dinner, I

was interrupted by the arrival of several natives, who, in breathless haste, related that an *onjeama*, or lion, had just killed one of their goats close to the mission station (Richterfeldt), and begged of me to lend them a hand in destroying the beast. They had so often cried "wolf," that I did not give much heed to their statements; but, as they persisted in their story, I at last determined to ascertain the truth. Having strapped to my waist a shooting-belt, containing the several requisites of a hunter—such as bullets, caps, knife, &c., I shouldered my trusty double-barrelled gun (after loading it with steel-pointed balls), and followed the men.

In a short time, we reached the spot where the lion was believed to have taken refuge. This was in a dense tamarisk brake, of some considerable extent, situated partly on, and partly below, the sloping banks of the Swakop, near to its junction with the Omutema, one of its tributaries.

On the rising ground, above the brake in question, were drawn up, in battle array, a number of Damaras and Namaquas, some armed with assegais, and a few with guns. Others of the party were in the brake itself, endeavouring to oust the lion.

But as it seemed to me that the "beaters" were timid, and, moreover, somewhat slow in their movements, I called them back, and, accompanied by only one or two persons, as also a few worthless dogs, entered the brake myself. It was rather a dangerous proceeding, for, in places, the cover was so thick and tangled as to oblige me to creep on

my hands and knees; and the lion, in consequence, might easily have pounced upon me without a moment's warning. At that time, however, I had not obtained any experimental knowledge of the old saying—"A burnt child dreads the fire," and therefore felt little or no apprehension.

Thus I had proceeded for some time; when suddenly, and within a few paces of where I stood, I heard a low, angry growl, which caused the dogs, with hair erect in the manner of hogs' bristle, and with their tails between their legs, to slink behind my heels. Immediately afterwards, a tremendous shout of "Ongeama! Ongeama!" was raised by the natives on the bank above, followed by a discharge of fire-arms. Presently, however, all was still again, for the lion, as I subsequently learnt, after showing himself on the outskirts of the brake, had retreated into it.

Once more I attempted to dislodge the beast; but, finding the enemy awaiting him in the more open country, he was very loth to leave his stronghold. Again, however, I succeeded in driving him to the edge of the brake, where, as in the first instance, he was received with a volley; but a broom-stick would have been equally as efficacious as a gun in the hands of these people, for, out of a great number of shots that were fired, not one seemed to have taken effect.

Worn out at length by my exertions, and disgusted beyond measure at the way in which the natives bungled the affair, I left the tamarisk brake, and, rejoining them on the bank above, offered to

change places with them : but my proposal, as I expected, was forthwith declined.

As the day, however, was now fast drawing to a close, I determined to make one other effort to destroy the lion, and, should that prove unsuccessful, to give up the chase. Accordingly, accompanied by only a single native, I again entered the brake in question, which I examined for some time without seeing anything ; but on arriving at that part of the cover we had first searched, and when in a spot comparatively free from bushes, up suddenly sprang the beast within a few paces of me. It was a black-maned lion, one of the largest I ever remember to have encountered in Africa. But his movements were so rapid, so silent and smooth withal, that it was not until he had partially entered the thick cover (at which time he might have been about thirty paces distant) that I could fire. On receiving the ball, he wheeled short about, and, with a terrific roar, bounded towards me. When within a few paces, he couched as if about to spring, having his head embedded, so to say, between his fore-paws.

Drawing a large hunting-knife, and slipping it over the wrist of my right hand, I dropped on one knee, and, thus prepared, awaited his onset. It was an awful moment of suspense and my situation was critical in the extreme. Still my presence of mind never for a moment forsook me—indeed, I felt that nothing but the most perfect coolness and absolute self-command would be of any avail.

I would now have become the assailant ; but as—

Owing to the intervening bushes, and clouds of dust raised by the lion's lashing his tail against the ground—I was unable to see his head, while to aim at any other part would have been madness, I refrained from firing. Whilst intently watching his every motion, he suddenly bounded towards me; but—whether it was owing to his not perceiving me, partially concealed as I was in the long grass, or to my instinctively throwing my body on one side, or to his miscalculating the distance—in making his last spring, he went clear over me, and alighted on the ground three or four paces beyond. Instantly, and without rising, I wheeled round on my knee, and discharged my second barrel; and, as his broadside was then towards me, I lodged a ball in his shoulder, which it completely smashed. On receiving my second fire, he made another and more determined rush at me; but, owing to his disabled state, I happily avoided him. It was, however, only by a hair's breadth, for he passed me within arm's length. He afterwards scrambled into the thick cover beyond, where, as night was then approaching, I did not deem it prudent to pursue him.

At an early hour on the next morning, however, we followed his "spoor," and soon came to the spot where he had passed the night. The sand here was one patch of blood; and the bushes immediately about were broken, and beaten down by his weight, as he had staggered to and fro in his effort to get on his legs again. Strange to say, however, we here lost all clue to the beast.

A large troop of lions that had been feasting on a giraffe in the early morning, had obliterated his tracks; and it was not until some days afterwards, when the carcase was in a state of decomposition, that his death was ascertained. He breathed his last very near to where we were "at fault;" but, in prosecuting the search, we had unfortunately taken exactly the opposite direction.

The escape of Hans, my faithful follower—who, as elsewhere said, was a most daring and successful hunter—from the jaws of an infuriated lion, was also very remarkable. He told me the story as we were one day passing in company the spot where the incident occurred, and I give it in his own words:—

"I was riding on 'ox-back' during broad daylight," said he, "along the dry bed of the Swakop, when I saw something dusky by the side of an acacia tree two hundred yards off. This was a lion. He rose and walked leisurely towards me. I had my 'gun-bag' by the side of the saddle, and rode on, for there is no use in provoking hostilities single-handed with a lion unless some object is to be gained, as every sportsman at length acknowledges. The coolest hand and the best shot are never safe, for a bullet, however well aimed, is not certain to disable the beast. After the lion had walked some twenty or thirty yards, the ox on which I was mounted either saw or smelt him, and became furious. I had enough to do to keep my seat, for a powerful long-horned ox tossing his head about,

and plunging wildly, is a most awkward steed for the best of riders. The lion galloped up; he and I were side by side. The lion made his spring, and one heavy paw came on the nape of the ox's neck, and rolled him over; the other paw clutched my arm, and tore the sleeve of my skirt to ribbons, but did not wound me, and there we all three lay. Though I was thrown upon my gun, I, nevertheless, contrived to wriggle it out of the case, the lion snarling and clutching at me all the time. For all that, I put both bullets into the beast, which fell, rose again and turned round, and then limped, bleeding, into a neighbouring thicket. Shaken as I was I let him go. There were no dogs to follow him, so he was allowed to die in peace; but, afterwards, his 'spoor' was taken up, and his remains found."

Again: lions had been unusually numerous and daring one particular year in the country about the Missionary station at Richterfeldt, where my friend the Rev. Mr. Hahn was then located; so numerous were they, indeed, that his waggon-driver, Piet, who, like my own follower, Hans, was a mighty Nimrod, had, with the aid of his two foster-sons, killed upwards of twenty in the course of a few months, and many and wonderful were their escapes from those beasts.

One night, the old man was awakened by a peculiar noise outside his door, which was constructed so as to shut in two parts. The lower division was closed, but the upper was left open on account of the oppressive state of the atmosphere. Quietly

taking up his gun, Piet stole softly to the door, expecting to meet with a hyæna, as he knew that one of these beasts was in the habit of harassing the goat-kids, which, for better security, he had "kraaled" against the wall of the house. His amazement, however, was great, when, instead of a hyæna, a lion stood before him. Without losing his presence of mind, he poked the muzzle of his piece against the animal's head and blew out its brains.

Again: Riding along one morning in a very weak state, having just recovered from a severe fever, a lion suddenly rushed at him. The ox became frightened, and threw the old man. One of his feet was caught in the stirrup, but, fortunately, the "veld" shoe slipped off. "I know," said the veteran hunter, "I was thrown, and that I got on my legs again, but in what manner is quite a mystery to me to this day. I called, as loud as my feeble voice permitted, to my people to bring a gun, the lion always getting nearer and nearer, until he stood within arm's length. I once or twice tried to pull out my pistol, or my sword-knife, which, as you know, I usually carry about me, but in my anxiety I missed them. My jacket was lying just in front of me on the ground, but the brute had one of his paws on it. I felt desperate, however, and, pulling it forcibly away, struck the lion on the head, when he grinned and growled terribly, and I expected every moment he would tear me to pieces. At this juncture my Damara, who fortunately had heard my cries of distress, came running up with my gun. Taking the piece from

the man, I fired at the lion, who had retreated a few paces, where he sat quietly looking at me. I don't know whether I hit him; for, what with the sudden fright and my weak constitution, I felt very unsteady. Be that as it may, it had the effect of scaring him away, for, at the report of the gun, he instantly betook himself to cover."

On another occasion, when the missionary waggon was on its road to Walfish Bay, a lion sprang unexpectedly into the midst of the sleeping party, bivouacking at the time on the banks of the Kubakop river. One of Piet's sons, who was present, picked up his gun from the ground, but, in order to prevent the dew from injuring it, he had wrapped his waistcoat round the lock, and, in the hurry, he was unable to disengage the garment. Finding, however, that the lion was just about to lay hold of him, he held out the piece and fired at random, but fortunately with deadly effect.

Again, "the following fact," writes Moffatt, "shows the fearful danger to which the solitary traveller in the African wilds is at times exposed from lions.

"A man belonging to M. Schmelen's congregation at Bethany, returning homewards from a visit to his friends, took a circuitous course in order to pass a small fountain, or rather pool, where he hoped to kill an antelope to carry home to his family. The sun had risen to some height at the time he reached the spot, and seeing no game, he laid his gun down on a low shelving rock, the back part of which was covered with a species of dwarf

thorn-bushes. He went to the water, took a hearty drink, returned to the rock, smoked his pipe, and, being a little tired, fell asleep.

“In a short time the heat reflected from the rock awoke him, and on opening his eyes he saw a large lion couching before him, with its eyes glaring in his face, and within little more than a yard of his feet. He sat motionless for some minutes, till he had recovered his presence of mind; then, eyeing his gun, moved his hand slowly towards it. The lion seeing him thus occupied, raised its head, and gave a tremendous roar. He made another and another attempt; but the gun being far beyond his reach, he gave it up, as the lion seemed well aware of his object, and was enraged whenever he attempted to move his hand. His situation was now painful in the extreme; the rock on which he sat became so hot that he could scarcely bear his naked feet to touch it, and he therefore kept moving them, alternately placing one above the other.

“The day passed, and the night also, but the lion never moved from the spot. The sun rose again, and its intense heat soon rendered his feet past feeling. At noon the lion rose and walked to the water, only a few yards distant, looked behind as he went, lest the man should move; and seeing him stretch out his hand to take his gun, turned in a rage, and was on the point of springing upon him. The animal went to the water, drank, and returning, lay down again at the edge of the rock.

“Another night passed; the man, in describing it, said he knew not whether he slept, but, if he

did, it must have been with his eyes open, as he always saw the lion at his feet.

“Next day, in the forenoon, the animal went again to the water, and while there, he listened to some noise apparently from an opposite quarter, and disappeared in the bushes. The man now made another effort, and seized his gun; but on attempting to rise, he fell, his ancles being without power. With his gun in his hand, he crept towards the water, and drank, but looking at his feet, he saw, as he expressed it, his ‘toes roasted,’ and the skin torn off with the grass.

“There he sat a few moments, expecting the lion’s return, when he was resolved to send the contents of his gun through its head; but as it did not appear, the poor fellow, tying his gun to his back, made the best of his way on his hands and knees to the nearest path, hoping some solitary individual might pass. He could go no farther, when, providentially, a person came up, who took him to a place of safety, from whence he obtained help, though he lost his toes, and was a cripple for life.”

Mossatt further relates the wonderful escape of another native from a lion, the particulars of which he had from the man’s own mouth.

“One night,” said he, “I, and about a dozen other hunters, were fast asleep, with a circle of bushes placed around the fire. When the blaze was extinguished, a lion suddenly sprang into the midst of us, seized me by the shoulder, and, together with my caross, dragged me to some distance. My com-

panions, aroused by the scuffle, snatched up their guns, and, not knowing one of their number had been carried off, shot in the direction from which the noise proceeded. One ball happened to wound the lion, and, in trying to roar, it let me drop from its grasp, on which I instantly ran off, leaving my mantle, and bolted in amongst my friends, crying out, ‘Don’t shoot me!’ for they supposed at the moment I was the lion.” The individual in question, Moffatt goes on to say, “showed the ugly marks of the beast on his shoulder.”

Moffatt himself, on two several occasions, would appear to have been in considerable jeopardy from lions.

After telling us “that it is a pleasing, sometimes an exciting, exercise, to look back on the rugged path which we have been called to tread, and to recount the dangers from which a gracious providence has rescued us, several of which, in my case, have been so striking that, when I recall the circumstances, I am forcibly impressed with the sentiment, that man is immortal until his work is done,” he goes on to say:—

“On the present journey, when travelling alone in a woody and sequestered place, I left the direct road, to avoid a ford where there were many crocodiles. I had not proceeded two stone casts, when it suddenly occurred to me that I should like to examine a projecting rock which lay beyond the path I had left. After examining the object which had attracted my attention, I turned towards the place whence I had come, in order to retrace my

steps, but saw a lion, which had caught scent of me, looking about for his prey. I, of course, made for the old ford, when, after throwing in, as customary, some stones to frighten the crocodiles away, I hastened to the other side, glad enough to get the watery monsters between the lion and myself. The lions in this part of the country," the Missionary adds, "having gorged on human flesh, do not spend time in looking at the 'human eye,' as some are said to do, but seek the easiest and most expeditious way of making a meal of a man."

Moffatt, I may here mention, was at this time in a region that had recently been ravaged by the Matabili, one of the fiercest and most unrelenting of African tribes, and whom he elsewhere paints in the very blackest of colours. His words are :—

"They were not satisfied with simply capturing cattle; nothing less than the entire subjection or destruction of the vanquished would quench their insatiable thirst for power. Thus, when they conquered a town the terrified inhabitants were driven in a mass to the outskirts, when the parents and all the married women were slaughtered on the spot. Such as dared to be brave in the defence of their homes, their wives, and their children, were reserved for a still more terrible death; dry grass, saturated with fat, was tied round their naked bodies, and then set on fire. The youths and girls were loaded as beasts of burden with the spoils of the town, to be marched to the homes of the victors. If the town was in an

isolated position, the infants were either left to perish with hunger, or to be devoured by beasts of prey. Should a suspicion, however, arise in the savage bosom that these helpless innocents might fall into the hands of friends, they effectively prevented this from taking place by collecting them into a fold, and after raising over them a pile of brushwood, applied the flaming torch to it, when the town, but lately the scene of mirth, became a heap of ashes.

“On such an event as that described occurring,” Moffatt goes on to say, “the lions scent the slain and leave their lair. The hyænas and jackals emerge from their lurking places in broad day and revel in the carnage, while a cloud of vultures may be seen descending on the living and the dead, and holding a carnival on human flesh!”

On another occasion Moffatt considered himself in considerable jeopardy from a lion. After telling us that on one of his journeys he had slept in the open air, near to the door of the hut in which the principal man of the village and his wife resided, he goes on to say, “In the morning I remarked to my host that it appeared some of the cattle had broken loose during the night, as I had heard something moving about on the outside of the thorn-fence under which I lay. ‘Oh!’ he replied, ‘I was looking at the “spoor” just now, it was the lion;’ adding that a few nights previous it sprang over the fence at the very place where I had been lying, and seized a goat, with which it bounded off through another part of the

fold. 'Look,' said he, 'there is part of some of the mats we tore from the house and burned, to frighten him away.' On asking him how he could think of appointing me to sleep in that very spot? 'Oh!' he rejoined, 'the lion would not have the audacity to jump over on you.' This remark produced a laugh from me, in which he and his wife joined most heartily; and reminded me of a circumstance in his own history, with which I was well acquainted, viz., 'that he himself had once been in the jaws of a lion.'"

Again, "Some short time since," writes Freeman, "three men and a boy were sleeping in the open air, whilst travelling through the Madoors' country. Two of the men were by themselves; the other man and the boy were also by themselves, wrapt up in a blanket. Whilst they were asleep, a lion came and walked off with the two in the blanket; they effected their escape, left the monster in possession of the warm coverlet, and stole back to their companions to give the alarm. Whilst the man was relating the adventure the lion came and pounced on him, seized him by the neck, and killed him. He had just time to cry, 'Shoot! shoot!' His companions did so, shot the lion in the neck, and destroyed him. Other lions were supposed to be in the neighbourhood, and the surviving two men and a boy escaped as fast as they could. They returned next morning to get the body of their companion, and inter it; but found that it had been devoured during the night, and the very lion that they

had shot had been devoured by some of his companions."

Freeman further relates that, when at Mankarana, in the Kat-river settlement, he was told by one of the chief men in the place, "that he himself was once caught by a lion, and that his head was actually between the jaws of the enormous monster; that he prayed God to have mercy on him, and spare him;" and he added, "Even though I never prayed before, I did so then most earnestly." And his prayer, he believed, was heard, for the animal let go his hold, and left him.

"Lucas van Veinsen, a Vie Boer," Thompson tells us, "was one morning, about daybreak, riding across the open plain, near the Little Fish River, when, observing a lion in the distance, he endeavoured to avoid him by making a wide circuit. There were thousands of spring-boks scattered over the extensive flats; but the lion, from the open nature of the country, had been unsuccessful in hunting. Lucas soon perceived that he was not disposed to let him pass without further parlance, and that he was rapidly approaching to the encounter. Being without his rifle, and otherwise little inclined to any closer acquaintance, he turned off at right angles, laid the sjambah freely to his horse's flank, and galloped for life.

"But it was too late. The horse was fagged, and bore a heavy man on his back. The lion was fresh, and, furious with hunger, came down upon him like a thunder-bolt. In a few seconds he overtook Lucas, and, springing up behind, brought man and

horse in an instant to the ground. Luckily the Boer was unhurt, and the lion was too eager in worrying the horse to pay any immediate attention to the rider. Hardly knowing how he escaped, he contrived to scramble out of the fray, and reached the nearest house in safety."

"Within three nights," writes Delegorgue, in his usual poetical phraseology, "M. Vernaas, a Dutch Boer, of French extraction, had lost two oxen. The tracks indicated a lioness as the author of the theft. Irritated at being thus deprived of his property, and fearing he should long have to pay a similar tribute, Vernaas took his gun, carrying eight balls to the pound, and proceeded in search of the depredator. His son, a mere stripling, who carried the ammunition, was his sole companion. It was a double lesson he was about to give—the first, to the lioness; the second, to show the child how he was to conduct himself when he became a man.

"After the lapse of an hour, occupied in following the spoor of the formidable quadruped, Vernaas found himself on the borders of a cluster of reeds, where he supposed, and with reason, that the lioness was concealed—in fact, she was there.

"Vernaas, who was at a distance of some sixty paces, fired, and wounded her. He waited a moment, to ascertain the effect of his shot, when he was attacked by her and thrown on his back. The terrible animal, growling with satisfaction at having her enemy in her power, opens a frightful mouth, garnished with superb fangs, long, and perfectly white.

Afterwards, the extended jaws of the beast embrace the entire breadth of the man's chest, on which its teeth leave four deep and bloody furrows.

“The youth had fled to a distance of a hundred paces. He could see his father lying on the ground under the lioness, and tremblingly awaited the terrible results which seemed in no wise doubtful. But presently the beast, whether owing to generosity, or being merely desirous of inflicting on her assailant wound for wound, slowly, gravely, and frequently looking behind her, walked away from the victim.

“All this time Vernaas had lain motionless as if dead, but now that the brute had retreated, and his oppressed breast could dilate more freely, he arose, picked up his gun (the stock of which the lioness had deeply scored with her fangs), and rejoined his son. Then, reloading his piece, he retraced his steps to the cluster of reeds in which the beast had again taken refuge.

“‘It is the lioness, or I myself,’ said Vernaas to his son, ‘that must die before the lapse of an hour, and that within two hundred paces of this spot.’ ‘Yes, father, but how hard it is on me; for, were I provided with a gun, I could kill the wicked beast when it has thee in its clutches. . . . I wish for a gun, father, dost thou comprehend?’ ‘Yes, son, the next time,’ rejoined Vernaas.

“They advanced together in silence, until they reached the edge of the reed-bed in question. ‘Remain here, my son,’ said the old man, who then boldly entered the clump alone. Listening atten-

tively, and with his eyes wide open, Vernaas was guided by the motion of a reed. The instant afterwards he found himself, at ten paces distance, face to face with the lioness, who was licking her wounds. She had no time even to look up, for the gun was discharged—the ball entered her breast, and she was a corpse!

“But, although no doubt could be entertained on this point, Vernaas, mad with passion, gave the carcase a desperate blow with the butt-end of his piece.”

Dr. Burchell gives the following description of an encounter with lions. “The day was exceedingly pleasant, and not a cloud to be seen. For a mile or two we travelled along the banks of the river, which, in this part, abounded in tall mat-rushes. The dogs seemed much to enjoy prowling about, examining every bushy place, and at last met with some object among the rushes which caused them to set up a most vehement and determined barking. We explored the spot with caution, as we suspected, from the peculiar tone of their bark, that it was, what it proved to be, a lion. Having encouraged the dogs to drive him out, a task which they performed with great willingness, we had a full view of an enormous black-maned lion and a lioness. The latter was seen only for a minute, as she made her escape up the river under concealment of the rushes, but the lion came steadily forward and stood to look at us. At this moment we felt our situation not free from danger, as the animal seemed preparing to spring upon us, and we were standing on the bank, at the distance of only

a few yards from him, most of us being on foot and unarmed, without any visible possibility of escaping. I had given up my horse to the hunters, and was on foot myself, but there was no time for fear, and it was useless to attempt avoiding him. Poor Tray was in great alarm; she clasped her infant to her bosom, and screamed out as if she thought her destruction inevitable, calling to those who were nearest the animal, 'Take care! take care!' In great fear for my safety, she had insisted on my moving farther off. I, however, stood well upon my guard, holding my pistols in my hand, with my finger upon the trigger, and those who had muskets kept themselves prepared in the same manner. But at this instant the dogs boldly flew in between us and the lion, and, surrounding him, kept him at bay by their violent and resolute barking. The courage of those faithful animals was most admirable; they advanced up to the side of the huge beast, and stood, making the greatest clamours in his face, without the least appearance of fear. The lion, conscious of his strength, remained unmoved at their noisy attempts, and kept his head turned towards us. At one moment the dogs, perceiving his eye thus engaged, had advanced close to his feet, and seemed as if they would actually seize hold of him; but they paid dearly for their imprudence, for, without discomposing the majestic and steady attitude in which he stood fixed, he merely moved his paw, and, at the next instant, I beheld two lying dead. In doing this he made so little exertion, that it was scarcely perceptible by what means they had been killed. Of the time which we

gained by the interference of the dogs not a moment was lost; we fired upon him; one of the balls went through his side, just between the short ribs, and blood began to flow, but the animal still remained standing in the same position. We had now no doubt that he would spring upon us; every gun was instantly reloaded; but happily we were mistaken, and were not sorry to see him move quietly away, though I had hoped, in a few minutes, to have been able to take hold of his paw without danger."

Gérard narrates the following singular story: "Some years previous to the occupation of Constantine there was amongst the prisoners condemned to death two brothers, who were to be executed on the following day.

"They were highwaymen, of whom most surprising feats of strength and courage were related. The Bey, fearing they might escape, commanded that they should be shackled in such wise that one foot of each was enclosed in the same iron ring, which was afterwards riveted.

"No one knew how it happened, but certain it is that, when the executioner presented himself, the prison was empty!

"After making vain efforts to sever or open the ring, the two brothers succeeded, by taking by-paths, in eluding observation and in gaining the open country.

"At daybreak they hid themselves amongst the rocks, and in the evening again continued their route.

"Towards midnight they were met by a lion.

"The two malefactors began to throw stones at

the beast, abusing him at the same time with all their might, to induce him to take himself off; but the animal remained couched, and would not stir from the spot.

“ Finding that neither threats nor violence were of any avail, they tried the efficacy of prayer, but the lion bounded upon them, threw them down, and quietly commenced devouring the elder by the side of his brother, who counterfeited death.

“ When the lion came to the leg which was confined within the ring, he, finding resistance, bit off the limb below the knee.

“ After that his appetite was satisfied, and being desirous of drinking, he left the spot and repaired to a neighbouring spring,

“ Imagining that he would return after appeasing his thirst, the poor devil who remained alive now looked about him for a place of refuge, and dragging after him the leg of his brother, he hid himself in a cave that he had the good fortune to meet with in his path.

“ Soon afterwards he heard the lion roaring with rage, and it several times passed near to the cave where he had concealed himself.

“ At length morning came, and the lion retired to his lair.

“ When the day was somewhat advanced, the unfortunate convict left his place of refuge, but he had not proceeded far when he was confronted by several horsemen whom the Bey had sent in pursuit of him. One of them took him up behind, and he was brought back to Constantine and again incarcerated.

“The Bey, not believing in the story told him by his people, was desirous of seeing the man himself, who was brought into his presence, dragging after him the leg of his unhappy brother. Notwithstanding his reputation for cruelty, Ahmed Bey was so affected at the sight that he ordered the prisoner’s fetters to be struck off, and restored him to liberty.”

And if we go back to the olden times, we shall find narrow escapes from the jaws of the lion as numerous as at the present day. One of the most notable was that of Sir John Gayner, Lord Mayor of London in 1646, of whom it is related that, when crossing a desert in the Turkish dominions, he was met by one of those beasts, who allowed him to pass unmolested; in gratitude for which he made provision in his will that at St. Katherine’s Church, in Leadenhall Street, a Sermon should be annually preached on the 16th November, in commemoration of his happy deliverance. It was further provided in the will that the minister was to have 20s. for the sermon, the clerk 2s. 6*d.*, the sexton 1s., and that the sum of £8 16s. 6*d.* should be distributed amongst the necessitous inhabitants of the parish.

CHAPTER XIII.

ARMS BEST SUITED FOR LION-SHOOTING—THE LION'S RAGE AT A BULLET—TENACITY OF LIFE—WOUNDS INFLICTED BY A DYING LION—SAFEGUARDS—CAPE-HORSES—REFLECTIONS ON LION-HUNTING—SIGNS OF THE LION'S WRATH—ALLEGED COWARDICE—THE ALGERINE LION.

AS regards the best weapons for lion shooting, I feel somewhat incompetent to give an opinion. From the want of horses and other circumstances, I never, as I have said, systematically hunted the lion; and when I chanced to fall in with him, was seldom armed with other than an ordinary double-rifle of moderate calibre. Experienced African sportsmen, I am aware, recommend such as carry ten or twelve balls to the pound; but, to say nothing of the common-sized rifle being much more handy, I am not sure that, if the ball be well placed, it will not do its business just as effectually as a larger one. In any case, that the ball should be hardened, or, what is better, steel-pointed, is, I believe, admitted by everyone—the skull and bones of the lion not being easily penetrated.

The Dutch Boers, however, amongst whom are many first-rate *chasseurs*, would seem to prefer the single to the double rifle; and that from the belief,

as I understand, that when a man has only one barrel to depend upon he always takes a deliberate aim, whereas, if he has a second barrel in reserve, he is very apt to fire the first hurriedly, and, as a consequence, to shoot wide of the mark. This single rifle, which in the Cape Colony is called a "Roer," is a very formidable-looking affair, and carries balls of several ounces in weight.

Singularly enough, I may here remark in parenthesis, that, should the ball aimed at the lion miss its mark and form a lodgment in the ground immediately near to him, he imagines it is the missile itself, and not the hunter, that has attempted to injure him, and resents the offence accordingly.

"On discharging the first barrel of my double gun at the lion, who was couched," says Delegorgue, "the bullet imbedded itself in the earth at only a few paces from his feet; the beast made a furious dash at the spot with his paw, thinking, perhaps, to seize a portion of my person. This movement he repeated on my sending him a second equally unsuccessful missile. Isaac Neiokerk dispatched a third ball, which whistled about his ears; the animal appeared exasperated at only having to do with invisible objects; he rose to depart, presenting to us his broadside, when I lodged a ball in his shoulder-blade, which passed clean through his body. It was a mortal wound."

The bayonet, in lion-shooting, is never, I believe, made use of in Southern Africa, and with good reason; for to say nothing of intervening boughs and bushes impeding the use of the weapon, and its

weight, which is apt to make the hand unsteady, and thus destroy the aim, it is perfectly certain that, when the lion makes his rush, the sportsman, if provided with one, would be knocked over by the shock; and even supposing the vital parts to be pierced, the man would, in all probability, be torn to pieces by the infuriated beast before its life was extinct.

Pistols, in lion-shooting, I take to be nearly as valueless as the bayonet; and they are, moreover, much in one's way whether mounted or on foot. As Kotje-Dafel, a famous *chasseur* in the Caffre country, told Delegorgue, "It is not with needles that the lion is killed. He is strong, and it requires a strong dose to produce a rapid hemorrhage."

The best point to aim at, when the lion is facing you, and not too far distant, is between the eyes, for, should the ball chance to penetrate the brain, death is of course instantaneous.

On one occasion, soon after my first arrival in Africa, I may mention that when stalking alone, and on foot, a gemsbok, a full-grown lion suddenly sprang out of a bush within some forty or fifty paces of me. The brute's unexpected appearance somewhat startled me, but I had so often been balked in my attempts to get a shot at lions, that I only hesitated for a moment. Accordingly, the beast having turned round to look at me, I took a deliberate aim at his forehead, and fired, and, as good luck would have it, with deadly effect. Indeed, so accurate was my aim that the ball almost split his skull in two, and, as a matter of course, killed him on the spot.

But if, on the contrary, the lion's broadside be exposed to your view, the best point at which to aim is perhaps the shoulder, as a ball through the latter, though it may fail to kill, will most assuredly cripple the beast. Many will say, "Fire behind the shoulder, in the region of the heart." But should you do so, and if the ball goes wide of that organ, it will probably have little more *immediate* effect than if directed against a brick wall; and however badly wounded the lion may be, the chances are he forthwith charges his assailant. Even if the projectile penetrates the heart, death does not always ensue so rapidly as to prevent him from attacking you.

The lion is exceedingly tenacious of life. Were other evidence wanting of this being the case, that of Major Delamaine's, in his description of the two interesting hunts recorded in a preceding chapter, would alone be sufficient. On both of these occasions, as may be remembered, the beasts were literally riddled with balls before life was extinct.

Gérard testifies to the like effect. After telling us "that the lion would seem to be possessed of a charmed life," he goes on to say:—"Whatever the number of balls may be that have hit him, he does not die until the heart or brain is pierced, and to penetrate the latter is no easy matter, for parts of the skull are so thick as actually to flatten the balls. On making the autopsy of the lion of Bône, I discovered that the second bullet had struck the *os frontis*, without breaking it. It had flattened on the bone, as large as the palm of my hand, and

thick as ten sheets of paper. Nor is it quite certain," he goes on to say, "that even if the heart is pierced, the wound will at once prove mortal. It is asserted, indeed, that a lion, after being shot through that organ, has been known to tear a horse to pieces before expiring."

By all accounts, the lion is terrible in his death-struggles, and it is then highly perilous to go near him. "What is remarkable in the beast is this," says Gérard, and all lion-hunters tell the same story, "that the nearer he is to death, the more dangerous he becomes." It is, moreover, the generally received impression—with the natives at least—that the wounds he inflicts when in his dying agonies are infinitely more difficult to cure than those inflicted by him at other times.

Dogs, and the more the better, are, I take it, a great safeguard in lion-shooting. This was amply shown in the case of Gordon Cumming, who would hardly have got off unhurt in his numerous duels with the beast but for those valuable auxiliaries. Their incessant attacks on the lion not only enable a man to approach him unperceived, and thus fire at a short distance, and with deliberation, but often, in the event of his "charging," they divert his fury from the hunter to themselves. Dogs, however, should not be of too fierce and courageous a disposition, as such soon get killed; mere curs, that "give tongue" well, are the best for the purpose.

But whether they are high-couraged, or the contrary, the consumption of "dog-flesh" in lion-shooting is always, I take it, considerable. Gordon

Cumming, for instance, had at one time, he states, as many as thirty, and no doubt he was constantly replenishing his pack, yet on his return to civilisation, it would seem as if he had only three or four remaining, the remainder of the poor creatures, the larger portion at least, having been destroyed by the beasts in question.

In the more open parts of the country at least, the horse, in lion-shooting, is a great advantage, as it not only enables one the more rapidly to come up with the quarry, but, to a certain extent, is a safeguard also; for should the beast "charge," and succeed in overtaking and overthrowing both the steed and its rider, as not unfrequently happens, he, in the first instance, almost invariably expends his rage and fury on the former.

By all accounts the Cape horses, with a little training, are admirably adapted for either hunting or shooting. "They are," says Harris, "hardy, docile, and enduring. In the chase, the most formidable animal does not inspire them with the slightest alarm; and, the bridle being thrown over their heads, they may generally be left standing in the wilderness for hours together, without attempting to stir from the spot. They seldom trot; the usual pace is a canter, and occasionally a gallop."

The endurance of these horses is something wonderful. A striking instance of this occurred a few years ago in Great Namaqua-land. The animal in question belonged to a son of the Hottentot chief, Zwartbooi, who, whilst hunting in an open tract of country, fell in with a troop of eleven giraffes, to

which he immediately gave chase, and the whole of which he rode down and shot in succession in the course of the day. But the immense exertion was too much for the gallant creature, whose life was thus sacrificed.

This remarkable horse was well known throughout Great Namaqua-land, and is said to have been quite mad with excitement when he observed a wild animal; and he only ceased to pursue when the game was either killed or no longer in sight.

Another matter in lion-shooting, not exactly a safeguard, it is true, but one that the sportsman should bear in mind is, that if there be several in company and the lion charges, while his companions take to their heels, the best plan is to stand stock-still; in which case it is confidently asserted that the beast, nine times out of ten, will pursue the runaways in preference to the man who looks him boldly in the face.

But even with every precaution, and under the most favourable circumstances, the danger of lion-hunting, it must be acknowledged, is considerable, and few of those who have engaged to any extent in this exciting amusement have come off altogether unscathed. The perils attendant on it are fully appreciated by Gordon Cumming, in the truth of whose observations I fully concur. He says:—
“A recklessness of life, perfect coolness and self-possession, an acquaintance with the disposition and manners of lions, and a tolerable knowledge of the use of the rifle, are indispensable to him who would strive in the overpoweringly-exciting pastime of

hunting this justly-celebrated king of beasts.”

A word now as to the character of the lion, &c. : a subject which I have purposely reserved until this time that the reader, from being acquainted with all I have to tell about the beast, may be the better able to form his own judgment. As, however, the opinions of writers and sportsmen regarding the character of the lion are various and contradictory, I shall content myself with saying, in the words of Gérard, that, in my opinion, the leading characteristics of the animal are “courage and slothfulness.”

It is true there are those who altogether deny the lion the former quality, and even go so far as to pronounce him a poltroon. But this very erroneous view of his character is of easy explanation. “The existence of the lion,” as has been well observed by the author just named, “is divided into two distinct periods, making him in some measure two distinct animals. The two periods are the night and the day. During the night he roams the wilds in search of prey, whilst in the day he is accustomed to retire to the most solitary places, where he sleeps at his ease. Because a person in the daytime has met a lion, whom the sun or the flies have caused to shift his quarters, and because he escapes from the beast with impunity, he, without taking into consideration that at that hour the animal was half asleep, and that its belly was full, goes away with the impression that the lion never ventures to attack a man, and the beast is therefore branded with cowardice. In fact, the lion does not kill for

the mere pleasure of killing, but for food, and to defend himself from attack."

That the lion in the daytime, unless previously provoked, or exasperated by hunger, almost invariably retreats at the sight of a man, or on hearing him approach, is a fact that almost every traveller or sportsman (myself amongst the rest) who have visited Southern Africa can testify to.

Harris, for instance, at page 258 of his entertaining work, says:—

"Scarcely a day passed without our seeing two or three lions, but, like the rest of the animal creation, they uniformly retreated when disturbed by the approach of men. However troublesome we found the intrusions of the feline race during the night, they seldom, at any other time, showed the least disposition to molest us unless we commenced hostilities; and this, owing to the badness of our horses, we rarely felt disposed to do."

Delegorgue testifies to the same effect. "At the sound of a man's steps or voice, the lion, whether hidden in the wooded dell, in the deep ravine, or stretched at length in the rank grass, will start from his hiding-place, and make a precipitate retreat. In the bush he effects it noiselessly, and by stealth; but in the more exposed localities, it is done slowly and with extreme caution, fearing, perhaps, to compromise his dignity. He may then be seen to turn round repeatedly, with a careless air, as if his mind was pre-occupied, but at the same time always taking care to increase the distance between himself and his pursuer. Shout to him,

and he will in all probability stop to listen, continuing his course, however, when the sound has ceased. If you do not wish to encounter him, you have only to lie down, when he at once becomes uneasy, he starts to his feet, and if he perceives nothing, often retreats hurriedly, and with apparent confusion."

Though during the day the lion, as a rule, retreats at the sight of a man, yet at times he shows unmistakable signs of displeasure.

"When the beast is wroth, or pinched with hunger," says Kolbein, a quaint but often truthful writer of the last century, "he erects and shakes his mane, and thwacks his back and sides very briskly with his tail. When he is in this action, 'tis certain death to come in his way; and as he generally lurks for his prey behind bushes, and travellers sometimes discover not the motion of his tail till too late, one now and then falls into his paws. But if the lion shakes not his mane, nor makes any great motion with his tail, a traveller may reckon upon it that he may pass safely by him."

"A showman, who was exhibiting a lion," Kolbein adds, "was unexpectedly attacked by the animal, who seized him by the head. Whilst in the beast's grasp, he called out to the bystanders, 'Is he wagging his tail?' 'Yes,' some one replied. 'Well, then,' the unfortunate man stammered forth, 'I'm a dead man.' And truly enough, for after keeping his victim in suspense for a few seconds, the brute put an end to the sufferings of his master."

Moffatt is amongst those who have no very high opinion of the lion's courage, at least in the day-time. He even goes so far as to say "that, with all the beast's boldness, he sometimes proves an ardent coward," and in proof thereof, relates several instances of his seeming poltroonery.

Amongst others, he says "that he has known the Bushmen, and even women and children, to drive the lion from the prey he has just seized, by beating their sticks on dry hides and shouting."

He also states "that he remembered a man having come unexpectedly on a lion, and fainting at the sight. The beast raised himself up to look over the bushes, and seeing no one, he suspected a plot, and scampered off with his tail between his legs."

Then, after relating the manner in which a native had been followed by a lion, the Missionary goes on to say:—

"At length the animal lay down at the foot of the tree up which the poor fellow had taken refuge, and kept watch all night. Towards morning, however, sleep overcame the hitherto watchful Bushman. He dreamt that he had fallen into the lion's mouth, and awaking at the moment he, in a state of fright and bewilderment, lost his balance, and falling from amongst the branches, alighted directly on the back of the beast, on which the monster, thus unexpectedly saluted, ran off with a loud roar; and the Bushman, also taking to his heels in an opposite direction, returned in safety to his anxious parents."

As regards the hours of darkness, nevertheless,

the Reverend gentleman would seem properly to appreciate the lion, for elsewhere he says :—“ But on the approach of night his courage returns, and that which during the day he dreads he now fearlessly attacks. Indeed, he will not unfrequently seize the horse by the side of his rider, or the ox that is tied to the waggon, or even the faithful dog. Nay, he dares man himself.”

Delegorgue, as well as Moffatt, would appear to entertain but a poor opinion of the lion's courage, which, he thinks, is only displayed on very special occasions. After telling us that he has seen upwards of fifty of those beasts, and killed many, he goes on to say : “ But in no instance, not even when badly wounded, did they show fight, but invariably retreated. Once, indeed, when I was within ten paces of a lion and a lioness, and there was no better weapon at hand than my double-barreled gun, loaded with Number Five shot, I fired at the one as well as the other, and both forthwith made off, without daring to show their ire otherwise than by a deep growl.”

That the actions of the lion in the day-time, when, to speak figuratively, he is somewhat in the position of a fish out of water, often look very much like poltroonery, cannot be denied, still, admitting that, as with the bravest of men, he has his *moments de peur*, there cannot be a doubt that, on very many occasions, actions of his, which have been branded as cowardly, have rather arisen from fear of falling into the toils than any other cause; and if such be really the case, it is not at all surprising that “ he should have made himself scarce.”

In spite, therefore, of all that has been said and written in disparagement of the lion's bravery, I venture to say that people who are well acquainted with him in his native wilds, and who have confronted him in battle, whether by night or by day, will not fail to pronounce him amongst the bravest of beasts; and thousands of instances, in addition to those recorded in these pages, might be adduced, testifying to his undaunted and unconquerable spirit. His daring, indeed, at times, almost exceeds credence.

So much for the courage of the South African lion; but in this quality, as also in "power" (which means, I presume, both size and strength), he, according to Gérard, is greatly surpassed by the lion inhabiting Algeria.

"This terrible poacher,"—such are Gérard's words (or rather, perhaps, those of his critic), when speaking of the lion—"who reposes all day in his lair of olive trees, and stretches his refreshed limbs only as the sun goes down, who throttles a horse as a man stifles a mouse, and who calmly breasts forty muskets levelled at his noble head, and never sees an object that he is afraid to attack, in no way resembles the lion of South Africa described by Gordon Cumming. He is by far the more courageous, the more powerful, the more unscrupulous animal. His roar is compared to thunder; he breaks past cork and lentile trees by the mere weight of his enormous body; he picks up a man in his jaws as a pet-dog picks up a ball of cotton; he springs upon his enemies even with a dozen

balls in his carcase. The lioness respects him, and consents to be wooed by him only when he has destroyed the rest of her suitors."

But is all this gospel? I think not. To me it seems that "a lion is a lion all the world over;" in other words, that his courage, and other qualities, are about on a par in every country. We have at least the testimony of Harris and Delamaine—who everyone must admit are competent judges of the matter—that the Indian and South African Lion are identical in every respect, courage included; why, therefore, should there be so great a difference between the latter and that of Northern Africa, as Gérard tells us is the case? It is certainly possible that, from the terrible ravages (as will presently be shewn) those beasts commit in Algeria amongst the cattle, where, in consequence, every man's hand is against them, they become more than commonly savage and ferocious, and lose that fear and respect for the human form divine usually entertained by carnivorous animals; but even admitting this to be the case, the difficulty is not altogether cleared up.

Amongst other instances adduced by Gérard, or his critic, of the extraordinary bravery of the Algerian lion, is the fact of his having been known "calmly to brave forty muskets levelled at his noble head." A great proof of courage, no doubt, but surely it was equalled, if not surpassed, on the occasion mentioned by Gordon Cumming, of a lion facing not only forty, but two-hundred-and-fifty armed men; and had they not taken the alarm and hastily

retreated, it would, in all probability, have "charged" the cowardly crew. Then again, as shown in these pages, the South African lion has, in many instances, been known to carry off men from the bivouac fire, when surrounded by many companions, and that in spite of numerous shots and firebrands hurled at his head.

I have also great doubts as to the Algerine lion being superior in size and power to the South African; but as, unfortunately, neither the dimensions of the beast nor its weight seem to have been taken with any great accuracy in either country, this point must be left undecided.

We will now speak of the lion's magnanimity, which, from time immemorial, has been cried up to the skies by poets and others. We are told, for instance, that he has been known to despise weak and contemptible enemies, and even to pardon their insults when it has been in his power to punish them, while we all know by heart the stories of the Lion of Androcles, and that of Florence. These relations may be true or false, but with that I have little to do. All I know is that, during my long wanderings in Southern Africa, nothing in the shape of nobleness of disposition on the part of the lion ever came under the notice of either myself or anyone else, whether native or colonist, with whom I came into contact. That he does not always kill the man he stands over (even though previously wounded by him), and consequently at his mercy, is perfectly true, but to assign a cause for this, his seemingly-capricious conduct, appears to me not only difficult, but impossible.

That the lion may not be so bloody-minded as some other carnivorous animals—the fox, for instance, who when in the hen-roost not unfrequently whisks off the heads of most of the inmates—is also perfectly true; for, as elsewhere said, he only kills when hungry, or when attacked, but never for the mere pleasure of killing; but let his stomach be empty, more especially in the night-time, and if man or beast crosses his path, be assured he will show no mercy. The Arabs, indeed, who are well acquainted with his disposition, have the adage:—“When thou settest off on a journey never go alone, and always arm thyself as if thou wert going to meet a lion.”

Though the world at large considers the lion a scourge, and one that it is desirable to get rid of by every possible means, yet, strange to say, certain of the Bushmen and other natives of Southern Africa look upon the beast rather as a *benefactor* than otherwise.* To these men he performs the same part as the jackal is said to do to the lion,

* In certain parts of the African continent, indeed, the lion would seem to be actually protected, so to say, and that for a singular reason. “There are also,” says Dr. Livingston, when traversing countries bordering the Portuguese settlement on the West Coast, “a great many lions and hyenas, and there is no check upon the increase of the former, for the people, believing that the souls of chiefs enter into them, never attempt to kill them; they even believe that the chief may metamorphose himself into a lion, kill any one he chooses, and then return to the human form. Therefore when they see one they commence clapping their hands, which is the usual mode of salutation here. The consequence is that lions and hyenas are so abundant, that we see little huts made in trees, indicating the places where some of the inhabitants have slept when benighted in the fields.”

viz., he acts as their *provider*; for, watching the movements of the beast, they are frequently enabled, as it is said, to possess themselves of such portions of his victim as he may not have had time or inclination to devour, or, it may be, of the carcase whilst still intact.

On a certain occasion, I myself was an eye-witness to an act of this description.

Returning somewhat late one very dark night from Mr. Rath's house to our encampment, I was suddenly startled by sounds of the most painful description, not unlike the stifled groanings of a person who is on the point of drowning. It at once struck me that the lions had surprised some unfortunate native whilst lying in ambush near the water for wild animals that came there to drink. Whilst listening in anxious suspense to the wailings in question—which gradually became more and more faint—there reached me from another quarter a confused sound of human voices and of hurried footsteps. This only tended to confirm my first impression; but, from the impenetrable darkness, I could not ascertain anything with certainty. Being unable, however, to endure the suspense any longer, and regardless of the danger to which I exposed myself, I caught up my fowling-piece, which happened to be loaded with ball, and set out in the direction whence the wailings—now fast dying away—proceeded.

I had not gone very far before I fell in with a number of natives, who were hastening in the same direction as myself.

My road, for the most part, lay through a dense tamarisk coppice, and it was surprising to me how I ever managed to thread the labyrinth. The hope of saving human life, however, enabled me to overcome all obstacles. I might have been three or four minutes in the brake, when, on coming to a small opening, I suddenly encountered, and all but stumbled over, a large black mass lying at my feet; whilst, close to my car, I heard the twang of a bow-string, and the whizzing of an arrow. At the same moment, and within a very few paces of where I stood, I was startled by the terrific roar of a lion, which seemed to shake the ground beneath me. This was immediately followed by a savage and exulting cry of triumph from a number of the natives.

Having recovered from my surprise, I found that the dark object that had nearly upset me was one of the natives stooping over a dead zebra, which the lion had just killed, and I then learnt, for the first time, to my great astonishment as well as relief, that the wailings which had caused me so much uneasiness, and which I imagined were those of a dying man, had proceeded from this poor animal.

The design of the natives, who, from the first, I take it, well knew what they were about, was simply to possess themselves of the zebra, in which they had fully succeeded. Whilst some busied themselves in lighting a fire, the rest joined in a sort of war-dance round the carcase, accompanied by the most wild and fantastic gestures, totally disregarding the proximity of the lion, who had only re-

treated a few paces. As the fire began to blaze, indeed, we could distinctly see him pacing to and fro amongst the bushes on the edge of the river's bank.

He, moreover, forcibly reminded us of his presence by cruelly lacerating a small dog belonging to one of the party, which had incautiously approached him too closely. By a slight touch of his murderous paw he ripped up its body from head to foot; but, notwithstanding that its entrails dragged on the ground, the poor creature managed to crawl to our fire, where it breathed its last in the course of a few seconds. It was a most touching sight to see the faithful animal wagging its tail in recognition of its master, who was trying to replace the intestines, and to stop the flow of blood.

The savage features of the natives, which received an unnaturally wild character as the glare of the half-blazing fire fell upon them; the dying dog, with its wild master stooping despondingly over him; the mutilated carcass of the zebra; and the presence of the lion, within a few paces of us, presented one of the most striking scenes it was ever my fortune to witness.

Delegogue, also, testifies to the fact of the natives of particular districts looking on the lion rather as a blessing than a curse.

“People,” he says, “who, by reason of disastrous wars, are compelled to live on the produce of the ground, or those who, like the Bushmen, exist solely by the chase, are far from showing hatred to the lion. To these he is in no way hurtful; but,

on the contrary, in many respects useful. In truth, from the manner in which these men hunt, which insures neither certain nor great results, they are often compelled to seek their subsistence in woods. The lion leaves after him ample fragments, which are by no means to be despised; and every morning these are indicated by the vultures, who are sure pilots. The cloaks of most of the Mahashee are made of the skins of the beast's victims, which are rendered supple by means of the marrow extracted from their bones; whilst the men themselves feed on the flesh. Hence these people shewed no desire to assist me in ridding the country of their formidable neighbours, whose services they prized."

Then again, it is said, the lion is a benefactor in this way; that, were he not to keep down the numerous granivorous animals that roam over the boundless savannahs of Southern Africa, little herbage would remain for the cattle belonging to the colonists and natives. On this subject, Delegorgue expresses himself very strongly.

"In point of fact," such are his words, "the lion in these wilds is of incontestable utility, and I prove it thus: that if from Drakensberg, the source of the Vaal River, to the tropic of Capricorn, not a lion existed, it is very certain that the herds of gnoos and quaggas, already far too numerous, would multiply in a frightful proportion. It would require only ten years, and the pastoral people would not find a blade of grass for their cattle There were so many lions when I crossed from the Elands River to the Vaal River, that almost every day we

saw several; and nearly every night they attempted to carry off our cattle. Nevertheless, their numbers proved insufficient to fulfil their mission, as was exemplified by the fact that during the six successive days I journeyed before reaching the Vaal River my cattle were unable to find the least green herbage. This was in the winter time, when everything had been cropped off by the gnoos and quaggas, whose mouths and teeth had literally shaved the turf; and not an inch of ground was to be seen whereon there was not the impress of a foot. Indeed, where the soil was light and dry, their feet had so broken up the ground, that it almost resembled land under tillage."

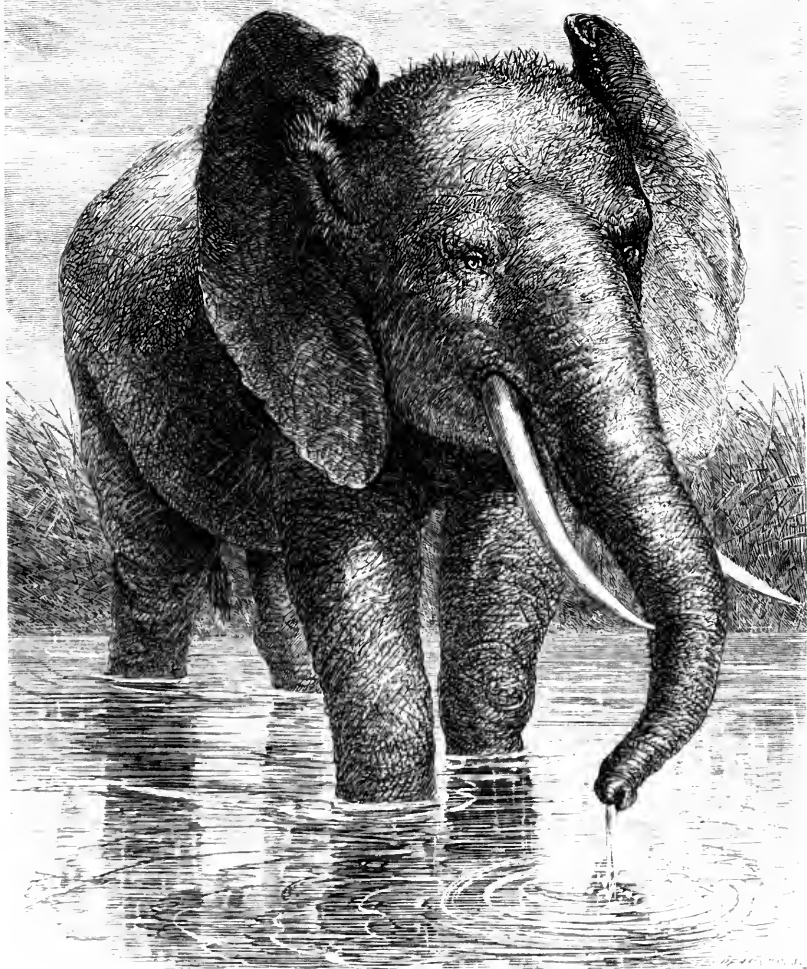
"It follows," Delegorgue goes on to say, "that had there not been lions to diminish the number of granivorous wild animals, not only would the Caffirs have been unable to find pasture for their cattle, but the gnoos and quaggas—supposing that emigration had been denied them—would have perished in masses from inanition."

Whatever may be the case in Southern Africa, in the Northern portion of that continent, in Algeria at least, the lion cannot surely be looked on as a benefactor; for although the number of those beasts in that country is supposed by Gérard not to exceed thirty, yet the ravages they commit amongst the cattle are something unheard of. It is calculated, indeed, as we learn from the same authority, "that in Algeria alone, the lion levies a tax on the Arabs ten times heavier than the tribute they pay to the French Government,

that each lion kills cattle of all sorts to the annual value of £300, and that in the course of the beast's life his keep costs the 'Douars' on which he preys, eight thousand pounds."

If, therefore, the question be put to the natives of Algeria as to whether they look on the lion as a benefit or the contrary, I imagine there will be no difficulty in divining their reply.

THE ELEPHANT.



THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT.

CHAPTER I.

COUNTRIES IN WHICH THE ELEPHANT IS FOUND—TWO VARIETIES—DIFFERENCE OF THE INDIAN AND AFRICAN SPECIES—COLOUR, HEIGHT, AND WEIGHT—THE PROBOSCIS—THE TUSKS—CARE WITH WHICH THE ELEPHANT GUARDS ITS TRUNK—DENTITION—MOVEMENTS AND PACE—WHEELING ABOUT—ENORMOUS WEIGHT OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT—THE SPOOR.

“The Greek shall come against the conqueror of the East,
By his side there stalks to battle the huge earth-shaking beast,
The beast on whom the castle with all its guards does stand,
The beast that has between his eyes the serpent for a wand.”

MACAULAY'S “LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.”—*The Prophecy of Cass.*

IT is somewhat singular that, notwithstanding our acquaintance from very remote ages with this

“The wisest of brutes, with gentle mind endowed,
Though powerful, not destructive,”

our knowledge of its habits, manners, and natural history, in general, should be still so imperfect; and though much of what I am about to relate of this most interesting animal may be a “twice-told tale,” it is still to be hoped the reader will find not only amusement, but matter that may not previously have met his eye.

The elephant inhabits many countries extending over an immense area, but there are only two known

species in existence, namely, the African (*Loxodonta Africana*), and the Indian (*Elephas Maximus*, Lin.).

As regards Africa, the elephant is found throughout all the more central portions of that vast Continent, as high up, at least, as Abyssinia. Its limits to the southward would appear to be about the 32nd degree of latitude. Little more than a century ago it was an inhabitant of the Cape Colony, where, by all accounts, the breed is now extinct. Thunberg, in his second journey into Caffraria, in 1773, informs us, indeed, that he met with a man who told him "that in his younger days the elephant was very numerous in the Dutch possessions, even to near Cape Town itself; that in travelling to and from that place one might kill great numbers of them; that he himself had often shot from four to five in a day, and sometimes twelve or thirteen; and that twice in his life, when he was out in pursuit of those animals, he had shot with his own gun twenty-two each day."

Sparman says "that, in the country near the Cape, elephants are sometimes seen in large herds, consisting of many hundreds; and that, in the more remote and unfrequented parts of the interior, they are still more numerous."

Indeed, since the introduction of fire-arms, the increased value of the tusks, and the esteem in which the flesh of the elephant is held by the natives, who slaughter both females and young without mercy, the number of these animals, as regards Southern Africa, would seem to be everywhere rapidly decreasing; and if the destruction

should continue in the same ratio as of late years, the period of their final annihilation may not be very far distant.

Two varieties of elephant are said to be peculiar to Southern Africa; and some even seem to consider them as distinct species. Thus Mr. Oswell, who has had great experience in these matters, and who has hunted both on the Limpopo and the Zouga rivers, tells me "that the elephant of the former locality is of large proportions, with small tusks, whilst that of the latter is a comparatively small animal, but has very heavy tusks." My own imperfect knowledge of and acquaintance with this animal, tends to corroborate the theory of the most ivory being found in small, but of course full grown, elephants.

But the African and the Indian elephant not only differ widely in their habits, but are distinguished by peculiarities of form.

One of the leading characteristics of the African species is its ears, which are not only of a somewhat different shape from the Indian, but of an immensely superior size, covering the whole shoulder, descending to the legs, and overlapping the neck, "to the utter exclusion of the Mahout," as Captain Harris truly observes. Of the great size of these appendages, some idea may be formed from the fact that, when a full-grown bull-elephant advances in full charge with his ears cocked, his head measures about fourteen feet from the tip of one ear to that of the other, in a direct line across the forehead.

Then, again, the head of the Indian species is

perfectly distinct from that of the African. The forehead of the former, when held in the natural position of inaction, is perpendicular; and above the slight convexity at the root of the trunk, there is a depression, in shape like a herald's shield; a bullet in the lower portion of that shield would reach the brain in a direct line. The head of the African elephant is completely convex from the commencement of the trunk to the back of the skull, and the brain is situated much lower than that of the Indian species; the bone is of a denser quality, and the cases for the reception of the tusks are so closely parallel that there is barely room for a bullet to find a chance of penetrating to the brain; it must be delivered in the exact centre, and extremely low, in the very root of the trunk; even then it will frequently pass above the brain, as the animal generally carries his head high, and thrown slightly back.

Hence, though a forehead-shot at an Indian elephant, as testified to by several celebrated Indian sportsmen of my acquaintance, is almost certain death, yet to the African species the chances are that not one bullet out of twenty, though it may stagger him for an instant, or even cause him to deviate from his course, will prove fatal. That such is the fact was strikingly exemplified by Sir Samuel Baker, who tells us that, though he on one occasion lodged three successive balls from a heavily loaded and large-bored rifle in the forehead of a charging elephant (one of them when the creature was at only some four paces distance), they had no other

effect than somewhat to bewilder him, and cause him momentarily to stay his headlong course. And that the shots in question were well directed, was shown after the death of the animal, "when the three balls were found lodged so close together as only to occupy a space of about three inches."

Elsewhere, Sir Samuel says, "It was only in a single instance that I succeeded in slaying an African elephant with a front shot, although I have steadily tried the experiment on several occasions."

Then, again, the back of the Indian elephant is exceedingly convex, whilst that of the African is exactly the reverse, and the concavity behind the shoulder is succeeded by a peculiarity in the sudden rise of the spine above the hips.

The African elephant is, besides, superior in height, by a foot or more, to the average of the Indian; and both sexes are armed with formidable tusks, with which weapons females of the last-named species are not always, I believe, provided; or, if so, they are of comparatively diminutive size.

The teeth of the African elephant, moreover, differ materially from those of the Indian by containing a lesser number of laminae or plates, the surfaces of which, instead of exhibiting straight and parallel lines like those of the Indian, are shaped in slight curves, which increase the power of grinding.

The two species differ, not only in certain peculiarities of form, but in their habits. The Indian elephant, for example, dislikes the sun, and in-

variably retreats to thick shady forests at sunrise, whereas the African species often enjoy themselves in the burning sun during the hottest hours of the day, amongst plains of withered grass many miles from a jungle.

Again, the African elephant is a more decided tree-feeder than the Indian, and the destruction caused by these animals in a mimosa forest, as will be shown hereafter, almost exceeds credence.

The African species is also more active than the Indian in its movements, and more capable of enduring the fatigue of long marches, as proved by the distance it at times travels in search of food.

Of the two species, it is by far the most dangerous, the forehead-shot, as I have shown, being never to be depended on. The hunter must, therefore, await the charge with the conviction that the bullet will fail to kill.

The skin of the African elephant is of a tawny colour; but, owing to the animal's constant habit of wallowing in the mire, its hide is generally so begrimed with dirt that its real hue is hardly discernible.

The average height of a full-grown male may be taken at from eleven to twelve feet, which is about a foot higher than the Indian; but still larger are occasionally killed. Indeed, if I remember right, the late Sir Cornwallis Harris shot one in Abyssinia that measured fourteen feet at the shoulder. The female is considerably smaller than the male. The weight of the animal seems never to have been accurately ascertained; but it must be from three to four tons.

Scientifically to describe so well-known an animal as the elephant, would be worse than superfluous; and I shall therefore confine myself to speaking of its more striking features.

The most remarkable of these, probably, is its proboscis, or trunk, which is composed of membranes, nerves, and muscles, and, in a full-grown male, is some eight feet in length, and about five feet in circumference at the base. Indeed, of all the instruments which nature has liberally bestowed on her most favoured productions, it is, perhaps, the most complete, and from time immemorial has commanded the admiration of all who have witnessed its remarkable power. Cicero calls it, by a bold figure of speech, "the elephant's hand." Lucretius, even more expressively, describes it by the word *anguimanus*, the snake hand; and the Caffre, when he kills an elephant, approaches the trunk with superstitious awe, and, cutting it off, solemnly inters it, repeatedly exclaiming, "The elephant is a great lord, and the trunk is his hand."

It is an organ of both feeling and motion. The animal can not only move and bend it, but can contract, lengthen, and turn it in every direction. The trunk is terminated by an extremely flexible prolongation of the muscles, destined to seize whatever the animal desires. This may be considered his finger, and opposed to it is a sort of thumb, which enables him to hold fast the object which he wishes to take up. Between the two are the nostrils. The parts in question are equally flexible, and as capable

of holding objects as the fingers of a man. He lifts from the ground the smallest piece of money ; he selects herbs and flowers, and gathers them one by one ; he unties knots of rope, opens and shuts gates, and, with his trunk, he grasps any body to which it is applied so firmly that no force can tear it from his gripe.

As an organ of touch, the proboscis of the elephant is exquisitely fine. Elephants sometimes go blind, and, under that privation, the poor animal can, not only collect its food and discriminate its quality by means of this wonderful instrument, but travel, without much difficulty, over irregular ground, avoiding lumps and hollows, and stepping over ditches. The creature, under such circumstances, rarely touches the ground with his trunk ; but, projecting it forward as far as possible, lets the finger, which is coiled inward to protect the nostrils, skim along the surface, to the inequalities of which it adjusts itself with wonderful exactness.

With this organ the elephant collects his food, liquid as well as solid. He has no power to apply his mouth (with the single exception of the mode in which the young elephant sucks) to the food to be taken ; and, therefore, whether he gather the supply below or above his head, the substance is introduced into his mouth by the inward flexure of the trunk.

Under these circumstances, it is little surprising that the elephant, whether in a state of nature or under the control of man, should invariably keep this invaluable member as much out of harm's way

as possible. If he is attacked by a lion, or other wild beast, he carries his trunk as high in the air as he can, and if this delicate organ is in the slightest degree injured, the animal becomes wild with rage and terror. The instinct by which the creature defends and preserves this precious instrument is in proportion to its paramount importance. Mr. Williamson saw an elephant whose trunk had been cut through with a bill-hook, and though the wound was healed the animal was perfectly helpless—unable to procure its own food, and incapable of travelling without danger. He was fed with bundles of grass, which were put into his mouth; had he been in a state of nature he must have perished.

An affecting example of the instinct with which the elephant preserves his trunk was exhibited in the death of the poor animal which was burnt in Dublin. The author of the anatomical account says:—“Doubtless the elephant’s care to preserve his proboscis was great; for, when we dissected him, *we found it thrust near two feet into very hard ground*; upon which account we thought it had been burnt till the head was divided from the body, and then we found it kept fast by the proboscis.”

The elephant is extremely cautious of using his trunk as a weapon. It is on his formidable tusks that he chiefly relies, whether acting on the offensive or defensive; but he will not unfrequently throw clods and stones with his trunk at objects which he dislikes. Elephants often thus attack hogs, casting these missiles with tolerable force and precision

This fact is a confirmation of Busber's account of the animal playing at ball. One of the elephants in the Jardin des Plantes is extremely expert at playing with a log of wood, which it often does to the great amusement of the crowd.

The tusks of the elephant, another of its striking features, which not only serve it as weapons of offence or defence, as the case may be, but enable it to obtain a large portion of its sustenance, are deeply imbedded in the upper jaw of the skull, on either side of the trunk. Nearly one-third of their whole length is occupied by the sockets, which, as long as the teeth continue to grow, are very thin. When this is no longer the case, the sides of the hollow become somewhat more solid, whilst the pulp is gradually absorbed. Thus, in old female elephants, it has been observed that the sockets were nearly filled up with ivory, and it is a great wonder how the animals were able to balance or retain them.

The tusks of the female African elephant are, as I have said, comparatively small, averaging probably not more than twelve or fifteen pounds each; the largest I ever heard of did not weigh more than twenty-nine pounds. Those of a full-grown male are occasionally many times heavier. During my visit to Lake Ngami, I saw several varying from eighty to one hundred pounds each; and I have been given to understand that, both on the east and west coasts of Africa, tusks exceeding one hundred pounds are by no means uncommon. The aggregate weight of two tusks of a male elephant

killed by Mr. Oswell was two hundred and twenty-four pounds; near to the point of their insertion in the head they measured twenty-three inches in girth, whilst their length along the curve was seven feet, eleven inches. The tusks of another shot by a Boer on the Mariqua River were still larger, weighing no less than three hundred and three pounds. Gordon Cumming speaks of one in his collection as measuring ten feet nine inches in length along the curve, and one hundred and seventy-three pounds in weight. Methuen makes mention of a still finer tusk, its perpendicular length being eleven feet, six inches; and Hartenfels, in his "Elephantographia," speaks of one exceeding fourteen feet. But, enormous as are the above dimensions, they are as nothing in comparison with a tusk that, according to Klokner, was sold at Amsterdam, the weight of which was three hundred and fifty pounds.*

As a rule, I would remark, short tusks are weightier in proportion than long ones. I once shot a comparatively young male elephant, the tusks of which, notwithstanding their being broken off at the points, and that neither protruded above six or seven inches beyond the lips, weighed forty-three and fifty-seven pounds, respectively. Had they been perfect, and fully developed, my firm impression is they would have exceeded one hundred and fifty pounds each.

The formation of the tusks is very irregular,

* Is it not possible that this tusk belonged to a defunct species of elephant—the so-called Mammoth-tusks, of which naturalists tell us, have been known to weigh upwards of four hundred pounds each.

but those which project horizontally, arching gradually upwards, and tapering to a point, are considered the handsomest. It is by no means easy, however, to obtain two perfect teeth from the same animal, for although they may originally have been well-formed (which is not always the case) they are often broken off, either at the point, or even close to the sockets. The injury is supposed to have been inflicted by the animals when in play, or when pushing their tusks into the ground in search of large succulent bulbs, or in tearing up the roots of trees in order to be enabled to browse on the young shoots and boughs. It may even be the result of the determined and savage battles that take place between males, fragments of strange tusks, as elsewhere shewn, having occasionally been found imbedded, not only in the heads, but in the bodies of elephants.

✓ In one instance, indeed, and the fact is perfectly well authenticated, "a piece of ivory, weighing twenty-two pounds, was discovered in the stomach of an old bull-elephant that was shot on the Sharkakee River by Jacque, Slekanen, and other respectable and well-known hunters belonging to Kruman, the missionary station of the Reverend Mr. Moffatt. This animal had a large wound in the side, which had closed up, and he had for some time past stuck to the locality. He was well known to the natives, two or three of whom he had already killed in the most unprovoked manner, charging them at first sight. In like manner he charged some ten or a dozen hunters

three times before they got a fair shot at him, and this without trumpeting, or the least warning. It was well known to the natives living in that locality that he had fought with, and been wounded by, another elephant, so that, for some time, he showed signs of weakness, from which, however, he gradually recovered, and was at length killed by the Kruman hunters on the highway between the Vic Falls and Linganti, where he molested almost every traveller that passed. Upwards of two hundred shots had been fired at this beast, and then the hunters abandoned him in despair; but next day he was found dead."

The natives of India are said to distinguish elephants by the shape of their tusks. Thus they have "Putterig" (a bed or cot); "Soor" (a hog); "Ankoos" (a crook), and so forth, according to the resemblance of the tusk to these several objects. In order, moreover, to make the tusks grow thicker, or perhaps for the sake of uniformity, they (the natives of India) cut off portions of the tusks of the living animals whilst young.

Elephants having only one tusk, without even the rudiments of another, are occasionally met with in Southern Africa. When this is the case, the tusk, the natives assure me, is invariably of an enormous size. An animal of this kind (the tusk must also be of a particular shape) is highly prized by the Hindoo Princes, by whom it is kept in state, and worshipped as a divinity. The Hindoo God of Wisdom (Ganesa) is represented with a head like an elephant, with only one tooth.

Many people profess to be able to judge of the age of the elephant by his tusks ; but to my notions they are a very uncertain criterion. In this opinion I am borne out by my friend, Frederick Green, who has probably killed as many of those animals as any man in Southern Africa. In a note to me he says :

“ I do not think, as a general rule, that the age of the elephant can be ascertained by the size and solidity of his tusks ; for instance, a large bull may be observed with very small tusks. From the appearance of the latter before they are taken out of the head, he would be set down as a young elephant, but one is surprised to find that the tusks are very solid, or with a very small hollow in the root ; he is then looked on as an old bull. On the other hand, an elephant, similar in proportions, is shot with an immense pair of tusks, say ninety, or even one hundred, pounds each—a rare occurrence in this part of Africa, I grant. He is of course termed a very old bull, but when these tusks are examined they are found to be very hollow, and, if solid in the same proportion as the others, would perhaps attain a weight of a hundred and twenty or thirty pounds. I have remarked this on many occasions, both in elephants killed and in tusks bartered. Again, a large bull is frequently to be met with having ridiculously small tusks, perhaps not exceeding fourteen or sixteen pounds weight, and at the same time very hollow. I remember a case in point whilst hunting in the Omuramba-Omtaka. I was returning home, having killed a large bull, when I suddenly encountered two other bulls standing

under some large trees. I approached within thirty paces, unobserved by them. One had his head towards me, and I distinctly saw that he had a large pair of tusks, I should think about sixty pounds each. The other was broadside on, his head partly concealed by the trees, but there was no mistaking the size of the two elephants, the latter being much the larger of the two. I accordingly selected him, and killed him; but to my disgust, I found his tusks absurdly small. I remember perfectly the weight of these tusks, as I put them on the steel-yards when they reached the waggon, and the two weighed twenty-one pounds—eleven and ten each. I do not believe, as some hunters have asserted, that, as a general rule, the smaller bulls have the larger tusks. The largest-tusked elephants which I have killed, have been, with one or two exceptions, the largest elephants, and several shot in the Mat-tabili country, by my brother and self, were gigantic in their proportions.”

Somewhat corroborative of my friend's theory as to the difficulty of judging the age of the elephant by the size of his tusks, I may mention that I remember once killing a bull, the tusks of which, notwithstanding the stupendous size of the animal, who measured twenty-six feet from foot to foot across the shoulder, only weighed about one hundred and thirty pounds.

The tusks, it is to be observed, are very firmly embedded in the elephant's skull, of which, indeed, they would seem to form a portion, for, though they may break, they can never be extracted from it during

the animal's lifetime. It is owing to the tenacity with which they hold fast to the jaw that the elephant is enabled to obtain the chief part of its food, viz., succulent bulbs, which it finds in the arid plains, and the leaves, branches, and roots of trees; for in the event of the upper part of the latter being beyond the reach of the creature's proboscis, it drives one of its tusks (seldom or never both), in the manner of a crowbar, under the roots of the tree, and, using it as a lever, quickly succeeds in overthrowing it, the sooner, as the mimosa, on which it chiefly feeds, has no tap-root. But in this rough work the tusk is not unfrequently broken.

Another remarkable instance, showing how firmly the tusks are imbedded in the skull of the elephant, is related by Gordon Cumming, who, when speaking of a huge brute that he had mortally wounded, says:—

“Just as the pangs of death came over him, he stood trembling violently beside a thorny tree, and kept pouring water from his trunk into his mouth until he died, when he pitched heavily forward, with the whole weight of his fore-quarters resting on the points of his tusks. He lay in this posture for several seconds, but the amazing pressure of the carcase was more than the head was able to support; he had fallen with his head so short under him, that the tusks received little assistance from his legs. Something must give way: the strain on the mighty tusks was fair; they did not, therefore, yield; but the portion of his head in which the tusks were imbedded, extending a long way above

the eye, yielded, and burst with a muffled crash. The tusks were thus free, and turned right round in his head, so that a man could draw them out, and the carcass fell over and rested on its side. This was a very first-rate elephant, and the tusks he carried were long and perfect."

It is not always, however, that the tusks will stand a similar strain to this, as evidenced by what the author just quoted tells us when describing the conclusion of an elephant-hunt:—

"These two shots wound up the proceedings; for, on receiving them, the animal backed stern foremost into the cover, and soon afterwards I heard him fall over heavily—but, alas! the sound was accompanied by a sharp crack, and, on running forward, I found him lying dead, with his lovely tusk, which lay under, snapped through the middle."

Dentition in the elephant is very curious and interesting. Besides the tusks, which correspond to the canine teeth in other quadrupeds, he has only grinders—the incisors, or cutting-teeth, being entirely absent. The total number of grinders consists of from twenty to twenty-three teeth, or rather laminae, in each side of either jaw; but, from the whole being enclosed in a bony case, they have the appearance of forming only a single tooth or grinder. A very great number of years are supposed to be requisite for the full development of a set of grinders; indeed they may be said never to be completed, for, as one set gradually wears away another is forming, a process which continues to the end of life. They are never supplied from beneath (as in animals in

general), but from behind, from which circumstance they are not shed. Even the milk-grinders, which are four in number (one grinder in each side of either jaw), are completed soon after birth, and are said to cut in about eight or ten days.

Only one other animal, the wild hog of Guinea (*Sus Æthiopicus*), is believed to possess this peculiar advantage; and, as the completion of a case of grinders requires a great number of years, it may be inferred that it is an animal of great longevity. The structure of the tusks, moreover, of this species of wild boar resembles that of the elephant.

When about five or six months old, the milk-tusks (which are never large) of the young elephant cut the gum. Between its first and second year these are again shed, and, soon afterwards, the permanent ones make their appearance. Like the palm amongst trees, and the horns of certain animals, the tusks of the elephant receive their increase internally from a kind of core or pulp, in the shape of circular layers of ivory. If the period necessary for the completion of one of these laminae could be ascertained, a tolerably fair guess as to the age of the animal might be formed.

The usual pace of the elephant, when undisturbed, is a bold, free, sweeping walk. From the spongy formation of his foot, his tread is exceedingly light and quite inaudible; all his movements are attended with a peculiar gentleness and grace; his whole appearance, when roaming in his native wilds, is exceedingly grave and imposing.

His fastest walk is about equal to the steady jog trot of a man. When pushed, he assumes a kind of ambling pace, which, in fleetness, is equal to a gallop. He goes forward with ease and celerity; but—if English naturalists are to be credited—“turns himself round with great difficulty, and that not without taking a pretty large circuit.”

The latter statement may, possibly, be in part true of the Indian species, but certainly not of the African, which, as I myself can testify, is by no means slow in wheeling about when beset by enemies. To show that this is the case, I cannot do better than quote the experiences of Sir Samuel Baker, who, when describing a hunt at which he himself was present, and in which three natives on foot attempted to hamstring an enraged bull-elephant, says,—“The creature turned himself round, as if on a pivot, with extreme quickness, and charged headlong, first at one and then at the other of his assailants, who, though they were as active as monkeys, found it impossible to get behind him, and thus attain their purpose.”

The speed of the elephant is not very great, nothing like that of the horse; but from the length of his legs and body he is enabled to get pretty quickly over the ground. In sandy districts, however, his broad feet give him an advantage over the horse; for, while the latter sinks to the depth of several inches at every step, the foot-prints of the elephant are hardly perceptible.

Speaking on this subject, Mr. Moodie, the African settler, when describing the tragic death of one

of his party by an infuriated elephant, says: "The quickest pace of the animal is a trot, and I observed that the legs of the large male, which caught the man, moved as fast as those of a horse when trotting. I had afterwards the curiosity to measure the distance between the prints of the elephant's feet, and found that it was about nine feet where he ran with the greatest speed in pursuit of his victim. This elephant did not exceed ten feet in height." After ascertaining the number of steps a horse usually takes in any given time whilst trotting, and the length of each step, Moodie goes on to say, "We may easily calculate the comparative speed of an elephant with tolerable accuracy."

The strength of the African elephant is enormous. On a certain occasion, I myself saw a huge male, in his gambols, crush to the ground, at one and the same time, three lofty trees, the stems of which were from eight to ten inches in diameter. The feat appeared to be accomplished partly by the weight of his ponderous body, and partly by main force; for, twisting his proboscis round the trees, he leaned obliquely forward, and the next instant the splintered trunks were prostrated, and deeply buried in the sandy soil. On another occasion, I had lodged a ball in the most deadly part of an elephant's shoulder, when the poor brute, in his death agonies, encircled four tall acacias of equal size to the trees just spoken of, and presently afterwards sank to the ground amid a mass of broken boughs and timber.

When speaking of the "spoor," or track, of

the elephant, my friend, Green, remarks, "As with most other elephant-hunters, I, at one time, entertained the impression that a deep-rutted 'spoor' was a sure indication of an old bull; but I now find it no criterion whatever. Many young bulls have deeper rutted soles to their feet than old ones. I think it entirely depends on the nature of the soil of the country they are accustomed to; for instance: if a sandy soil, their ruts will be found very deep and rough; but if, on the contrary, a stony country, they will be the reverse; in some cases, indeed, worn completely smooth. If, contrary to this rule, an elephant be killed in a sandy country, with the soles of his feet smooth, then he is sure to have lately left a strange district, and vice versâ."

The elephant is a capital swimmer, and takes to the water freely when in search of food. He swims deep; so much so, indeed, that the end of his proboscis only is out of the water. With this instrument for breathing, however, he will fearlessly cross the most mighty rivers of the African continent.

CHAPTER II.

VOICE OF THE ELEPHANT—SENSES—HEARING, SIGHT, AND SMELL
 —NATURAL DISPOSITION — MUTUAL AFFECTION — CARRYING
 WATER TO A WOUNDED COMRADE—SAGACITY—FLESH OF THE
 ELEPHANT—THE FOOT—PROBOSCIS AND FAT—HIDE AND EAR—
 IVORY—LONGEVITY.

THE elephant has an expressive organ of voice. The sounds which he utters have been distinguished, by his Asiatic keepers, into three kinds. The first, which is very shrill, and is produced by blowing through his trunk, is indicative of pleasure; the second, produced by the mouth, is a low note expressive of want; the third, proceeding from the throat, is a terrific roar of anger or revenge.

The sense of hearing in the elephant is very acute. The structure of its ear has been investigated with great accuracy by Sir Everard Home, who has come to the conclusion that the elephant hears sounds at a greater distance than other animals, and particularly that his sense is more acute than that of man. He illustrates his position by several statements (too long for insertion in these pages), which he gives on the authority of Mr. Corse.*

* Afterwards Mr. Corse Scott, formerly Superintendent of the East India Company's elephants at Toperah, a province of Bengal.

The elephant's scent is also remarkably acute, as is indicated, according to naturalists, by the formation of the animal's head. To the acuteness of this sense I myself can personally testify, and my experiences are fully borne out by my friend, Frederick Green, who, in a note to me, says:—

“Elephants will detect where a man may have passed for many hours after, by the scent left with the impression of his foot. I have also known elephants to flee from man when at a distance of three miles at least, having detected the presence of the human species by their scent, the wind blowing in this quarter at the time.”

The eye of the elephant is unusually small. Its comparatively diminutive size contributes to its protection from injury amidst the bushes where he seeks his food, and it is provided with a nictating membrane, by which he is enabled to free it from all small noxious substances, such as broken leaves and insects. Small as the eye is, it is by no means an imperfect organ, although he cannot direct its range above the level of the head.

The natural disposition of the elephant would seem to be mild and docile, as may be partly inferred from the great facility with which, after capture, he may be domesticated. That he is so, is a merciful as well as wise dispensation; for if he had possessed a ferocity equal to his powers, he must have exterminated a very large part of the animal creation.

“Calm amid scenes of havoc, in his own
Huge strength impregnable, the Elephant

Offendeth none; but leads a quiet life
 Among his own contemporary trees,
 Till Nature lays him gently down to rest,
 Beneath the palm which he was wont to make
 His prop in slumber; there his relics lie
 Longer than life itself had dwelt within them.
 Bees in the ample hollow of his skull
 Fill their wax citadels, and store their honey;
 Thence sally forth to forage through the fields,
 And swarm in emigrating legions thence;
 Then little burrowing animals throw up
 Hillocks beneath the over-arching ribs;
 While birds within the spiral labyrinth
 Contrive their nests."

The impression on the minds of many people, indeed, is that the elephant is a harmless creature, and that, as with the giraffe, it is almost a crime to destroy him. That in countries where he is left altogether undisturbed, he is peacefully inclined, not only towards the brute creation, but to mankind, I can readily believe; but in those where he is subject to molestation, he can hardly be said to retain his innocuousness, as instances innumerable are on record, both in Africa and elsewhere, of his attacking travellers and others who have not offended him in any way.

In India, indeed, it would appear that large male elephants (there called *goondahs*, or *saims*) are not seldom found wandering from the herd, whence the natives believe they are driven as a punishment for their ferocious excesses. These animals are a terror to the district, as, without the slightest provocation, they will attack every man, woman, or child that chances to cross their path.

Even when domesticated, especially during the love season, the elephant, according to Mr. Corse, not unfrequently evinces blind fury, at least towards his congeners. On one occasion this gentleman saw a stately male elephant gore two smaller ones, in the midst of the herd, in a terrific manner. "When the poor animals were thrown down, conscious of their impending fate, they roared most piteously; but notwithstanding their prostrate situation and submissive cries, he unfeelingly and deliberately drove his tusks through them, and transfixed them to the ground."

But whether or not the elephant be the harmless creature he is represented by many, certain it is that to the sportsman he is the most formidable of all the beasts, the lion not excepted, that roam the African wilds; and few there are who make the pursuit of him a profession, that do not, sooner or later, come to grief of some kind.

Elephants, at times, show much solicitude for, and attachment to, each other, and many instances are on record in which, when one of these animals has been wounded and disabled, a comrade has come to the rescue. A very affecting incident of the kind is related by Moodie.

"On this occasion," says that gentleman, when describing a hunt, "we witnessed a touching instance of affection and sagacity in the elephant, which deserves to be related, as it so clearly illustrates the character of the noble animal. Seeing the danger and distress of her mate, the female from which I so narrowly escaped, regardless of her own danger,

quitted her shelter in the wood, rushed out to his assistance, walked round and round him, chasing away the assailants, and returning to his side caressed him. Whenever he attempted to walk, she placed her flank, or her shoulder, to his wounded side, and supported him."

Again, the Bushmen and other natives assert, that the elephant will carry water to a wounded companion who may be at a long distance in the "Weldt," and unable himself to procure that liquid from the fountain. Incredible as this may seem, yet from what my friend, Frederick Green, writes me, there would really appear to be much truth in the story. He says :

"A case came under my own notice when hunting in the Lake Regions in the year 1851, which tends greatly to corroborate the Bushmen's statement. Owing to my ammunition being expended, I had been compelled to leave an elephant that was crippled, besides having eleven wounds in his body, some thirty miles from my waggons. In trying to reach the encampment, I lost my way, and it was not until the following day, after wandering about the whole of the night, that I got there, and that in a very exhausted state.

"As I felt confident the elephant in question would die of his wounds, one leg being broken, I dispatched Bushmen after him, instead of going myself; but they, not attending to my commands, remained for two days beside an elephant killed by my after-rider on a previous occasion. It was, therefore, not until the fourth evening after I left this elephant that

the Bushmen came up to him, which was not far from where I had seen him last. What followed I must give in their own words :

“ ‘They found him still alive and standing, but unable to walk, owing to his leg being broken. They slept near him, thinking he might die during the night ; but at an early hour after dark they heard another elephant at a distance, apparently calling, as he was answered by the wounded one. The calls and answers continued until the stranger came up, and they saw him giving the wounded one water, after which he assisted in taking his maimed companion away.’ ”

“ When this story was told me, I put it down as a very ingenious fabrication of the Bushmen, and determined to be led to the spot myself. Accordingly, the next afternoon found me at the identical place where I had left the wounded elephant. I can only add that the statement of the Bushmen, as to the stranger elephant coming up to the maimed one, was proved by the spoor ; and their further assertion, as to his having assisted his unfortunate friend in removing elsewhere, was also fully verified from the spoor of the two being close alongside each other, the broken leg of the wounded one leaving after it a deep furrow in the sand. As I was satisfied that these parts of their story were correct, I did not see any further reason to doubt the other. I followed the spoor some few miles, but as the evening was far advanced, and we were all suffering from thirst, I relinquished the pursuit ; but I heard, the following year, that the wounded elephant had been

found by the Bushmen, and their chief at the Lake became the proprietor of a very fine pair of tusks."

The sagacity of the elephant is proverbial, and instances innumerable are on record shewing his superior intelligence. The Bushmen, and other natives of South Africa, indeed, assert that, should one of these animals happen to be engulfed in a pit-fall, his companions, not unfrequently, release him from the toils. Strange as this story seems, yet it is, nevertheless, in a great degree borne out by the experiences of trustworthy authorities.

"In many instances, during my peregrinations in the interior," writes my friend Frederick Green, "have I observed where elephants have tumbled into the trap, and succeeded in getting free again. In these cases it was quite evident that, had the prisoner been left alone, he could not possibly have extricated himself. How the others managed to liberate him, it is difficult to surmise. But that there is a great hubbub amongst them when one unexpectedly falls into the abyss is evidenced by the fact that the ground about is torn up by their feet in rushing to and fro. Traces near the edges of the pit may also be observed where those that have come to the rescue have stood. The one entrapped also exerts himself to the utmost by breaking away the sides, or ends, of the pit with his tusks."

"But at times," my friend goes on to say, "the elephant is precipitated head-foremost into the trap, and then all help from his comrades appears of no avail. This the latter appear to know, as they hurry at once from the scene of the disaster, and allow the unfortunate animal to perish."

Mr. Moodie's testimony as to the elephant's extracting its comrade from the toils, is to the like effect as Mr. Green's. He says :

“A few days before my arrival at Enon (a missionary station) a troop of elephants came down, one dark and rainy night, close to the outskirts of the village. The Missionaries heard them bellowing, and making an extraordinary noise for a long time, at the upper end of their orchard; but knowing well how dangerous it is to encounter these powerful animals in the night, they kept close within their houses till daylight. Next morning, on examining the spot where they had heard the elephants, they discovered the cause of all this nocturnal uproar. There was at this spot a ditch, or trench, about four or five feet in width, and nearly fourteen in depth, which the industrious Missionaries had recently cut through the bank of the river, to lead out the water for the purpose of irrigating some portion of their garden-ground, and driving a corn-mill. Into this trench, which was still unfinished, and without water, one of the elephants had evidently fallen, for the marks of his feet were distinctly visible at the bottom, as well as the imprint of his huge body in its sides. How he had got into it was easy to conjecture; but by what means, being once in, he had contrived to get out again, was the marvel. By his own unaided efforts it was obviously impossible for such an animal to have extricated himself. Could his companions have assisted him? There can be no question that they had, though in what manner,

unless by hauling him out with their trunks, it would not be easy to conjecture; and in corroboration of this supposition, I found, on examining the spot myself, that the edges of the trench were deeply indented with numerous impressions, as if the other elephants had stationed themselves on either side, some of them kneeling, and others on their feet, and had thus, by their united efforts, and probably after many failures, hoisted their unlucky brother out of the pit."

It is here to be remarked that full-grown male elephants seldom tumble into a pit-fall, whilst females, on the contrary, are not unfrequently found engulfed. This is not attributable to less sagacity on the part of the latter, but may probably be thus explained:—The male, in the full consciousness of his superior strength, stands in no dread of other denizens of the forest, and has only to guard against subterraneous dangers. Accordingly, he invariably carries his trunk near to, or actually touching, the ground, and, by means of this exquisite organ of smell and touch, is enabled to discover the toils in time to avoid them. The female, on the other hand, who is often accompanied by her young, and is naturally anxious for their safety, generally carries her proboscis in a somewhat elevated position, which, though it enables her to discover the skulking hyæna, or other enemies of her offspring, exposes her to be precipitated into the toils.

Again, it is positively asserted, by the Bushmen and other natives who are accustomed to entrap elephants, that those wily animals, when they

timely discover a pitfall, forthwith remove its covering, which is easily effected by means of their trunks; and to a certain extent at least, this statement is confirmed by Mr. Green, who says:—

“On more than one occasion I have myself observed the grass and sticks used to conceal the recently-uncovered abyss strewed near to it on the ground, and have seen the spoor of elephants about the place, which left little doubt in my mind that this had not been done by the hand of man, but by these sagacious brutes.”

“On other occasions,” my friend goes on to say, “I have seen the spoor of an elephant leading direct to a pit-fall, and traced it to the very edge, where he has detected the trap; and, turning on one side, he has pulled some bushes out of the fence connecting the several abysses, thus opening another pathway for himself, and continuing his course to the water.”

My friend also tells me “that elephants, when approaching at night waters of which they entertain suspicion, will follow the spoor of others that have gone before them; and should it have so happened that the troop in advance has scented danger and turned aside from the pool without drinking, those that follow, although it may be hours afterwards, will do so likewise.”

The Namaqua Hottentots affirm, moreover, that the elephant can distinguish between the foot-fall of civilized man and that of the natives.

The flesh of the elephant is generally described by travellers as “strong and disagreeable, partaking

highly of the peculiar smell of the animal." It may be so, but, for my part, I consider that of a young animal at least as very palatable.

Everyone, however, agrees in saying that the *foot*, if properly cooked, is a great delicacy. The native manner of preparing it is as follows:—A hole should be dug in the earth, about four feet deep and two feet six inches in diameter, the sides of which should be perpendicular. In this a large fire should be lighted, and kept burning for four or five hours, with a continual supply of wood, so that the walls may become red-hot. At the expiration of the blaze, the foot should be laid on the glowing embers, and the hole be covered closely with thick pieces of green wood laid parallel together, so as to form a sort of ceiling. This should be covered with wet grass, and the whole should be plastered over with mud, and stamped tightly down to retain the heat. Upon the mud a quantity of earth should be heaped, and the oven should not be opened for thirty hours or more. At the expiration of that time the foot will be perfectly baked; the sole will separate like a shoe, and expose a delicate substance, which, with a little oil and vinegar, together with an allowance of pepper and salt, is a delicious dish that will feed a number of people. When circumstances, however, permit, a more civilized plan of preparing the foot is to half boil it in water, and, after adding a quantity of fresh milk, allow it to simmer over a slow fire till reduced to a kind of jelly. In that state it may be eaten either hot or cold.

But why the proboscis should be looked on as a

delicacy equal to the foot, as some travellers tell us is the case, altogether puzzles my comprehension, since it consists of a mass of muscles, nearly forty thousand in number, possessing distinct action, according to Cuvier, and consequently very tough.

The fat of the elephant, which should be taken from the body without delay, as, if left for a few hours, it partakes of the peculiar smell of the animal, which no amount of boiling will overcome, is extremely good for cooking purposes, and forms an excellent substitute for butter. It is quite sweet, and has no particular flavour, as is the case with that of most other wild animals.

The boiling of the fat for preservation requires much care, as it should attain so great a heat that a few drops of water thrown upon the surface will hiss and evaporate as though cast on molten lead. It should then be strained, and when tolerably cool, poured into vessels, and secured. No salt is necessary, provided it is thoroughly boiled.

The quantity of fat, I should add, occasionally obtained from a single elephant, more especially from the female when pregnant, is almost incredible. One killed by myself yielded many hundred-weight of the purest fat, which, before being partially dried, would pretty well have filled a Cape colonial waggon. It was chiefly taken from the stomach; and, as seen from the outside, before being detached from the carcase, might not inaptly be likened to icicles, or rather to the stalactites found in caves. There is also a great deal of fatty matter about the head of the elephant; and however poor in other respects the creature may be, I have never seen this to fail.

The hide of the elephant is converted to a variety of purposes. Sparman, when speaking of it, says : "It is not near so compact and close as those of the rhinoceros and hippopotamus, but the texture of it seems to be composed of larger tubes and blood-vessels; at the same time that the external surface of it is more uneven, wrinkled, and knotty, and therefore cannot be used for making of whips, as are the skins of the animals above named."

Its ear is, by the natives and others, converted into a sort of truck, upon which they draw manure and loads of various kinds; and by the hunter it is not unfrequently cut off on the spot, and converted into a mat, on which he reposes whilst his people are dividing the carcase.

Even the excrement of the elephant, which, like sawdust, seems almost imperishable, is converted to useful purposes, for, on emergencies at least, it is used by the natives as a substitute for tobacco. Indeed, I have seen my own Cape servants smoke it. The great variety of roots, herbs, bulbs, &c., on which the creature feeds, give, no doubt, a certain aromatic odour to his droppings; and, after all, these may not be so bad a substitute for the "weed" itself.

Kolbein testifies to the like effect. His words are : "The Hottentots sometimes gather the excrement for smoking, in the want of tobacco; and, indeed, the scent and flavour of it in smoking are pretty much like it, as I myself have found, when with company I have smoked it out of whim."

The great value of the elephant, however, lies in its tusks, which form an important article of com-

merce. Taking large and small together, twenty-eight thousand tusks are said annually to find their way into England alone, which will give some idea of the great destruction committed amongst the animals in question. The number killed in South Africa is very great. Some idea of the havoc among them may be formed from what the distinguished traveller, Doctor Livingstone, tells us, "that within a year and a half of his and Mr. Oswell's discovery of Lake Ngami, no fewer than eleven hundred elephants were slaughtered on and about the Zouga, the river that falls out of that fine sheet of water."

Ivory is chiefly used for knife-handles, carved ornaments, chess-men, billiard balls, musical and mathematical instruments, and so forth. Dioppe, where works of every description and the most beautiful finish are prepared, would appear to be the grand manufacturing place for this article.

The valuable discovery of flattening ivory by subjecting it to heat has considerably enhanced its value and usefulness. The price of good bull-elephant teeth in the London market varies from five to ten shillings per pound.

The texture of the ivory brought from Africa, I may add, is said to be superior to that of India, arising, it is supposed, from the drier atmosphere of the first-named Continent, which tends to harden and consolidate the tooth.

In olden times, ivory was also in great request. It is stated that its consumption in architecture, painting, sculpture, &c., was at one period so great in ancient Rome and Greece that the supplies ob-

tained from Africa were found insufficient. With the decline, however, of those countries, the demand for this beautiful and durable article became gradually less, and ultimately it fell quite into disuse. Indeed, the ivory trade seems to have been suspended for upwards of a thousand years, a circumstance which allowed the poor elephants again to increase and multiply. At this day, however, the demand for ivory has revived; and now promises fair, not only to rival the consumption of the ancients, but to effect the destruction of the whole species from which the commodity is obtained.

In closing these remarks, I may mention that when the Portuguese arrived at Angola, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, they found ivory so abundant (having accumulated for ages) that, according to the testimony of Andrew Battell, the natives "had their idols of wood in most of their towns fashioned like a negro, and at the foot thereof was a great heap of elephants' teeth, containing three or four tons of them; these were piled in the earth, and upon them were set the skulls of dead men, which they had slain in wars, in commemoration of their victory."

Polybius tells us, "that some centuries before his time, ivory was so abundant in Africa that some of the native tribes used tusks for palisadings and door-posts." And this statement is in no wise to be discredited, as authentic accounts have lately reached us, "that, up to a very recent period, the people of Manyema (a country in the interior of Eastern Africa), being

ignorant of the value of the precious article, reared their huts upon ivory stanchions; and that ivory pillars and doors were common among them."

The elephant is a long-lived animal, a fact of which there is sufficient evidence in the remarkable formation and durability of its teeth, and the number of years that elapse (variously estimated from twenty-five to forty-five) before it arrives at maturity. But to what age it actually attains does not seem quite clear. It is on record, however, that, even in a state of captivity, it has been known to exist from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty years.. We read, indeed, in the life of Apollonius of Tyana (a book of somewhat doubtful authority), that at the tremendous battle on the banks of the river Hydaspes, where Alexander the Great broke the power of the Indian Prince, Porus, a great number of elephants were captured by the Macedonians, and amongst the rest, the Monarch's own, called Ajax, and that three hundred and fifty years after this remarkable event, a traveller, who at that period visited India, saw, as he himself informs us, this identical elephant, "which the inhabitants perfumed with sweet odours and adorned with garlands. On his tusks were rings of gold, on which was inscribed, in Greek characters, 'Alexander, son of Jupiter, dedicated Ajax to the sun.'" The Romans, in the time of Gordian, adopted the elephant as the symbol of eternity.

But great as may be the age to which the elephant attains when in captivity, there can be little doubt he lives much longer when in a state of unrestrained freedom.

CHAPTER III.

BREEDING HABITS—PERIOD OF GESTATION—THE CALF—SIZE OF THE YOUNG ELEPHANT—ITS GROWTH—MATERNAL AND FILIAL AFFECTION—TOUCHING STORY—CALF OF THE RHINOCEROS—INCAPABLE OF DOMESTICATION—PET ELEPHANTS—EMPLOYMENT OF THE ELEPHANT IN WAR.

AS regards Southern Africa, at least, little seems to be known, even to the natives themselves, of the breeding habits of the elephant. This arises partly from these animals pairing during the rainy season, extending from February to the middle of May, in which, while they are spread over an immense extent of country, either wholly uninhabited or only partially so, the hunters, owing to the prevalence of the "horse-sickness," are, in a great degree, prevented from going in pursuit of them.

It is conjectured that the elephant begins to propagate his species long before he has arrived at maturity. Indeed, there can be little doubt as to this being the case, for females in India have been known to grow very considerably after they have become pregnant.

The period of gestation with the female elephant, as has been ascertained by the observation of such

as have bred in confinement, is some twenty months. In about three months after her acquaintance with the male, the first symptoms of pregnancy are supposed to appear. She never brings forth more than one at a birth, and that at considerable intervals.

The young animal, when first born, is not much larger than an ordinary calf, but its limbs are more bulky and rounded. Its skin, which is of a pink colour, smooth and soft to the touch, bears no resemblance to the rough, wrinkled, bark-like exterior that it assumes in after-life.

The calf begins to nibble and suck at the teats (of which there are two, placed a little behind the fore-legs) soon after birth, not, however, with its proboscis, as, until lately, was generally believed, but with the mouth. Whilst sucking, the calf presses the breast with its tiny trunk, which, by natural instinct, it knows will make the milk flow more readily into the mouth; and this circumstance, no doubt, has given rise to the fable in question; one, strange to say, adopted by Buffon and other great authorities.

The mother, it should be remarked, never lies down to give her young suck; hence it often happens that, when the dam is tall, she is obliged to bend her body towards the calf, to enable it to reach the nipple with its mouth; and so sensible are the attendants of this, that it is a common practice with them to raise a small mound of earth, six to eight inches high, for the young one to stand on, and thus save the mother the trouble of bending

her body every time she gives it milk. The young elephant, whilst sucking, always grasps the nipple, which projects horizontally from the breast, with the side of the mouth, which enables it to suck as it runs along by the side of the mother, or even under her belly.

The young are suckled for two years; and in a wild state it is said they run for suck to any female near at hand, without regard to the mother. Hence a cry of distress from any one of the young generally arouses the whole herd.

The young animal grows rapidly at first, but afterwards more slowly, until it has reached its twentieth, or, as some will have it, its twenty-second year.

Mr. Stephen Harris gives us some curious information in regard to the growth of the elephant. Speaking of a young male that came under his observation, he says:—"At its birth it measured thirty-five inches in height. During the seven following years it attained a height of six feet four inches. With the exception of its fourth and fifth year, the decrease of growth had been gradual and proportionate."

Again: "In a female, which at the supposed age of eleven years measured six feet nine inches, the growth seems to have been much less regular. Thus, during the next five years, she only added six inches to her height, whilst, having become pregnant, she grew no less than five inches in the short space of twenty-one months. In the following seventeen months, though again pregnant, she grew only half an inch."

If, therefore, the above measurements are applied to the general growth of the elephant, due allowance must be made for irregularity in the growth of the female during pregnancy.

It has been said that the female elephant shows much tenderness for her progeny; and it must be admitted there are many instances on record tending to show that this is the case. I, for my part, however, cannot confirm the statement, as my own small experiences tend rather the other way. On a certain occasion, indeed, I remember that one of my native servants stabbed a calf to death in the presence of the mother, and though the poor creature cried most piteously, the dam allowed herself to be driven off by two or three cowardly dogs.

My friend, Frederick Green, would seem to be pretty much of the same way of thinking as myself in regard to this matter. "The female elephant," he writes me, "does not appear to have that affection for her offspring which one would be led to suppose. It is a common occurrence to find calves in pit-falls, whom the mothers, had they been so minded, might easily have liberated. To judge from the appearance of the surrounding ground, indeed, they would not appear even to have attempted to rescue them."

But whether or not the mother evinces special regard for her offspring, certain it is that the latter is tenderly fond of its dam. Captain Harris relates a very touching instance to this effect.

"Not an elephant," says this enthusiastic sportsman, "was to be seen on the ground that was yesterday teeming with them; but, on reaching the

glen [which had been the scene of our exploits during the early part of the action, a calf of about three-and-a-half feet high walked forth from a bush, and saluted us with mournful piping notes. We had observed the unhappy little wretch hovering about its mother after she fell, and having, probably, been unable to overtake the herd, it had passed a dreary night in the wood. Entwining its little proboscis about our legs, the sagacious creature, after demonstrating its delight at our arrival by a thousand ungainly antics, accompanied the party to the body of its dam. The conduct of the quaint little calf now became quite affecting, and elicited the sympathy of everyone. It ran round its mother's corpse with touching demonstrations of grief, piping sorrowfully, and vainly attempting to raise her with its tiny trunk. I confess that I had felt compunction in committing the murder the day before, and now half resolved never to assist in another; for, in addition to the moving behaviour of the young elephant, I had been unable to divest myself of the idea that I was firing at my old favourite *Mowla-Bukshh*, from whose gallant back I had vanquished so many of my feline foes in Guzerat—an impression which, however ridiculous it must appear, detracted considerably from the satisfaction I experienced."

My friend Green also testifies to the filial affection at times displayed by the calf—"he himself having seen it," he tells me, "turn upon the hunter in defence of its mother."

In parenthesis, I may mention that Gordon

Cumming relates a similar instance on the part of a rhinoceros calf. After telling us he was reconnoitring the forest in search of wounded game, he goes on to say :—

“ When I had proceeded a little further the dogs ran forward, and next moment a rush of many feet was heard charging towards where I stood ; it was a troop of half-grown lions, with a lioness, which dashed past me, followed by the dogs. They had been feasting on a white rhinoceros I had wounded two nights previously, now lying a little ahead. Beside the carcass stood a fine fat calf. The poor thing, no doubt fancying that its mother slept, had, heedless of lions and the other wild animals that had feasted there, remained beside its dead dam for a day and two nights. Rhinoceros calves,” he goes on to say, “ always stick to their mothers long after they are dead.”

The African elephant is, I believe, equally docile as the Indian when domesticated, but we have no account of a negro tribe that have ever tamed one of these sagacious animals—their only maxim, as some one truly says, is “ kill and eat.”

Young elephants have, however, often been kept in confinement in Africa, by the colonists and others, but, for some reason or other, they do not seem to thrive. They linger awhile, and then die. An acquaintance of mine had one for a considerable period, which was extremely amusing and interesting. A favourite trick of his consisted in pushing his head between a person's legs, which usually ended in a tremendous somersault on the part of the

man. As he grew up, however, these gambols became dangerous. Thus, my friend was one day standing close to the side of a house, when the pet suddenly rushed up from behind, and before he had time to get out of the animal's way, he found himself immovably fixed against the wall; from which disagreeable position he had some difficulty in extricating himself, and in the while, moreover, sustained considerable injury.

I have never heard any satisfactory reason assigned why the African elephant should not be domesticated as well as the Indian. It has been urged by some that he is of a more ferocious and less docile disposition; but, surely, many elephants engaged in the terrible battles between the Carthaginians and the Romans, belonged to the African continent. Indeed, there can be no doubt that this animal was then obtained as near as Barbary. Jugurtha, the Numidian King, also employed it in his wars against the common enemy of the world. It is, moreover, recorded that during the Ptolemean dynasty in Egypt, great numbers were obtained from Ethiopia, which were used both to do battle and to draw chariots, &c. Even the Romans themselves, after they had broken Hannibal's power in the sanguinary engagement of Zama, employed the African elephant against the Macedonians. Several instances are mentioned, by ancient authors, of Asiatic and African elephants being engaged against each other,* but, singularly enough, they describe

* At the battle of Magnesia, between the Romans and the Syrians, and in the contest between the third Ptolemy and Antiochus Theos, King of Syria.

the latter as very inferior, both in height and strength, to the Indian, which is the very reverse of the fact.

In those days, the African elephant appears, from all accounts, to have been quiet and tractable, and it is, therefore, not very likely that his character should be different at present. "What he did in a state of nature two thousand years ago, he does now. His natural habits, as well as those of every living thing, are derived from his organization; his structure is the best adapted to the necessities of his existence; and, as the structure is invariably the same in the same species, we may conclude that the natural habits are equally in accordance." It would, perhaps, be more reasonable to attribute the popular belief as to the incapacity of the African elephant for a domesticated and disciplined life, to the "revolutions of civilization." After a certain time, when means had been found to oppose the formidable power of the elephant, these animals became no longer useful for the purposes of war; even the demand for them for the Roman Amphitheatre wore away; the consequence of which was that the process whereby the Egyptians, the Numidians, and the Carthaginians had been accustomed to tame and train them, generally became lost.* The incursions of the Arabs into Northern Africa, to whose rapid movements these animals would

* According to Losinus, who travelled in the sixth century, the Ethiopians had then already lost the art of training the elephant for war.

have been of little or no use, was probably another of the causes why the elephant was again permitted to range his native haunts in unrestricted liberty.

It used to be a popular notion that female elephants, captured when pregnant, showed the greatest possible aversion to their young when, at an after-period, they came into the world, and not only refused to suckle, but actually ill-treated them when they attempted to lay hold of the teat. It was formerly believed, also, that the male elephant, when reduced to a state of captivity, would not propagate his species; some imagining that this was owing to his possessing the sentiment of modesty in an unusually high degree; others, that his feelings for the loss of liberty were so acute as to cause him to refuse obedience to the laws of nature, lest he should entail on his progeny a fate similar to his own. There were those, again, who asserted that he lost the power of procreation when in thralldom.

But all these idle fallacies have long since been exploded. To say nothing of the ancient Romans breeding the elephant when in confinement (as may be safely inferred from the figure of a female in the act of suckling her calf depicted on the walls of Pompeii) there is, in the Transactions of the Philosophical Society of London, in the year 1799, a long and elaborate article on the habits of the elephant, which must convince the most sceptical that we have been labouring under a delusion. The evidence, however, of Mr. Corse, who had for a number of years the entire management of several

hundreds of elephants in India, sets this matter at rest. He says :—

“Having mentioned a sufficient number of instances to prove the ability as well as the inclination of the elephant to propagate his species in a domestic state, and that without any signs of modesty, and having ascertained the period of gestation to be twenty months and eighteen days, it may be necessary to observe that it is a difficult matter to bring a male, who has been captured in the prime of life, into good condition to act as a stallion; for being naturally bolder, and of a more ungovernable disposition than the female, he is not, in general, easily trained till reduced very low; and it requires considerable time, as well as much expense and attention, before he can be brought into such high order as is requisite. He must also be of a gentle temper, and disposed to put confidence in his keeper; as he will not readily have connection with a female, whilst under the influence of fear or distrust. Of this I have seen many instances—nor do I recollect one male elephant in ten, which had been taken after attaining its full growth, much inclined to intimacy with the other sex. This is a most convincing proof that those males which are captured early in life, and have been domesticated for many years, more readily procreate their species than elephants taken at a later period.”

CHAPTER IV.

GREGARIOUS HABITS OF THE ELEPHANT—LARGE HERDS—HAUNTS
 —HABITS—IMITATIVE FACULTIES—A SQUADRON OF ELEPHANTS
 —FOOD ON WHICH THEY SUBSIST—TREES UPROOTED BY ELEPHANTS—NOT A RUMINATING ANIMAL—QUANTITY OF WATER DRUNK BY THE ELEPHANT—THROWING WATER OVER THE BODY
 —PROTECTION FROM THE SUN.

THE elephant is gregarious. “Like the beaver,” says Buffon, “it loves the society of its species. Elephants understand each other, assemble, disperse, and act in concert.”

Ordinarily the herd consists of females, with their calves, and young males; but the former are much more numerous than the latter, probably, in the proportion of twenty to one. It is a remarkable fact that, neither in my own experience nor in that of the elephant-hunters of my acquaintance, have full-grown males (excepting in very rare instances) been met with in company with the cows. On only a single occasion, and that out of a herd of perhaps little less than three hundred females, Mr. Oswald informs me, does he recollect having met with a mature male in their society, and the individual in question, singularly enough, had not even the rudiments of tusks. The old bulls keep to themselves.

and are found singly or in pairs, or consorting together in small herds, varying, say, from four or five to fifteen or twenty; and it is only in the rainy season, extending from February to May, during which time, it is said, few hunters go in pursuit of these animals, that they (the old bulls) are with the females; and when the cold weather sets in, they again retire from the company of the latter.

Though I myself have never seen any very great number of elephants congregated together—perhaps not more than from one hundred to one hundred and fifty—yet other South African travellers have met with very enormous herds of those animals. Both Harris and Oswell have seen, they tell us, about three hundred in company. This number, however, is as nothing compared with what we read of on the East coast. It is asserted, indeed, that in an extensive forest in that part of Africa known as the “Fish River Bush” (where, from the extent and denseness of the cover, elephants are comparatively safe from persecution), no fewer than fifteen hundred have been seen in the course of a single day!

Mr. Rose, an engineer officer who travelled in South Africa, goes even further. He informs us that a certain hunter of his acquaintance told him that he had once seen a herd consisting of three thousand elephants; and from the number of paths he (Mr. Rose) himself observed, he imagined there was no exaggeration in the account.

Without intending to throw the shadow of a

doubt on this statement of Mr. Rose, I wish merely to point out that the multitude of paths argues little or nothing, since a very small herd of elephants, if left undisturbed for any length of time, will produce them. Moreover, from the great bulk of the animal, the space that such an immense troop (three thousand) must necessarily occupy, would be so extensive that it is questionable whether the scope of vision could compass so vast a number, more especially in a wooded locality. Indeed, I scarcely know anything more deceptive, as regards numbers, than a herd of animals in their native wilds.

Major Denham, again, in his journey from Mour-suk to Kouka, in Bournow, speaks of an enormous herd of elephants that he there fell in with. "They seemed," he tells us, "to cover the face of the country; whole trees were broken down where they had fed, and where they had reposed their ponderous bodies, young trees, shrubs, and underwood were crushed beneath their weight."

The favourite haunts of the elephant are deep and boundless forests distant from the abodes of man, and in near vicinity to rivers or fountains; but in districts where he is subject to persecution, he, in the day-time, retires for the most part to inaccessible ravines and jungles, very distant, it may be, from water, which he only visits during the hours of darkness. Like the whale in the ocean, the elephant on land is acquainted with, and roams over, wide and extensive tracts. He is extremely particular in always frequenting the

freshest and most verdant parts of the forest; and when one district becomes parched and barren, he will forsake it for years together, and wander far and wide in quest of other and better pastures.

It is a commonly received opinion, I believe, that the elephant always sleeps standing, or reclining, it may be, against a tree or rock; or, as regards Southern Africa, against one of those gigantic ant-hills* one there so frequently meets with; but this is not altogether the case; for though, as a rule, this may be his usual mode of reposing, yet in regions where he is but little molested, he is not unfrequently found stretched at full length on the sward; and, in saying this, I am fully borne out by my friend Frederick Green, who, like myself, was at one time somewhat sceptical as to the elephant ever sleeping otherwise than in an upright position.

The elephant, according to Delegorgue, is a very imitative animal—very much more so, I confess, than I ever had the most distant idea of; for, after speaking of a herd of those animals recently disturbed by himself and party, he goes on to say:—

“A portion of the troop ought, from the nature of the country, to have passed within two hundred paces of us, but as they made for the river, where

* My ideas of the nests of the termites, or white ants, were first realised at Schmelen's Hope, a missionary station in Damara Land, some of the abodes of these interesting, though destructive, insects measuring as much as one hundred feet in diameter at the base, and rising to about twenty feet in height.

the ground was falling, and their motions in consequence quick, we were too late to intercept them. As without doubt they had crossed the water, and ascended the opposite bank, we therefore searched to the right and left for them, frequently taking advantage of ravines, that we might march with the greater silence.

“On leaving one of these hollows for the higher ground, that we might obtain a more extended view, a dull and heavy sound, as of the trampling of a large body of men, reached our ears. The noise approached, as also the dust. A squadron of elephants, in total ignorance of our presence, advanced with rapid strides towards us. Three in front—eleven in all.

“I was the first to perceive them. ‘The elephants! Kotchoba! Boulandja! Be on your guard! Conceal yourselves amongst the bushes! They are not aware of us. Hold straight, and be not afraid.’ But an irresistible desire, a diabolical impulse, induced each of us to look up. It was so natural to assure oneself first of the position of the game, and the distance, before firing; and in our case the movement probably partly proceeded from a feeling of apprehension, because the animals were bearing down directly upon us, and, if they did not trample us under foot, might strike us with their tusks; and, if so, what a blow! Twenty-five paces separated us from them. They perceived us. I take the first, and fire: it falls, sinking on its knees. Kotchoba addresses himself to the second, which also falls on his

knees. Boulandja discharges his gun—his elephant assumes the same attitude as the other two; and all the rest, even to the eleventh, kneel in succession.

“Great God! Twenty guns—forty guns charged, if we had possessed them. ‘Reload, lads, and quickly.’ But the laugh that this grotesque scene created, deprived us of strength and the power of motion.

“I had time, however, to fire at the last of the troop as they were retreating, and, as a *souvenir*, lodged a ball in its buttocks.

“One alone remained on the spot, but standing in a defiant attitude, when a ball in the brain caused him to sink dead to the ground, like a tower that had been undermined.”

“Never during my Jäger life,” Delegorgue goes on to say, “have I witnessed a similar scene to that described above. Meanwhile I am far from disbelieving that with animals collected together a spirit of imitation does exist.”

The food of the elephant consists of grasses, herbs, as also of succulent roots, of the situation of which he is advised by his exquisite sense of smell. To obtain them he turns up the ground with his tusks, in the manner of a hog, so that at times whole acres may be seen where one would almost suppose the plough had been doing its work. He also feeds largely on the shoots, smaller branches, and roots of certain trees, to gain access to which he applies one of his tusks, as we would a crow-bar, to the roots of the tree, to loosen the soil, and

then laying hold of the trunk, pulls it to the ground. Many of the larger *Mimosa*, however, resist all his efforts, and it is, therefore, only after heavy rains, when the ground is soft and loose, that he can successfully attempt the operation. The elephant consumes an immense quantity of food, and passes the greater part of both day and night in feeding.

The elephant does not ruminate, and has but one stomach. This want, however, is amply supplied by the magnitude and width of his intestines, which are formed on the same principle as those of the horse. "The colon of animals that live upon the same species of food," observes Sir Everard Home, "is of greater length in proportion to the scantiness of the supply. Amongst quadrupeds, this may be illustrated by the length of the colon in the elephant, being only twenty feet six inches, while in the dromedary it is forty-two. The first inhabits the fertile woods of Asia, the latter, the arid deserts of Arabia. Many other remarkable facts and striking analogies make it clear that some process goes on in the colon, from which a secondary supply of nourishment is produced."

Though water is indispensable to the elephant, he would not seem to require so constant and regular a supply as most other animals. In regions where he is subject to persecution, he, it is said, usually passes the day in lonely and secluded places, far distant from the river or the fountain, which he only visits during the hours of darkness. In dry and warm weather this occurs nightly, but if the

weather be cool and cloudy, only every second or third night. For this purpose he, about sunset, leaves his mid-day haunts, and commences his march towards the water, which he usually reaches between the hours of nine and midnight, and after he has drunk his fill, he retraces his steps to his forest home.

My friend Green's remarks regarding the subject in question, (in which, so far as my limited experience extends, I fully concur) are not without interest; he says:—

“Elephants in the cold season, in July and August, do not appear to require water every night. Males at that time will frequently remain in the bush for three days without visiting the pool, making excursions to it only every fourth, or, it may be, third night. Females with small calves require water more frequently, and during the months just named repair to it every other night, that is, leaving one night out. During the hot weather in October, November, and December, should no rain fall, it is different, as the males then appear to require water every second night, if not every night. After the rainy season, when the desert portion of the country is well supplied with vley water, it is very common to find elephants frequenting the pool during the day-time; in districts where they are left undisturbed, noon-day would, in fact, appear to be their natural time of drinking. It is only when they are distrustful of danger that they avoid going to water in the heat of the day.”

It is the generally received belief, I apprehend, that the elephant, after it has slaked its thirst, is in the habit of spouting large quantities of water from its trunk over its body for the purpose of cooling it. If my eyes have not deceived me, I myself, indeed, have seen the animal perform the operation. My friend Green, nevertheless, would seem to doubt such being the case; he says:

“It is natural enough to believe that the African elephant should repair to the pool for the purpose of taking a bath, because, when in a domesticated state, his Indian congener is in the habit of doing so. Still, although I have had so many opportunities of observing these animals at water, during, I may say, eleven years wanderings in the wilderness, I never witnessed these ablutions. I have frequently seen them repair to large waters after drinking at smaller holes, and supposed it was for the purpose in question, but noticed that they only drank, and made no attempt to throw water over their bodies. I am well aware they will coat themselves over with mire, as a muddy jacket protects them from the burning rays of a tropical sun, and this expedient is more particularly observable in the ‘Tsetse’ country, where it serves, no doubt, to protect them, in degree at least, from the bite of that poisonous insect.”

In connection with the subject in question, I may be permitted to add some remarks of Kolbein, which, however quaint, may nevertheless contain some truth.

“When elephants drink,” he writes, “they first

trouble the water. Some are of opinion they do this to avoid being shocked with the reflection of their own ugly shapes. But in my opinion, they do it by the same instinctive laws which direct geese, ducks, and other birds to mix sand or gravel frequently with the water they drink, in order to carry off crudities and indigestion."

That elephants are very destructive to arborous vegetation cannot be denied. Everyone who has traversed the wooded regions of Southern Africa, must admit such to be the case. In many instances that have come under my own observation, this destruction would seem to have been altogether wanton. Often, indeed, have I seen regular avenues, so to say, of trees that have been thrown down by these animals without their having fed on either their roots or branches; what, therefore, could have induced them to take all this useless trouble, is to me a mystery. "Possibly," as some one says, "it was done to try their strength, or one or other of the troop may have had the bump of destructiveness about it?"

When elephants abound in the near vicinity of man, they are certainly not at all times the best of neighbours, as what follows will show :

"In the year 1821," says Pringle, "during one of my excursions in the interior, I happened to spend a few days at the Moravian Missionary Settlement of Enon, or White River. This place is situated in a wild but beautiful valley, near to the foot of the Zwurberg Mountains, in the District of Uitenhage, and is surrounded on every side by ex-

tensive forests of evergreens, in which numerous herds of elephants still find food and shelter. From having been frequently hunted by the Boers and Hottentots, these animals are become so shy as scarcely ever to be seen during the day, except among the most remote and inaccessible ravines and jungles; but in the night time they frequently issue forth in large troops, and range, in search of food, through the inhabited farms in the vicinity. And on such occasions they sometimes revenge the wrongs of their race upon the settlers, who have taken possession of their ancient haunts, by pulling up fruit-trees, treading down gardens and corn-fields, breaking their ploughs, waggons, and so forth.

“ I do not mean, however, to affirm,” Pringle goes on to say, “ that the elephants really do all this mischief from feelings of revenge, or with the direct intention of annoying their human persecutors. They pull up the trees, probably, because they want to brouse on their soft roots, and they demolish the agricultural implements merely because they happen to be in the way.”

During these nocturnal raids of the elephant on the domains of the settlers and others, loss of human life occasionally occurs; of which an instance is related by Delegorgue.

“ A small herd of these animals, five or six in number, traversed, during the night, the upper part of the bay, and paid a visit to the property of the Englishman, Ogle; and having followed the first foot-path, entered the woods and clambered

up a hill. At the extremity of the path was a Kraal, consisting of a dozen huts, inhabited by Caffres, who were all sunk in profound sleep. These huts, unfortunately, were unprotected by a dry thorn fence. The leading elephant, probably by mistake, crushed one of these huts. The inhabitants uttered fearful cries; the animal then took fright; but instead of returning the way he came, he, followed by his comrades in succession, passed at a rapid pace over the hut, whereby four persons were crushed to death by their feet."

We read, moreover, that when on one occasion there was a great drought in the country about Benzuela, on the West Coast of Africa, a large herd of elephants attacked the town, to get possession of the wells, and were only driven away by the inhabitants after a hard fight.

But though the elephant, from the destruction he causes in the forest, and the ravages he occasionally commits on the properties of the Colonists and others, has a somewhat bad name, yet, as a set off, he makes excellent path-ways, or tracks, through the entangled jungle. Many of these, indeed, have proved of the greatest advantage to the pioneer of civilization. I, for my own part, have frequently taken advantage of them, for, besides being wide and open, they are wonderfully straight, so much so that in many instances it would be difficult to improve upon them.

As with the lion, the natives of Southern Africa entertain many very curious notions respecting the elephant. According to popular belief the animal,

when wounded and hotly pursued, will hide himself behind a tree, and when his unwary pursuer has approached sufficiently near, he will push down the tree with his proboscis, with the object of causing the man's destruction.

Amral, the chief of the Namaqua Hottentots, told Mr. Galton and myself "that on one occasion he and others were in pursuit of a troop of elephants, and at length came to a waggon-track which the animals had crossed. Here the latter, as was seen by their spoor, had come to a halt, and, after carefully examining the ground with their trunks, had formed a circle, in the centre of which the leader had taken up his position. Afterwards, individuals were sent forth to make further investigations. The *Raad*, or debate," the chieftain went on to say, "must have been long and weighty, for they (the elephants) had written much on the ground with their probosces. The result of the council was that to remain longer in the locality would be dangerous, and they therefore came to the unanimous resolution to decamp forthwith. Our attempts to overtake the creatures," Amral went on to say, "were useless, for, though we followed their tracks until sunset, we saw no more of them."

The tribe in question, I may add, believe "that if a person shoots at an elephant and fails to kill him, the animal will immediately make for the ambush, and, should he be unable to catch the enemy, will forthwith destroy all he has left behind him. Not content with this revenge, he will follow, in like

manner as a dog, his persecutor to his home, and, if fire be burning on the hearth, will seize a lighted brand with his trunk, and fire the dwelling over its owner's head."

The Namaquas, it is to be remarked, stand in great dread of the elephant, and few are bold enough to attack him, either on horseback or on foot; and fewer still will venture to taste of the creature's flesh, "because," say they, "his *sense* is so like unto that of a man."

With certain tribes it is, moreover, the belief that the herd (of elephants) has a chief, or captain, who never caters for himself, but is supplied with sustenance by his subjects. These chiefs are said to be regular swells in their way, their hides and tusks being beautifully clean, thanks, no doubt, to the fair sex by whom they live surrounded. ✓

Another superstition regarding the elephant, very prevalent in Southern Africa, is "that, after the death of the animal, his companions drag the body away to a distance and bury it." The almost unheard-of existence of a perfect specimen gives some countenance, it must be confessed, to the idle story, which to my mind is easy enough of solution: for, however imperishable the giant structure may appear, the bones, on becoming separated from their joints and sockets, are no doubt dispersed by the hyenas and other carnivorous animals. Even the ponderous head may be found hundreds of paces removed from where it was first deposited.

They tell you, moreover, that "if, when the elephant is crossing a river, or taking a bath, he is

molested by the crocodile, he forthwith seizes the reptile with his trunk, and carries it far into the 'weldt,' until he meets with a forked tree suitable for his purpose, when, after sufficiently enlarging the opening between the forks, he thrusts his enemy into the cavity, and, bidding it adieu, leaves it there to perish."

This story, when told by the natives in their own way, is rather an amusing one.

CHAPTER V.

STALKING GENERALLY DESCRIBED — THE AUTHOR'S OWN EXPERIENCES—TRACKING THE ELEPHANT—FATIGUE OF ELEPHANT-SHOOTING—QUALITIES REQUISITE IN AN ELEPHANT HUNTER—PARTY OF OVAMBOES—SUCCESSFUL STALKING—NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF ELEPHANT-HUNTERS.

THOUGH the elephant, if left unmolested, is of a pacific disposition, yet, if roused and irritated, he proves a most dangerous enemy, and, as some will have it, “more difficult to conquer than any other beast of chase.” Be that as it may, he is certainly the noblest game in the world, and from his great power and sagacity, gives ample scope for the hunter's skill and daring.

In Southern Africa, the chasse of this animal is conducted as well on horseback as on foot. Where the country is tolerably open, the former mode, as being not only the most exciting and imposing, but the safest, the least fatiguing, and the most successful, is greatly to be preferred; but in wooded districts the elephant is perhaps “stalked” to fully equal advantage.

Geographical researches being the main object of my several journeys into the interior, and hunting and shooting secondary considerations, it was only

when subjects for the compass and the pencil were temporarily exhausted, that I had opportunity to enjoy my gun; and if at such times I happened to be in an elephant country, I cared little for any other game; following the creature's "spoor" by day, and watching by the pool where he came to quench his thirst during the hours of darkness, were then my chief occupations. During this period, I had many interesting, and not a few dangerous encounters with the huge animal; and though occasionally my success was inconsiderable, yet, on the whole, I was well repaid for all my labour and trouble; not a few of my prizes proved splendid specimens of the giant race, and bore tusks that even Gordon Cumming would have beheld with rapture.

From the exhausted state of my exchequer, however, and other circumstances, I was unable to maintain a stud of horses suitable for elephant-hunting, and was consequently compelled to pursue the sport on my own legs; that is, generally, for once in a time I followed the spoor of the animal, for a certain distance at least, on ox-back, my usual way of travelling in Africa.

As, therefore, I am best acquainted with the chase of the elephant on foot, I will speak of it in the first instance.

On arriving at a pool which elephants are known, or suspected, to frequent for the purpose of slaking their thirst, the ground in the vicinity is carefully examined, and if there is evidence of these animals having recently been there, preparations are at once

made, should they visit the water during the coming night, to attack them on the following morning.

On these occasions the natives in scores—nay, in hundreds—follow the sportsman to his bivouac, which, for fear of alarming the elephants, is usually at some little distance from the pool. They (the natives) commonly arrive about daybreak; it is a strange sight to see these dusky and savage figures gliding with phantom-like steps through the forest, each equipped with a fire-brand (the custom of the country) as a protection against the cold. It brings to one's mind the fable of Ulysses' visit to the dead. As the different parties arrive, fires are lighted, round which the barbarians group themselves, impatiently waiting the first signs of day. Great excitement prevails, but conversation is carried on in a whisper.

As soon as it has become sufficiently light to distinguish the "spoor" of the elephant, one or two experienced "trackers"* are dispatched to examine the ground, and should their search prove satisfactory, a suppressed murmur of delight runs through the assembly. Springing to their feet,

* Vaillant, when speaking of the "trackers," says:—"What a subtle sense is the sight of a Hottentot! how he assists it by a difficult and truly wonderful attention, upon a dry ground, where, in spite of his great weight, the elephant scarcely leaves any trace; in the midst of dead leaves, scattered and curled up by the wind, the African recognises his step. He sees the way which the animal has taken, and that which he himself must follow. A green leaf turned up or broken off, a bud, or a little twig bruised or torn down, these, and a thousand other circumstances, are indications which never fail him. The most expert European hunter is completely baffled; for myself, I could never understand it."

they all sling their well-stocked quivers across the shoulder, snatch up bow and javelin, and take the field.

Everything having been properly arranged on the preceding evening, the sportsman's own preparations are soon completed; and after partaking of some solid food, and a cup or two of strong coffee, he quickly follows in the wake of the natives.

At first there is often delay and difficulty in hitting on the right spoor caused by the elephants and other large game frequently wandering about a good deal, either before visiting the water or after quenching their thirst; but this difficulty overcome, off start the "trackers,"* with the whole hunt at their heels, at an astonishing pace—at times, in short, amounting to a run. This rapid pace is kept up as long as the atmosphere is moderately cool; but as the heat increases, the eagerness of the "trackers" gradually diminishes, and you pursue your way slowly and mechanically. Occasionally, however, a false alarm of the presence of the elephants causes a slight relief to the monotony of the proceedings. Here and there the animals have diverged from their path to browse, but they again proceed.

* A singular custom (one said to be universally adopted by them when "spooring" game) exists amongst the Bechnanas, viz., that when a number of these men are in search of the elephant, or other beast, the individual who first hits off the right track forthwith loudly smacks his nether-end with his hand as a signal to his companions of his success; and when they are afterwards traversing in a line the mazes of the forest, each one warns the one behind him of any rough sticks, stones, or thorns which lie across the path by the same elegant and friendly gesture.

Noon has arrived. The sun is in his zenith. Its scorching rays descend vertically on your devoted head ; the sand is so headed as to blister your feet, and not a breath of wind stirs the atmosphere, which is like that at the mouth of a heated furnace. You are seized with giddiness and a burning thirst, which your supply of half-boiling water is insufficient to quench. You look anxiously round for some shady spot to rest your aching head ; but recollecting that success depends almost entirely upon your perseverance, you pursue your course with a painful and listless step. The elephants are at rest, but in another hour or two they will again be moving.

Suddenly, and when almost ready to sink to the ground from the united influence of heat, thirst, and fatigue, a native, who has been considerably in advance, is seen running towards you. His looks bespeak important news. "The elephants, surely !" you involuntarily exclaim. Yes. Your surmises are correct. Joy is depicted on every countenance ; heat, thirst, fatigue, all are forgotten in the absorbing thought that you are near the object of your pursuit.

But you are still a mile or two distant from the animals, and a short halt is therefore made, partly in order to recover breath and to examine your weapons, and partly to consult on the best mode of attack ; and this being settled, you again push forward, taking great care to be under the wind of the elephants.

The time that now elapses before coming in sight

of the animals is one of intense interest. Not a word is spoken; you steal noiselessly on from bush to bush, and occasionally a savage ascends a conspicuous tree to reconnoitre.

All at once the man in advance comes to a stand-still, and, pushing the branches cautiously aside, points to some dark, gigantic, and immovable masses a short distance a-head. At first sight, their statue-like and motionless appearance makes you almost question the reality. But the occasional flapping of the immense appendage, the ear, so conspicuous in the African species, quickly dispels your doubts. Those ponderous groups are, indeed, a herd of elephants.

The "trackers" now fall back—their work is done, yours still remains. Grasping the trusty rifle, you advance with a beating heart. One towering form appears above the rest; a glance at his head shows two enormous alabaster teeth. To him, as a matter of course, you direct your steps; you are within twenty paces of this monster of flesh; your finger is on the trigger. But, lo! he suspects treachery. Raising his "wand" on high, and hoisting his "studding-sails," he takes a step or two backwards, evidently preparing to charge down upon you. This is a thrilling moment to the sportsman. No time, however, is to be lost; you pull the trigger, and the next instant the bullet is well home in the beast's body. Should you have merely dealt him a flesh-wound, the chances are small of your coming up with him, either on that day or any other; but if, on the contrary, the missile

has penetrated any of the vital parts, he curls up his trunk, and, uttering a faint cry, plunges violently forward, and presently subsides in the dust.

The report of the gun is the signal for a general and confused rush of the whole herd; and should they unfortunately come your way, it requires great coolness and self-possession to guard against being trampled to death by the towering masses. They sweep past on these occasions with the violence of a tornado, carrying havoc and devastation in their path.

Having described in a general way the manner in which the elephant-hunter usually proceeds when on *foot*, I will now, for the readers' better understanding of the subject, relate two or three of my own "stalks" after the noble creature.

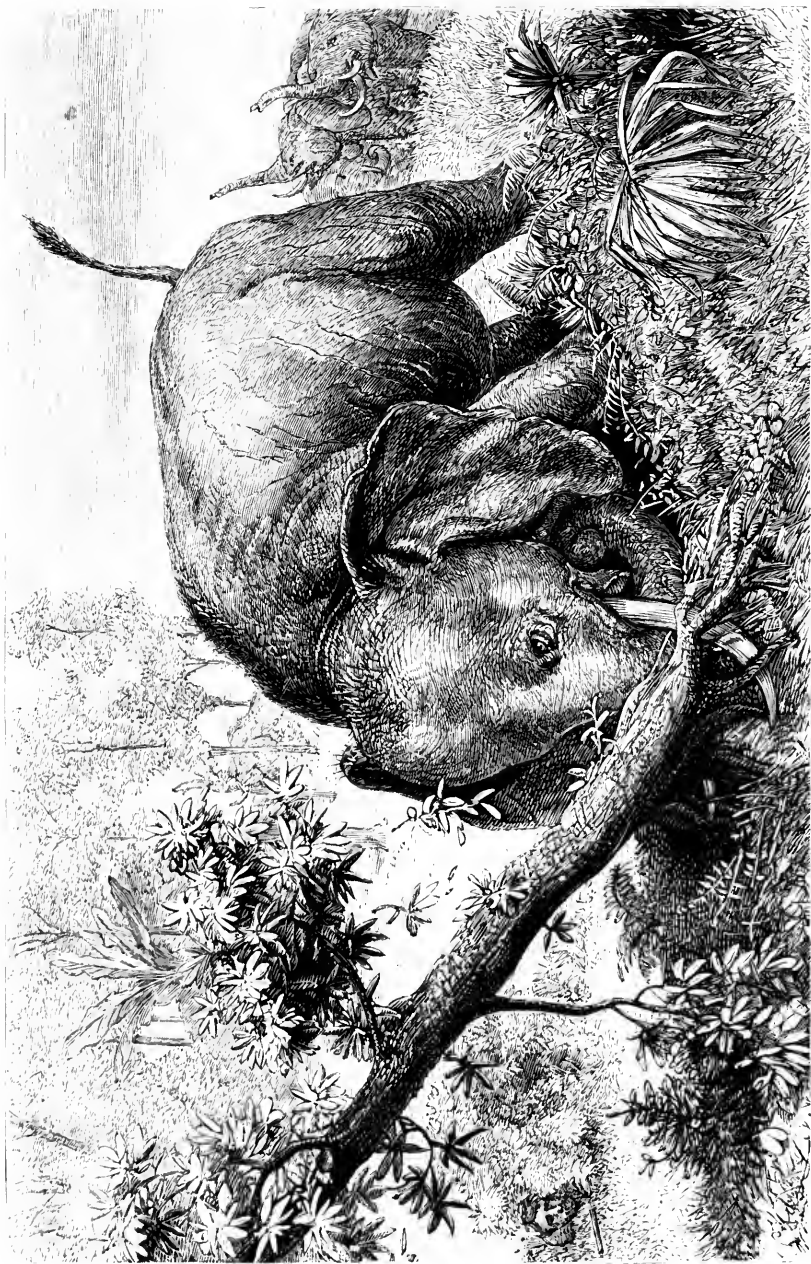
Just prior to leaving a place called Orombola, I took up the spoor of an immense herd of female elephants. A short time before I had, on more than one occasion, been so savagely attacked by cows with calves, that I had my life placed in great jeopardy, and, in consequence, had resolved not again, without adequate cause, to molest troops so constituted; but in this instance I was induced to depart from my newly-formed resolution, because, amongst the spoors in question, were those of first-rate bulls, whom I hoped to find by themselves, or lingering behind the rest.

The elephants, whose tracks we were now following, led us a long chase. Hour after hour elapsed, miles after miles of weary walking were passed, without the least indication that they would come to a halt. The zeal of the "trackers" began

to flag, and I felt inclined to give up the pursuit, when suddenly, about two o'clock in the afternoon, we espied the rear-guard of the stupendous game slowly wending their way across some rising ground a short distance a-head. At this sight every face brightened, the step became once more elastic, and hunger, thirst, and fatigue were all forgotten at the exciting prospect before us.

Leaving my people behind, with the exception of one of the native boys, I at once started in pursuit of the quarry. The cover, unfortunately, was scanty and unfavourable in the extreme; but, in the hope of finding better, I followed leisurely and cautiously in the immediate track of the elephants, keeping a sharp look-out on every side, for fear of leaving any behind. Suddenly my henchman pulled me by the sleeve, and pointing at the same time to a small brake on our left, above which appeared the backs of several suspicious-looking objects, whispered, "Bull-elephants." "Capital," I responded, in the same subdued tone; and, leaving the herd we had so long been following, made for that my man had just espied.

In a very short time I found myself within easy range of the animals, but, to my dismay, discovered they consisted almost wholly of females, with their young. Amongst them, however, were two or three fine males, one of whom evidently acted as *Paterfamilias*, or, militarily speaking, General of Division, to this portion of the emigrants. This particular elephant was standing a little apart from the rest, but his shoulder, unfortunately, was



A FURIOUS CHARGE.

partially hidden by two well-grown calves, whom the jolly old patriarch was busily caressing. A very slight change of attitude was all I required to enable me to send him to the land of shades, and I waited in breathless anxiety for this opportunity. To my intense disappointment, however, the huge beast all at once tossed his trunk on high, and giving his sides two or three smart slaps with his monstrous ears, turned abruptly round and made off, instantly followed by the whole herd.

But it would never do to allow them thus to escape. Springing therefore to my feet, and advancing a few steps, I levelled and fired at the second in size of the males, just as he was disappearing from view. The bullet struck him, but very unsatisfactorily, as it glanced from off his hide and went hissing through the air. In a moment the retreating column turned right about, and made a furious and headlong charge, *all but over me*. I had thrown myself flat on the ground, sheltered only by an insignificant little shrub. A false move would have been my death. After looking about him inquiringly, the *Paterfamilias* made a second dash at the supposed foe, in which charge the enraged brute actually tore up by the roots and carried off with him a whole tree. He looked the very picture of rage and grandeur as, for a few seconds, he stood exposed to full view, part of the shattered tree still clinging to his tusks. I was thoroughly scared, and held my breath in dreadful and agonising suspense. Not being able to discover anything, he once more faced about and, accom-

panied by the rest of the troop, was soon lost to view in the jungle. I hailed their departure with rapture; for, though I had failed in my object, I felt heartily thankful that my life was saved.

One morning when on a journey, principally devoted to geographical discoveries, while encamped at a place called Hokahanja, in Damaraland, a native suddenly "dropped in," and silently deposited at my feet a small branch of a thorn-tree. Any explanation on the man's part was unnecessary; for, after carefully examining the twig, which was much jagged and cut by the marks of teeth, I at once came to the conclusion that it had been torn from its stem only a few hours previous by elephants. I therefore merely inquired, "Where are they? and how many in number?" To the first of my queries he replied by pointing to some low broken hills in the neighbourhood; to the second he could give no precise answer. He had left some of his companions, however, he told me, to watch the movements of the animals.

In some ten minutes, I was *en route*, duly equipped. After a rapid and hot march of rather less than two hours' duration, we saw the three natives left as sentinels running towards us in fiery haste, exclaiming, out of breath, "We have seen them! we have seen them! there are three of them! But there"—pointing to a small eminence on which was posted one of their companions, looking in the distance very much like a huge baboon—"you can see for yourself." I did not wait to be told this twice, and had soon the satisfaction

of verifying with my own eyes the statements of the natives.

The elephants were then distant about three quarters of a mile, slowly browsing amongst some brushwood at the foot of a low ridge. A few seconds enabled me to make my arrangements. Leaving a couple of men on the rock to watch their movements, I proceeded with the rest to the attack, making a considerable circuit in order to get to the leeward of our game—the wind being at first exceedingly unfavourable.

Having gained the foot of the hill where the animals were last seen, I sent two natives ahead, up the hill, to reconnoitre. A low whistle, the signal to advance, was soon heard, which quickly brought me alongside of the scouts. The elephants were still almost on the spot where they had been first seen, but I could only make out two. Putting fresh priming and cap to my rifle, and ramming the bullet well home, I dropped noiselessly down the rock, accompanied by one of my own Damaras, who carried a spare gun. The rest of the party were instructed to remain quiet within their hiding-place. A couple of minutes' walk brought me within range of one of the elephants, and, the cover being admirable, I advanced to within about twenty-five paces of the spot where he stood. He was then somewhat aslant from me, but soon turned his broadside. Some minutes, however, elapsed before I could make out the exact position of his shoulder. I once attempted to get a little ahead of him, but soon found my situation less favourable than before,

and therefore returned to my first post. With my heavy rifle (carrying steel-pointed conical bullets, three to the pound) ready poised in my hand, and my double-barrelled smooth-bore ready cocked on the ground beside me, I anxiously waited for a chance to fire. I wanted him to move a step or two forward, when I knew his shoulder must be fully exposed. Suddenly he did so, and as quickly I covered his heart—the jungle re-echoing the next instant with the explosion of twelve drachms of Hall's best rifle-powder. The effect was deadly; with a frightful rush forward—it was the most tremendous plunge I ever witnessed by any wild animal—he fell prostrate within one hundred and fifty yards of my ambush.

Another elephant was evidently following on the track of the stricken one. It is true I did not see him, but inferred as much from the noise occasioned by his flight, and, having quickly reloaded, I pursued the fugitive.

Suddenly, and when within less than twenty paces, I found myself in his presence. The beast was partially facing me, his huge ears spread like a pair of studding-sails, giving a defiant and threatening air to his whole attitude. I did not, however, hesitate, but fired at once at his shoulder, when he instantly betook himself to flight. My henchman, becoming alarmed at the close proximity of the gigantic creature, instead of handing me the spare gun, also ran away.

Reloading the rifle, I was soon once more in pursuit, and had shortly the satisfaction of again

sighting the poor beast, who, from the quantity of blood in his spoor was evidently severely wounded. My attendant having now rejoined me, I managed this time to fire all my three barrels; but, though every bullet told on his carcase, they had not the effect of bringing him down. To my surprise and satisfaction, nevertheless, he, instead of trying to escape (perhaps from being unequal to the task), began gradually to retrace his steps.

Hearing just at this time a peculiar hammering sort of noise close under the hill, I turned aside to ascertain the cause. It arose, I found, from a party of Ovambos, who were plundering some bees' nests. Several dogs accompanied the men, which, on our approach, began to bark most furiously. For a moment I really thought my quarry would escape me; but my misgivings, fortunately, proved unfounded, for I soon overtook the poor creature resting under a small tree. I crept quite close to him, and once more the contents of all my barrels entered his body, though without apparent effect, as he remained quite motionless.

Unfortunately, whilst pulling the trigger of the small-bore, both barrels went off together; the gun being light, and very heavily loaded, the recoil was most powerful. The stock struck me violently on the face, and the left-hand cock, burying itself deeply in my upper lip, loosened some of my teeth. The shock almost stunned me; indeed, it was enough to have prostrated a horse, yet I almost instantly recovered myself.

Bullets for my large rifle, and powder, now

failed me, and I therefore sent my attendant for a reserve of both that had been left with the men on the rock, and, on his return, quickly terminated the sufferings of the miserable creature.

Whilst thus engaged, a third elephant had been seen by the men on the look-out; and, being informed he had gone in the direction of the spot where the first of his comrades had fallen, I turned off at once in search of him. I had not, however, gone far, when I found myself surrounded by numerous Ovattjimbos, or poor Damaras, making the most terrific hubbub in celebration of my success; or, rather, at the prospect of a gorge on some six tons of elephant's flesh. I cannot describe the annoyance I felt at being thus unexpectedly baffled in my object, for, of course, the animal in question, scared by the noise, had precipitately left the vicinity. Had it not been for the presence of these men, I should probably have killed this one also, which would, indeed, have made a glorious day's sport.

As it was, I had done pretty well; having bagged, to use the sportsman's phrase, two fine young male elephants, measuring respectively, from head to shoulders, eleven and eleven and a half feet. Their tusks, however, were not on a par with the size of the animals, the largest not much exceeding fifty pounds.

By this time more than fifty Damaras were on the spot, whilst other natives, including Bushmen and Berg Damaras from the neighbouring mountain Etjo, were flocking in on all sides. The

sudden, and to me perfectly astonishing and inexplicable, appearance of these carnivorants, strongly reminded me of the approach of a flock of vultures.

The following morning I breakfasted on an elephant's foot, done under the ashes, and a dish of honey—a meal fit for a king.

One more “stalk” after elephants, and I have done with the subject. The story I am about to relate is chiefly remarkable from the singular pre-sentiment of success that preceded its occurrence, which I not only felt, but announced to several persons.

We were travelling at the time in the dry bed of the Omuramba, a periodical water-course, when I was on my way to the river Okovango, and my illness had for a time taken a favourable turn, when traces of elephants became very numerous. Our larder was then all but exhausted, so I determined on replenishing it by a hunt for some of this big game as soon as certain intelligence could be obtained of its whereabouts.

And I had not long to wait; for early on the following morning we crossed the fresh spoor of a middle-sized bull-elephant. Five minutes afterwards, I was in hot pursuit of the animal; and in less than an hour, he having “doubled” on his track, I suddenly found myself face to face with him in a dense brake, the distance between us certainly not exceeding some fifteen paces. Foreseeing the consequences that might ensue, I felt at first averse to fire in my rather awkward position, but there was no alternative.

Raising the rifle, therefore, to my shoulder, and taking a deliberate aim at the creature's forehead, I pulled the trigger. The result was that, though my life was probably saved, the game was gone. With one of those terrific screams so peculiar to the species, the monster wheeled round with the rapidity of lightning, and the next instant was out of sight; and, though I followed his trail closely for a long time, I failed in again sighting him.

I subsequently rejoined my waggon, both sick and dispirited, yet resolved on another hunt before the fever should resume its fatal sway over my enervated frame; and thinking it probable that elephants would wander our way during the night, I directed Pereira,* my head-servant, to keep a sharp look-out.

* This poor man, who was exceedingly well educated, speaking several languages, and who for a length of time was in the employ of Mr. Anderson, recently met his death in a very sad way. Several articles had been stolen from him by some Bushmen, whom he succeeded in capturing at the "werft" of their chief, and by the aid of some Damaras was conveying to his waggon. Night, however, overtook the party half way, and Pereira, therefore, resolved to wait until morning before continuing his journey. He was followed, unobserved, by three Bushmen, friends of the captives, who shortly before daybreak crept stealthily upon his place of bivouac, and by the light of the fire, alongside which he was sleeping, discharged three poisoned arrows at him. The first entered the left breast; he started up and seized his rifle, and whilst in the act of firing, another entered his arm close below the shoulder, causing him to drop his gun, and the next moment the third struck him in the stomach; but the latter alone did not penetrate. With the deadly shafts still embedded in the flesh, poor Pereira discharged his rifle at the murderers, who fled, and made their escape in the obscurity of the early morn. He then summoned the Damaras to his assistance.

I had soon fallen into a deep but perturbed slumber, my fancy busily depicting the scene of my day's adventure, and wildly shaping the chances of better success on the morrow, when, about midnight, I was startled by the cry "Sir—sir, two elephants are passing us on yonder bank." To spring to my feet and to seize the rifle was the work of an instant; and as soon as my eyes had become sufficiently clear of their sleepy film, I perceived, at no great distance, not only two, but three elephants, which, from their towering frames, I at once concluded to be males. They were marching with a steady but quick step; and, supposing they were about to quench their thirst at some rain-pools hard by, I hastened to intercept them. It soon became evident, however, that they had taken the alarm, and being afraid that, were I now to follow them, they might soon be altogether lost to view in the dimness of a starlit night, I deemed it best to postpone the attack until dawn. Halting thereupon, I said to Pereira, who was following me with a spare rifle, "No, don't let us disturb them now; to-morrow morning, at break of day, we will take up their spoor."

The arrow which entered the flesh of the arm was cut out, but the other, which entered the breast, and appeared to have passed round the bladebone, could not be extracted. He was carried on a rude stretcher, hurriedly made for the purpose, to his "veldt-home," where he lingered in great agony for five days. "The Bushmen's poison," the narrator of poor Pereira's death goes on to say, "is usually very fatal in its effects; but in this instance it had evidently become weak either from exposure or age. Otherwise, he would not have survived the fatal shafts for more than a few hours."—*The Editor.*

I then added, half speaking to myself, and half addressing my servant, "Two of these brutes, as I certainly foresee, must and shall bite the dust before the setting of to-morrow's sun."

Accordingly the first grey streaks of dawn had hardly announced the arrival of the blushing day when I was in pursuit of my lost quarry. They had evidently visited a fountain in the neighbourhood, but the excessive rankness of the grass, and the numerous tracks of other elephants who had previously quenched their thirst there, made it so very difficult to follow the spoor, that the sun was high in the heavens before we had fairly tracked them on the way to their noonday haunts. Fortunately, they had progressed very leisurely, which enabled us to gain on them rapidly, and in a short time we viewed them in the distance. Two out of the three were sauntering to and fro; here cropping tender shoots, there thrusting their massive tusks under the roots of trees, in order, by toppling them over, to feed more conveniently on their delicate leaves and sweet tendrils, whilst the third was loitering in the rear, carelessly scraping the sand with his flexible trunk, that he might gain access to some favourite root or succulent bulb.

Interesting as was the picture, I gave but a few moments to its contemplation, and proceeded at once to the attack. A short "stalk" sufficed to bring me within easy range of the laggard. A minute afterwards, the still morning air was disturbed by the explosion of my trusty rifle. A

shrill shriek announced that the bullet had been well aimed, and immediately afterwards the stricken animal disappeared, but not for long, as I soon again sighted him. Owing, however, to a sudden change in his position whilst I was taking aim, and to the great distance, my second bullet seemed not to harm him greatly, for though I had reason to believe he was again hit, yet he turned quietly round, peered deliberately in all directions with his small, sinister-looking eyes, and before I had re-loaded was once more lost to view.

I had not, however, proceeded more than a dozen paces, when I caught a glimpse of the rump of an elephant as it was disappearing behind a large tree, environed by tall and thick bushes. Taking it for granted that this was the wounded one, I approached the spot with the utmost circumspection; and it was well I did so, for I had no sooner fairly rounded the tree in question than I discovered the creature, then obliquely facing me, rubbing his hide against the bushes. On seeing me, he at once drew back a step or two, preparing to charge, when a well-directed bullet, lodged in his right shoulder, changed instantly his intended rush into a precipitate flight. This shot so effectually crippled him, however, that, by taking a short cut, I presently managed to intercept his retreat; a second bullet brought him to a stand-still, whilst a third, fired almost immediately afterwards, stretched him on the ground a corpse.

The whole hunt scarcely occupied ten minutes, and I naturally felt gratified at its speedy and successful termination. Still, on a nearer inspection

of the defunct elephant, I felt some disappointment at its comparative smallness; and Kamapju, my henchman and tracker, exclaimed: "This is not the elephant you first fired at, Sir! That was a larger one." "Impossible," I replied, "surely I have not made the same mistake as with the giraffes at Omonbondi?*" No, I am quite sure I have not." "You have though," rejoined the man. "Very well," I said, "let us examine the ground then," and we moved off for that purpose. And certainly in the search we made, the track of no other elephant was to be discovered. Kamapju, nevertheless, continued to look positive, though much perplexed.

Having returned to the carcase, we were shortly joined by the rest of our party, one of whom said: "Sir, in coming here, we came across an elephant walking very slowly and stiffly, as if much hurt." "Then Kamapju is, perhaps, right after all," I exclaimed, "let us go and see." We did so, and had not proceeded above a hundred yards in an opposite direction to that just examined, when we noticed another blood-spoor, quite distinct from that of the animal I had slain. Pointing with exultation to these marks, Kamapju, with a smile full of meaning and satisfaction, looked full in my face, and said as plainly as looks could speak: "Did I not tell you so, Sir! For the future trust to my eyes and ears."

To cut a long story short, I will only add that,

* On which occasion I had killed two of these animals, though only aware, in the first instance, of one having fallen.

notwithstanding the serious wound the animal had received, he cost us many hours hard walking and running, much dodging, great suffering from thirst, and exposure to many perils, before we finally succeeded in bringing him down.

At length, therefore, my presentiment was fulfilled to the letter; but the excitement and exertion of the hunt had been too much for me. The very next morning, indeed, I was delirious, and months elapsed before I could again shoulder my rifle.

As will be seen from the above, elephant-hunting on foot, and in the hot season, is most laborious and harassing work. Indeed, a long experience of this pursuit has brought me to the conviction that, under such circumstances, it is far more trying and distressing to the constitution than the most severe manual labour. It was rarely, or never, that I could track, stalk, and kill my elephant, and return to camp, in less than ten hours; more frequently I was absent from it for fourteen, or sixteen, hours. Nay, I have been as much as two days and a night engaged in a single hunt. My attendants (natives) were, at times, so completely done up, I myself being in general nearly as much so, that, on their return to the bivouac, they would fall asleep where they stood, alike indifferent to hunger, to the chilling night-air, or to the scorching rays of the sun, as the case might be. For my own part, when fairly beaten, nothing could restore me to myself but quiet, a plentiful supply of cool water, and, above all, a good wash.

It was not, however, hunger or fatigue that was

most trying; the heat was more so. The sun, "blazing in a sky of brass," heated the atmosphere to a state of suffocation, and the loose sandy soil to a blistering intensity that made water! water! the incessant cry; but water, frequently half-boiling, even when we could carry a decent supply with us, rarely allayed our burning thirst. Indeed, every fresh draught seemed merely to augment our ardent craving—often almost bordering on madness—for more of the precious liquid. A giddiness, a languor, a sense of oppression throughout the whole system, a choking sensation in the throat, a difficulty of speech, a fearful palpitation of the heart, and a nightmare feeling about the chest, were the frequent consequences of our excessive fatigues.

Words, however, can convey no adequate idea to the reader of the hardships and sufferings of the elephant-hunter on foot in the dry season of the year, and in regions where water is scarce. Indeed, experience alone can enable a man fully to understand the severity of the sport in which he takes so much delight. I remember on one occasion when, after a long *running chase*, I had come to within one hundred and fifty yards of an elephant that I had seriously wounded, being so thoroughly exhausted as to be unable to advance even a few steps farther to enable me to give it the *coup de grâce*. As a consequence, I was necessitated to rest for a few minutes, and when I had recovered sufficiently to renew the attack, I found, to my great mortification that the creature had moved off, and was lost to me for ever.

In conclusion, I would remark that, to be a successful *foot elephant-hunter*—in a decent degree at least—requires the following qualities in a man, viz. :

To be able to run for many miles on a stretch, and that, moreover, up hill if needful, without stopping to take breath.

To have sufficient self-possession to await the charge of an enraged elephant until he is within half a dozen paces of the muzzle of the hunter's rifle.

To stand thirst like a savage.

The following notes in regard to elephant-hunting may possibly be of use to those who are fond of the sport; more especially to such as, from circumstances, are compelled (as was the case with myself) to pursue the animal on foot:—

If in tracking an elephant it keep *straight down wind* for any considerable distance, and you have reason to believe it will continue to do so, your wisest plan will be to desist from farther pursuit; otherwise, the probabilities are a hundred to one that it will get the wind of you before you can come up with it. By desisting from following the creature you will gain two points, viz.—you will have the chance of falling in with it on a future day, and you will, in all probability, have been saved many hours of fatiguing walking.

Again: If, when you are tracking an elephant in a locality where those animals have been but little hunted, and consequently have no very great dread of man, the animal should happen to get the wind of you, and move off, don't despair of eventually coming up with him. Keep ascending lofty trees,

and, if he is espied, make a considerable détour, and try to get to leeward of him. When the weather is hot, the elephant does not run far before again halting; even when wounded repeatedly, he will only run a short distance at a time. I have killed elephants hours after they have been first wounded.

Use a heavy rifle with a large bullet; such as are conical and steel-pointed are preferable to all others.

Never attack an elephant in an open and exposed situation, unless you delight in deliberately risking your own life.

As almost everything depends on the first shot, get as close as the locality admits of to the animal, —twenty-five to thirty yards is my own distance, but get nearer if it be practicable.

As regards the African elephant, at least, the shoulder, or immediately behind it, in the region of the heart, is, in my opinion, the best point at which to aim. Never fire at the forehead unless the beast charges; for, though a well-directed shot there will probably have the effect of causing him to swerve from his course, it will not once in twenty times (for the reasons given in the first chapter) prove fatal.

Avoid cows with calves, also bulls accompanying them, as these are usually very savage.

When an elephant is seen cocking his ears and erecting his trunk, it is best to give him a wide berth for a while, as he is then more than usually dangerous to approach.

In following the spoor of a wounded elephant —and the remark equally applies to the lion, the

buffalo, the rhinoceros, and other dangerous game—beware how you proceed, as in a dense brake you are very apt to walk on to the top of the brute before you are aware of his presence; and should you be accompanied by a henchman, let him hold the track (of which he should keep as much to windward as possible), whereby you will be enabled to direct your whole attention to the quarry itself, which, if badly hurt, and after running a short distance, not unfrequently doubles suddenly in the manner of a hare—in other words, retraces its steps, though not perhaps exactly by the same path, and whilst you are busily engaged in examining its spoor, will rush upon you unperceived from behind with the speed of lightning. From neglecting these and similar precautions, many are the elephant hunters who have lost their lives in Southern Africa.

When stalking, and attended by inexperienced people, it is well to let the man who carries your spare weapon (he is supposed to follow on your steps) push it crosswise before him, or with the butt end towards your own person. By not being careful in this respect the most serious accidents may result, since a grass-straw, or a twig, is sufficient to catch and partially cock the gun, when an explosion is pretty sure to follow.

It may be proper here to remark, in parenthesis, that, in following the bloody track of an elephant, the hunter not unfrequently finds every trace of blood suddenly to cease, when confusion immediately ensues as to which is the wounded animal. It is difficult to explain the cause of this sudden cessation of blood. Some suppose that, as is re-

ported of the bear, the animal plugs the wound, but I must confess to being very incredulous on this point. As, however, blood in large quantities does not usually flow from the wound itself, but from either the trunk or the mouth, is it not far more reasonable to suppose that the creature has the power of retaining a large quantity of that fluid in either the one or the other of these receptacles. I have observed an elephant holding the end of its trunk up for the purpose, as it seemed to me, of preventing the blood from falling; and I have likewise found, after death, a vast quantity of blood in the animal's mouth, from which and the proboscis it then flowed out in a complete stream, whereas from the place where it had received the shot—a distance of a mile or more—only a few drops (in some instances, indeed, none whatever) could be observed. Blood will also run strongly from a wound for a certain time after the animal has received the shot, but owing to the thickness of its skin the aperture made by the bullet soon collapses, and the blood is therefore stopped.

In conclusion it may be proper for me to remark that, when stalking elephants or other large game, I have found a close-fitting skull-cap, with a grey wide-awake over it, very advantageous for the head. When game is spied, hand the hat to your attendant, and you are at once in stalking order. The skull-cap is sufficient protection against a tropical sun, and affords no prominent mark for the quarry. It serves also as a night-cap. A common shooting-cap is much too warm, whilst a wide-awake alone is too conspicuous.

CHAPTER VI.

ELEPHANT-HUNTING ON HORSEBACK—HARRIS'S EXPERIENCES—
ADVENTURES OF GORDON CUMMING—DANGERS TO WHICH THE
MOUNTED ELEPHANT-HUNTER IS EXPOSED—DOGS—HARDSHIPS
ENDURED BY THE HUNTER ON HORSEBACK.

HAVING in a preceding chapter described the manner in which the sportsman, when on foot, usually hunts the elephant, I will now say a word as to how his operations are conducted if he be mounted, which, as I have said, is a safer and far more preferable way of enjoying the chase of that animal. My personal experiences on horseback are, however, very limited, and for the little I know, and am enabled to communicate to the reader, I am for the most part indebted to what has been told me by friends who have indulged largely in that amusement.

The usual plan of proceeding is, in the first instance, to ride alongside of the elephant, which, if the sportsman be well mounted, and the country pretty open, is commonly easily accomplished, and to fire behind his shoulder. Should the animal then charge, as he is very apt to do when wounded, the huntsman must get out of the way the best he can;

when the rush is over, he reloads, though* without dismounting, and renews the attack in like manner as before. Once in a time an elephant will drop to a single ball, but more generally it requires several, or it may be very many, to lay him low. We read, indeed, of fifty, or even one hundred balls, being lodged in his body before that object has been accomplished.

The following account of a very successful hunt on horseback, by Captain Harris, will, however, give the reader a far better idea of the manner in which matters are conducted than any description of mine.

After telling us that on the day preceding his party had, "from a commanding eminence, seen the face of the highly picturesque landscape covered with these stately beasts browsing in indolent security, and bathing in the pillowed stream," he goes on to say:—"The elephants, nearly all females, were at least one hundred in number, and on being attacked they

"Trampling their path through wood and brake,
And canes, which crackling fell before their way,"

rushed frantically down a ravine with upraised ears and tossing trunks, screaming wildly, and levelling everything before them. A shot fired from the bank, while it sealed the fate of the leader, turned the rest back; and this persecution was repeated until they became fairly stupefied. On one occasion they attempted to retrieve the day by a

headlong charge from several quarters at the same moment, and we were often so surrounded by small detachments that it appeared doubtful which party would be obliged to quit the field. The sound of our voices, however, uniformly turned the scale, and declared man the victor."

In a letter—now in my possession—to a brother-sportsman in India, the gallant captain further says: "I have seen as many as three hundred elephants in a group, and a single ball in the forehead,* as they pass in review order within thirty paces, does the business. . . . It is usual to 'yah' the elephant—that is, ride with him before firing; but after a little cramming, they become bewildered and 'gobiah,' and stand about in groups and clumps within twenty-five yards. I was always fancying I was peppering away at my old favourite Mowlah"—the elephant, I may remark parenthetically, from whose back the captain, as he elsewhere informs us, had, in India, slain great numbers both of lions and tigers.

What Captain Harris tells us as to the facility with which a well-mounted man, in a country tolerably free from timber, may approach and circumvent the elephant, would seem to be fully borne out by the experiences of Gordon Cumming, who, in his interesting work, says:—

"On the 27th of August, we came upon a large extent of burning grass, which the Bakalahari kindle

* Surely the Captain means the *temple*, where a bullet usually proves fatal, and not the *forehead*, where, as regards the African elephant, as we have said, it rarely kills?

to make the young herbage spring up with greater facility ; and, during the day, discovered a herd of bull-elephants quietly browsing on the side of a hill, two hundred yards to windward of us. I started them with an unearthly yell, and, selecting the finest, fired both barrels behind his shoulder, when he instantly turned upon me, and, in his impetuous career, charged head-foremost against a large bushy tree, which he sent flying before him, high into the air, he himself coming down at the same moment violently on his knees. He thus met the raging fire, and wheeled to the right-about.

“ I followed, loading and firing as fast as possible, sometimes at the head, and at others behind the shoulder, until the elephant’s fore-quarters were severely punished ; notwithstanding which he continued to hold stoutly on, leaving the grass and branches of the forest scarlet in his wake.

“ On one occasion, he endeavoured to escape by charging desperately amid the thickest of the flames ; but this did not avail him, for I was soon alongside, and blazed away at him until I began to think he was ball-proof. Having fired thirty-five rounds, with my two-grooved rifle, I opened upon him with the Dutch six-pounder ; and when forty bullets had perforated his hide, he began for the first time to show symptoms of exhaustion. Poor old fellow ! it was now all over with him ; so I resolved to expend no more ammunition, and shortly afterwards he subsided in the dust.”

Again, “ On the 31st August we held for Towannie, a strong fountain in the gravelly bed of a

periodical river; and here I came in full view of the tallest and largest bull-elephant I had ever seen. He stood broadside to me, at upwards of one hundred yards, and halting my horse, I fired at his shoulder, and secured him with a single shot. The ball caught him high upon the shoulder-blade, rendering him instantly dead lame.

“I resolved to devote a short time to the contemplation of this noble elephant before I should lay him low. It was, indeed, a striking sight; and as I gazed upon the stupendous veteran of the forest, I thought of the red deer which I loved to follow on my own native hills, and felt that, though the Fates had driven me to a distant land, it was a good exchange which I had made, for I was now a chief over boundless forests, which yielded unspeakably more noble and exciting sport.

“Having admired the elephant for a time, I made some experiments for vulnerable points, and approaching very near, fired several bullets at different parts of his enormous skull. These did not seem to affect him in the slightest degree—he only acknowledged the shots by a ‘salaam-like’ movement of his trunk, with the point of which he gently touched the wound with a striking and peculiar action. Surprised and shocked to find that I was only tormenting and prolonging the sufferings of the noble beast, which bore his trials with such dignified composure, I resolved to finish the proceeding with all possible dispatch; accordingly, I opened fire upon him behind the shoulder, and fired six shots with the two-grooved, which must eventually have proved mortal, but as yet he

evinced no visible distress. After this I fired three shots at the same part, with the Dutch six-pounder. Large tears now trickled from his eyes, which he slowly shut and opened; his colossal frame shivered convulsively, and, falling on his side, he expired. The tusks of this elephant were beautifully arched, and the heaviest I have yet met with, averaging ninety pounds a-piece.

“In case any fair reader may misinterpret my motive for making experiments to find out the most vulnerable point,” Gordon Cumming goes on to say, “I beg them to remark that my object was *not* to torture the animal, but to put an end to its life and pain in the quickest manner possible. I had often lamented having to inflict so many wounds on these noble animals before they fell.”

So much for the facility with which the elephant may be “overhauled” and “extinguished” by the well-mounted sportsman, where the country is tolerably open. Not so, however, if the animal holds to jungly ground, more especially if strewn with broken and uprooted trees (the handiwork of the elephant), as in such situations the difficulty of killing him is very greatly increased.

The hunter himself, moreover, is then exposed to great peril, as, in the event of the beasts charging, he is often puzzled to secure his retreat. On these occasions it is useless attempting to pick one’s path, and there is consequently great risk of a man’s being swept from off the saddle by the “*Wochten-bigte*,” or wait-a-bit thorns,*

* On one of my journeys I counted no fewer than seven distinct

as the Dutch settlers very properly call these tormentors, which environ him on all sides, but through which the elephant crashes as if they were only so many grass-stalks. Mr. Oswell, indeed, met with a mishap of this kind, and before he could roll himself out of the way of the elephant, the enraged creature strode over his body, though, most fortunately, without injuring him in any manner.

The mounted hunter is exposed to other perils. It happens occasionally that his horse becomes so terrified at the sight and trumpeting of the elephant, when the animal is in the act of charging, as "to be transfixed to the spot—to appear altogether bewildered—to spread out its legs, and to tremble violently." A friend of mine was once placed in this very awkward position, when the only alternative left him was to dismount and take to his heels. His horse also got off "scot-free," for no sooner had the enraged elephant seized him with his trunk than the spell was broken; with a frantic bound the terrified animal tore itself away

species of thorny trees and bushes; and as the greater part of the thorns, or prickles, are shaped on the fish-hook principle, each hook being on the average capable of supporting a weight of seven pounds, the reader can readily conceive the consequences when a few score of them lay hold of a man at once. When travelling, they were exceedingly annoying. To say nothing of the injuries they inflicted on our persons, they tore to ribbons our clothes, our carasses, and even the pack saddle-bags, though made of strong ox-hide. Once, indeed, on returning to Barmen, after a short absence, I possessed hardly a decent article of clothing, and had not M. Hahn, the missionary, kindly taken pity on my forlorn condition, I am afraid there would soon have been but little difference between me and the savage.

from the giant grasp of the enemy, and started off at full speed, though minus the saddle, which the beast bore away in triumph.

Another danger to which the mounted hunter is exposed, is the possible unmanageableness of his horse, of which Gordon Cumming gives us a notable instance. After telling us that "he had placed two balls in the body of one of a small troop of female elephants, and that the wounded animal subsequently dropped astern of the rest, and next moment was surrounded by the dogs, which, barking angrily, engrossed her attention," he goes on to say:—

"Having placed myself between the maimed elephant and the retreating troop, I dismounted within forty yards of her, in open ground; and "Colesberg," being extremely frightened, gave me much trouble, jerking my arm when I tried to fire. At length I let fly; but, on endeavouring to regain the saddle, my horse would not allow me to mount; and when I tried to lead him and run for it, he backed towards the enemy. At this moment I heard another elephant close behind me, and looking about, beheld "the friend," the one that had previously shown regard for its wounded comrade, with uplifted trunk, charging down upon me at top speed, trumpeting shrilly, and following an old deaf pointer named Schwart, that trotted along before her. I felt certain she would have either me or the horse; nevertheless, I determined not to relinquish my steed, and held on by the bridle. My men, who, of course, kept at a safe distance,

stood aghast with their mouths open, and for a few seconds my position was certainly not an enviable one. Fortunately, however, the dogs took off the attention of the elephants, and just as they were upon me, I managed to spring into the saddle, expecting every second to feel one of their trunks laying hold of my body. Kleinboy and Isaac, pale and almost speechless with fright, now handed me my two-grooved rifle, when I returned to the charge, and sent another brace of bullets into the wounded elephant, but Colesberg was extremely unsteady, and destroyed the correctness of my aim.

“The ‘friend,’ now seeming resolved to do some mischief, charged furiously, and pursued me several hundred yards. I therefore deemed it proper to give her a gentle hint to act less officiously; and, having loaded, and approached within thirty yards, I gave it to her sharp, right and left, behind the shoulder, upon which she at once made off, with drooping trunk, and evidently with a mortal wound.

“I never recur to this, my first day's elephant shooting,” Gordon Cumming goes on to say, “without regretting my folly in contenting myself with securing only one elephant. The first was dying and could not leave the ground; the second was also mortally wounded, and I had only to follow and finish her; but I foolishly amused myself with the first, which kept walking backwards, and standing by every tree she passed. Two more shots settled her; on receiving these, she tossed her trunk up and down two or three times, and, falling on her broadside against a thorny tree, which yielded like

grass before her enormous weight, uttered a deep, hoarse cry, and expired."

Dogs, in elephant-hunting, whether on horseback or on foot (with the exception, of course, when one is "stalking") I take to be the most valuable of auxiliaries; for by diverting the attention of the creature, the danger to the sportsman is very greatly lessened—that is, provided they do their duty; for if, in the event of the beast's pursuing them, as is not unfrequently the case, they, instead of boldly facing the enemy, run for shelter to the heels of their owner, they only serve to increase his peril. A striking instance to this effect once occurred to Gordon Cumming, who, after telling us that the elephant he was in pursuit of, being sorely harassed by his dogs, had backed into cover, goes on to say:

"But I was not long in coming up with him, and running in, gave him two fine shots behind the shoulder. The dogs also gave tongue, and the consequence was a terrific charge, his tormentors (the dogs) at once making for their master, thus bringing the elephant right down upon me. I had no time to gain my saddle, but ran for my life. The dogs, fortunately, took off after Sunday (the horse), who, alarmed at the trumpeting, dashed frantically away; and although, in the midst of a most dangerous affray, I could not refrain from laughing."

It is chiefly by the aid of dogs, which distract the elephant's attention from themselves, that the Bushmen, and other natives of Southern Africa, are

enabled to slay the animal with their slender spears, which, if properly directed, penetrate its bark-like hide with the same facility as a knife a Stilton cheese. As a number of men are usually engaged in these hunts, or massacres if you will, the appearance of the poor creature, prior to its sinking to the ground from loss of blood, is not very dissimilar to that of an angry porcupine.

The elephant, it is to be remarked, has an unaccountable aversion to the canine race; though, during the chase, he not unfrequently turns on a dog, he is said rarely to injure it with his trunk, which, were he so disposed, he might at times readily do; and that he detests swine is recorded by every naturalist, from Pliny to Buffon. It is even said that if a hare, or other small animal, crosses his path, he becomes immediately alarmed.

The fatigues and hardships of elephant-hunting on foot, as shown in a former chapter, are exceedingly great, and it may be affirmed that they are no less even when one is mounted. Not so, possibly, to the amateur sportsman, who, having every comfort, and needful appliances at hand, usually, I presume, takes the matter very easily; but certainly to the man who makes the pursuit of the animal a sort of profession. I judge so, at least, from what my friend Frederick Green, who comes under the latter category, wrote me during one of his expeditions in the interior.

“ We worked hard to overtake the elephants, following on their trail from day-break to dark, until man and beast were utterly exhausted.

We were frequently in the saddle for ten or eleven hours together, under a burning tropical sun, without either food or drink. Hunger we never felt, but tongue cannot tell what an elephant-hunter suffers from thirst when in the desert."

CHAPTER VII.

ELEPHANT-SHOOTING AT NIGHT—AMBUSHING FOR GAME—THE AUTHOR'S EXPERIENCES AT THE "SCREEN"—DANGERS ATTENDANT ON NIGHT-SHOOTING—PERSONAL ADVENTURES—A CRITICAL POSITION—A SUCCESSFUL NIGHT'S SHOOTING—AN EVENTFUL EPOCH OF MY LIFE.

MANY elephants are also shot during the hours of darkness, on coming to the water to slake their thirst; which sport, I am free to confess, has always had more charms for me than even that of stalking those animals by broad daylight. Others, however, entertain a very different view of the matter. A great sportsman and a great traveller,* whose name I am not at liberty to mention, once told me (prefacing his pleasant remark with a "saving your presence") that he considered ambushing for game at night nothing better than "dirty poaching." But I must beg leave to differ from my friend, to whose superior judgment in most sporting matters I respectfully bow, for I am quite sure he has had little or no experience in this kind of shooting; and, probably, for this simple reason, that he is always richly

* On asking the same gentleman what he thought of Dr. Livingstone, he returned me the following characteristic reply, "Well! to look at the man you would think nothing of him; but he is a plucky little devil."

furnished with well-trained hunters, and thus has at command the easiest and surest means of enjoying his gun without the fatigues attendant on night-watching. During my peregrinations, however, in South Africa, I have seen something of every sort of sport—whether at night, by the side of the water, or the “salt-lick,” or by day on foot, or on horseback, and I must conscientiously declare that, in my opinion, a moonlight ambush by a pool frequented by numerous wild animals is worth all the other modes of enjoying a gun put together. In the first place, there is something mysterious and thrilling in finding oneself the secret and unsuspected spectator of the wild movements, habits, and propensities of the denizens of nature’s varied and wonderful menagerie; no high feeding, no prison-bars, no harsh and cruel keeper’s voice having yet enervated, damped, or destroyed the elasticity, buoyancy, and frolicsomeness of animal life. Then the intense excitement between each expected arrival; the distant footfall, now heard distinctly rattling over a rugged surface, now gently vibrating on the strained ear, as it treads over softer ground—it may be that of a small antelope or an elephant, of a wild bear or a rhinoceros, of agnu or a giraffe, of a jackal or a lion. And what opportunities present themselves of observing the habits and peculiarities of each species, and even of individuals, to say nothing of the terrible battles that sometimes take place between animals when thus congregated, and which can so rarely be witnessed in the day-time. I have certainly learnt

more of the untamed life of savage beasts, in a single night of such peregrinations, than during months of toilsome wanderings in the broad light of the sun.

To give the reader, however, a better opportunity of judging between my critic and myself, I subjoin an account of two or three nights spent by me "ambushing for game," nights which were certainly not devoid of interest, though not always, it is true, of the most pleasurable kind.

On one occasion I had arrived a few minutes before sunset at a large "vley," called Okavaoa, which, from the number of elephants' footsteps in the sand, was evidently much resorted to by those animals. There was, however, danger in facing them here; the locality, with the exception of several gigantic ant-hills, described at page 283, being destitute of adequate shelter, and time not admitting of the construction of a "screen" like that elsewhere described, in which I was accustomed to ensconce myself on similar occasions. Still I did not relish the idea of losing a chance, and therefore determined, at all hazards, to take up my position for the night in one of the artificial mounds in question; and this the rather as the moon was at the full, which was much in my favour.

I had not been long perched in my post of observation before a cracking and crackling amongst the trees and bushes in the neighbouring thicket announced the approach of elephants, and a few moments afterwards a dozen or more huge unwieldy figures looming in the distance told

of their arrival. They appeared to be young males. I was too far off to fire with any certainty of success, and therefore left my ambush in order to "stalk" within range; but the beasts were on their guard, and soon began to retreat—a shot at the nearest hastening their departure. The lead sped truly, but not fatally, and the troop immediately disappeared.

I had scarcely withdrawn to my ant-hill when another herd, consisting of full-grown bulls, rapidly approached the water, with a steady, heedful step. I ran to a small tree to intercept them, and, just as the foremost had fairly passed me in rather dangerous proximity, I pulled the trigger. On receiving the bullet the brute uttered a faint cry, and with ears erect, his proboscis swaying to and fro, turned and fled, passing within a few paces of the spot where I stood. One of his companions took the same course on the opposite side of the tree, thus placing me between two tremendous foes. I felt frightened, but, fortunately, they did not attempt to molest me. To my surprise and vexation, the stricken beast succeeded in making good his retreat.

I felt annoyed at my want of success, and was asking myself how it happened that my last shot had not proved fatal, when I observed two other elephants cautiously approaching the water, at a little distance from which they halted; but, after a while, the leader, more courageous than his associate, moved forward, stopping, nevertheless, now and then to listen. I was at this time well concealed by

an ant-hill, and had my rifle in rest at my side. Having arrived at within less than a dozen paces of my ambush, the animal stopped short. That pause proved his death-warrant, for, the next instant, a well-directed ball pierced his heart. Turning sharply round, and staggering forward about fifty paces, he came heavily to the ground, a lifeless mass. He proved a very fine elephant.

After a while his companion, who had retreated on hearing the report of the gun, again made his appearance, and I was flattering myself would give me a chance of a broadside; but just then, owing to a sudden shift of wind, he got scent of me, and was off in double quick time. As he was retreating, however, I pulled the trigger, and with good effect, for he was next morning found dead at only a short distance from the spot where he had received the wound.

On discharging this last shot I was in a sitting posture, and the recoil of the rifle fairly knocked me head over heels, disabling at the same time my right shoulder, which generally, on hunting excursions, was protected by a pad; but this, on the present occasion, had been accidentally left behind at the bivouac. My gun was then charged with twelve drachms of powder, but afterwards I never exceeded nine-and-a-half, and found, by experience, that quantity amply sufficient.

To say nothing of the excruciating pain I suffered in my shoulder, I was also much hurt in the chest. Nevertheless, I remained for a while longer at my post, and was well rewarded for my patience, as the

best of the night's entertainment was yet to come.

A large herd of female elephants with their calves soon afterwards came on, perfectly heedless of the firing that had just taken place, and with a rush gained the water exactly opposite to my ant-hill; and subsequently other troops, consisting both of cows and bulls, poured in from different quarters. It was quite remarkable to observe how the animals ranged themselves closely side by side, like a line of infantry. They drew up in single file, the line extending the entire width of the lake, which here was about three hundred yards broad.

The moon was then nearly at its zenith, and shed a glorious and dazzling light on the huge creatures below me. I felt no inclination to disturb so striking and interesting a picture; indeed, even had I been so disposed, it would have availed me little, as the vley, in the direction occupied by the elephants, was totally destitute of cover; so all I could do, and did, was to look on, sigh, and admire.

When they had ceased drinking, and were about moving away from the water, I hurried forward to intercept their retreat, and as the very last of the vast herd was about to disappear, I succeeded, with some difficulty, in shouldering my rifle and firing. The rush and trampling that followed the discharge of the piece was truly most appalling; the animals actually yelled with rage. They were indeed, as I shortly afterwards experienced in a "stalk" after them that nearly cost me my life, a most savage lot. My last shot, however,

though a hurried and uncertain one, took effect; a fine cow was killed by it, but her carcase was not discovered till two days afterwards. On this night, therefore, I “bagged” three elephants, besides wounding two others.

On another occasion, when the night was very dark, I had crept to within a short distance of seven bull-elephants, and was endeavouring to pick out the largest, when I was startled by a peculiar rumbling noise close behind me.* Springing to my feet, I perceived, to my surprise and alarm, a semi-circle of female elephants, with their calves, bearing down upon me. My position was critical, being between two fires, so to say, and I had no other choice than either to plunge into the pool, which could be crossed only by swimming in the face of the male elephants, or by breaking through the ranks of the females. I adopted the latter alternative, but first fired at the nearest of the seven bulls; and then, without a moment's delay, rushed on the more open rank of the female phalanx, uttering at the same time loud shouts. My cries caused a momentary panic amongst the animals, of which I took advantage, and slipped between them, discharging my second barrel into the shoulder of the nearest as I passed her. No sooner, however, had I effected my escape than the whole herd made a simultaneous rush at me, and trumpeted so shrilly as to cause every man at the camp, as I learnt afterwards,

* The low rumbling noise one often hears when elephants are approaching the water, arises—say the Bushmen—not from the foot-fall of the animals, but from their stomachs.

to start out of his sleep. Fortunately, the darkness prevented the beasts from following me, and the jungle being close by, I was soon in safety. During my precipitate flight, however, I severely lacerated my feet; for, when "stalking" the bulls, I had taken off my shoes, that I might the better steal upon them.

When, after a while, I ventured out of my place of concealment, I found everything quiet, and only one solitary elephant remaining. Having approached within a short distance, I could distinctly see him laving his sides with water by means of his trunk. I immediately suspected that he belonged to the troop of seven bulls, and was the one at which I had fired. Seating myself right across his path, I quietly watched his proceedings. After a time I saw him, as I thought, moving off in an opposite direction. But I was mistaken, for in another instant his towering form loomed above me. It was too late to get out of the way; so, quickly raising myself on one knee, I took a steady aim at his foreleg. On receiving the ball, he uttered the most plaintive cries, and rushing past me, soon disappeared in the neighbouring forest. The next afternoon he was discovered dead within rifle-shot of the water. It had been a very successful night, for a fine female elephant had fallen to my other shot.

Though many were my adventures and hair-breadth escapes at the "screen," those that befell me on the night of the 15th of July, 1853, were the most remarkable. That night, indeed, will ever be remembered by me as one of the most eventful

epochs of my life, for in the course of it I was three several times in the very jaws of death, and only escaped destruction as by a miracle.

For a short time previous I had been encamped at Kobis, a watering-station only a few days journey from Lake Ngami, where I had been very successful with the larger animals, especially rhinoceroses, of which one night, I, in the course of five hours, shot no fewer than eight,* of three different species, and, had I persevered, I might have doubled the number; but game, owing to the persecution to which it was subjected, having at length become scarce and wary, and elephants having, as I had heard, resorted to Abeghan, a station still nearer the lake just named, I proceeded to that place.

Somewhat incautiously I, on the night in question, took up my position, quite alone as usual, on a narrow neck of land dividing two small pools, the space on either side of my "screen" (which, as elsewhere said, was a small circular enclosure, six to eight feet in diameter, and the walls of it—usually consisting of loose stones—some two feet in height) being only sufficient for a large animal to stand on between myself and the water. I was provided with a blanket, and two or three spare guns.

It was one of those magnificent tropical moon-

* To the reader, the great "bag" made by me on this occasion may appear to have been useless slaughter, but I can assure him that neither on this, nor on any other occasion, when I have killed a number of wild animals, has a single pound of flesh been wasted, for what was not consumed by myself and people, was greedily devoured by the natives, who usually followed on my track in crowds.

light nights when an indescribably soft and enchanting light is shed over the slumbering landscape; the moon was so bright and clear that I could discern even a small animal at a considerable distance.

I had just completed my arrangements, when a noise, which I can liken only to the passage of a train of artillery, broke the stillness of the air; it evidently came from the direction of one of the numerous stony paths, or rather tracks, leading to the water, and I imagined it was caused by some waggon that might have crossed the Kalahari desert. Raising myself partially from my recumbent posture, I fixed my eyes steadily on the part of the bush whence the strange sounds proceeded; but for some time I was unable to make out the cause. All at once, however, the mystery was explained by the appearance of an immense elephant, immediately followed by eighteen others. Their towering forms told me at a glance they were all males. It was a splendid sight to behold so many huge creatures approaching with a free, sweeping, unsuspecting, and stately step. The somewhat elevated ground, from which they emerged, and which gradually sloped towards the water, together with the misty night-air, gave an increased appearance of bulk and mightiness to their naturally giant structures.

Crouching down as low as possible in my "screen," I waited with beating heart and ready rifle the approach of the leading male, who, unconscious of peril, was making straight for my hiding-place. His position was, however, unfavourable for a good shot; and I therefore reserved my fire, in

the hope it might so far change as to expose the outer part of his shoulder—the preferable point, as I have said, to aim at when shooting at night. But, unfortunately, this chance was not afforded until he was close upon me, when the nature of the ground caused him to incline somewhat to one side. The consequence was, that, while in the act of raising the muzzle of my rifle over the “screen,” my person caught his eye, and before I could place the piece to my shoulder, he swung himself round, and, with trunk elevated and ears cocked, desperately charged me. It was now too late to think of flight, much less of slaying the savage beast. My own life was in imminent jeopardy, and seeing that, if I remained partially erect, he would inevitably seize me with his proboscis, I threw myself on my back with some violence, in which position, and whilst his enormous bulk towered above my head, I, without shouldering my rifle, fired upwards at random towards his chest, uttering, at the same time, the most piercing shouts and cries. This change of position in all probability saved my life; for, at the same instant, the trunk of the enraged animal descended precisely on the spot where I had been previously crouched, sweeping away the stones (many of a large size) that formed the fore part of my “screen,” like so many pebbles. In another moment his broad fore-feet passed directly over my face.

I now expected nothing short of being crushed to death. But imagine my relief when, instead of renewing the charge, he swerved to the left, and

moved off with considerable rapidity—most happily without my having received other injuries than a few bruises, occasioned by the falling of the stones. Under Providence, I attribute my extraordinary escape to the confusion of the animal, caused by the wound I had inflicted on him, and to the cries elicited from me when in my utmost peril.

Immediately after the elephant had left me, I was on my legs: and, snatching up a spare rifle lying at hand, I pointed it at him as he was retreating, and pulled the trigger; but, to my intense mortification, the piece missed fire. It was matter of thankfulness to me, however, that a similar mishap had not occurred when the animal charged; for had not my gun then exploded, nothing, as I conceive, could have saved me from destruction.

During this scene, the rest of the elephants retreated into the bush; but by the time I had repaired my hiding-place they re-appeared, with stealthy and cautious steps, on the opposite side of the pool, though so distant that I could not fire with any prospect of success. As they did not approach nearer, I attempted to “stalk” them, but they would not allow me to come to close quarters, and, after awhile, moved off together.

Whilst pondering over my late wonderful escape, I observed, at a little distance, a huge white rhinoceros protruding its ponderous and mis-shapen head through the bushes, and presently afterwards it approached to within a dozen paces of my ambuscade. Its broadside was then fully exposed to view, and, notwithstanding that I still felt a little nervous from

my recent conflict with the elephant, I lost no time in firing. The beast did not at once fall to the ground, but, from appearances, I had every reason to believe its days were numbered.

Scarcely had I reloaded, when a black rhinoceros of the species *Keitloa* (a female, as it proved), stood drinking at the water; but her position, as with the elephant in the first instance, was unfavourable for a good shot. As, however, she was very near me, I thought I was pretty sure of breaking her leg, and thereby disabling her; and in this I succeeded. My fire seemed to madden her; she rushed wildly forward on three legs, when I gave her a second shot, though apparently with little or no effect. I felt sorry at not being able to end her sufferings at once; but as I was too well acquainted with the habits of the rhinoceros to venture on pursuing her under the circumstances, I determined to wait patiently for day-light, and then destroy her with the aid of my dogs. But it was not so to be.

As no more elephants, or other large game, appeared, I thought, after a time, it might be as well to go in search of the white rhinoceros previously wounded; and I was not long in finding its carcase, for my ball, as I supposed, had caused its almost immediate death.

In heading back to my "screen," I accidentally took a turn in the direction pursued by the black rhinoceros, and by ill-luck, as the event proved, at once encountered her. She was still on her legs, but her position was unfavourable. Hop-

ing, however, to make her change it for the better, and thus enable me to destroy her at once, I took up a stone and hurled it at her with all my force; when, snorting horribly, erecting her tail, keeping her head close to the ground, and raising clouds of dust with her feet, she rushed at me with fearful fury. I had only just time to level my rifle and fire before she was upon me; and the next instant, whilst instinctively turning round for the purpose of retreating, she laid me prostrate. The shock was so violent as to send my rifle, powder-flask, and ball-pouch, as also my cap, spinning into the air; the gun, indeed, as afterwards ascertained, to a distance of fully ten feet. On the beast charging, it crossed my mind that, unless I was gored at once by her horn, her impetus would be such (after knocking me down, which I took it for granted she would do) as to carry her beyond me, and I might thus be afforded a chance of escape. So, indeed, it happened; for having tumbled me over (in doing which her head and the fore part of her body, owing to the violence of her charge, were half buried in the sand), and trampled on me with great violence, her fore-quarter passed over my body. Struggling for life, I seized my opportunity, and, as she was recovering herself for a renewal of the charge, I scrambled out from between her hind legs.

But the enraged beast had not yet done with me. Scarcely had I regained my feet, before she struck me down a second time, and with her horn ripped up my right thigh (though not very deeply)

from near the knee to the hip, with her fore-feet; moreover, she hit me a terrific blow on the left shoulder, near the back of the neck. My ribs bent under the enormous weight and pressure, and for a moment I must, as I believe, have lost consciousness. I have, at least, very indistinct notions of what afterwards took place. All I remember is that, when I raised my head, I heard a furious snorting and plunging amongst the neighbouring bushes.

I now arose, though with great difficulty, and made my way, in the best manner I was able, towards a large tree near at hand, for shelter; but this precaution was needless; the beast, for the time at least, showing no inclination further to molest me. Either in the *mêlée*, or owing to the confusion caused by her wounds, she had lost sight of me, or she felt satisfied with the revenge she had taken. Be that as it may, I escaped with life, though sadly wounded and severely bruised, in which disabled state I had great difficulty in getting back to my "screen."

During the greater part of the recent conflict, I had preserved my presence of mind; but after the danger was over, and when I had leisure to collect my scattered and confused senses, I was seized with a nervous affection, causing a violent trembling. I have since killed many rhinoceroses, but several weeks elapsed before I could again attack those animals with any coolness.

About sunrise, Kamoja, my half-caste boy, whom I had left on the preceding evening about half a mile away, came to the "screen" to convey my

guns and other things to our encampment. In a few words I related to him what had befallen me. He listened with seeming incredulity; but the sight of my gashed thigh soon convinced him that I was not in joke.

I afterwards directed him to take one of the guns and proceed in search of the wounded rhinoceros, cautioning him to be careful in approaching the beast, which I had reason to believe was not yet dead. He had only been absent a few minutes, when I heard a cry of distress. Striking my hand against my forehead, I exclaimed, "Good God! the brute has attacked the lad also."

Seizing hold of my rifle, I scrambled through the bushes as fast as my crippled condition would permit; and, when I had proceeded two or three hundred yards, a scene suddenly presented itself that I shall vividly remember to the last days of my existence. Amongst some bushes, and within a couple of yards of each other, stood the rhinoceros and the young savage; the former supporting herself on three legs, covered with blood and froth, and snorting in the most furious manner; the latter petrified with fear—spell-bound, as it were—and riveted to the spot. Creeping, therefore, to the side of the rhinoceros opposite to that on which the boy was standing, so as to draw her attention from him, I levelled and fired, on which the beast charged wildly to and fro, without any distinct object, and whilst she was thus occupied, I poured into her body shot after shot, but thought she would never fall.

At length, however, she sank slowly to the ground; and imagining that she was in her death-agonies, and all danger over, I walked unhesitatingly close up to her, and was on the point of placing the muzzle of my gun to her ear, to give her the *coup de grâce*, when, to my horror, she once more rose on her legs.' Taking a hurried aim, I pulled the trigger, and instantly retreated, with the beast in full pursuit. The race, however, was a short one; for, just as I threw myself into a bush for safety, she fell dead at my feet, so near me, indeed, that I could have touched her with the muzzle of my rifle. Another moment, and I should probably have been impaled on her murderous horn, which, though short, was sharp as a razor.

When reflecting on the wonderful and providential escapes I had recently experienced, my heart was lifted in humble gratitude to the Almighty, who had thus extended over me His protecting hand.

The second day after the scenes described, my bruises began to show themselves; and on the third day they were fully developed, giving nearly the whole of my body a black and yellow hue. So far as I was aware, none of my bones were broken; but burning and agonising pains in the region of the chest were clearly symptomatic of severe internal injury. Indeed, at first, serious apprehensions were entertained for my life. After great suffering, however, I had so far recovered as, with the aid of my men, to mount my ox, and resume my travels.

When shooting elephants, or other large game, in the night season, it may be proper to add, the sportsman will do well to affix a piece of white paper, or fine rag, to the muzzle of his gun, and secure it with a thin white thread behind the "sight." He should then raise the paper, or the rag, as the case may be, slightly in front; that is, nearest to the muzzle, in which position it is to be kept by introducing a small twig, or thick straw, beneath and on either side of the "sight." If the paper lies flat on the barrel, nothing is gained. When levelling the gun, let the muzzle be sufficiently raised to enable you to catch a full view of the paper, and then gradually lower it until the paper is lost to view; having thus got the elevation of the object, pull the trigger. It requires, however, some practice before a person can become a tolerable night-shot.

The dangers attendant on night-shooting are, as we have seen, not slight; but, independent of the chance of being impaled on the tusk of the elephant or the horn of the rhinoceros, the risk one incurs from the lion is, as I have elsewhere said, not inconsiderable. To say nothing of the two occasions when, as has been mentioned, those beasts stealthily approached to within a few paces of my place of concealment, with the intention, as I firmly believe, of making a meal of me, numbers of men, when lying in wait for large game during the hours of darkness, are carried off by those animals. An instance of the kind came under the immediate notice of my friend Green, who, in a letter to me, says:—

“In the Bamanguato country it occurred on a certain night that three or four natives proceeded to the water with the object of lying in wait for deer. One individual of the party, known as a successful hunter, took up his position at some little distance from his companions ; but feeling cold, he left his place of concealment to join his friends, who had a small fire in their ‘screen.’ On returning to his own, he found it occupied by a lion, who instantly pounced upon and devoured him.”

CHAPTER VIII.

HAMSTRINGING OF ELEPHANTS BY THE CAFFRES—BRUCE'S ACCOUNT—THE PITFALL—USE OF POISONED JAVELINS—THE RHINOCEROS; THE ELEPHANT'S ENEMY—COMBATS BETWEEN MALE ELEPHANTS—STRUCK BY LIGHTNING—THE CHASSE IN ABYSSINIA—THE AGGAJEERS—THEIR MANNER OF KILLING THE ELEPHANT—FREEMASONRY AMONG HUNTERS.

ACCORDING to Montgomery Martin, “the Caffres are accustomed to steal behind and hamstring the elephant, after which it is easy for them to dispatch the animal with their assegais;” and though this statement may be perfectly accurate, yet I do not find it corroborated by any other South African traveller, or sportsman.

In parts of Abyssinia, however, it is a common practice with certain of the natives (the same spoken of in Chapter IX., page 148), to attack the elephant with the sword alone, and it is thus described by the celebrated Bruce:—

“An hour before daylight, and after a hearty breakfast,” says this intrepid and truthful traveller, “we mounted on horseback, to the number of about thirty; but there was another body, both of horse and foot, who made hunting the elephant their particular business. These men dwell constantly in

the woods, and know very little of the use of bread, living entirely on the flesh of the beasts they kill, chiefly that of the elephant and rhinoceros. They are exceedingly thin, light, and agile, both on horseback and on foot; are very swarthy, though few of them are black; none of them woolly-headed, and all of them have European features. They are called Aggajeers, a name of their profession, not of their nation, which comes from the word *agar*, and signifies to lough or hamstring with a sharp weapon—more properly it means the cutting of the tendon of the heel, and is a peculiarity of the manner in which they kill the elephant, which is shortly as follows:—

“Two men, absolutely naked, without any rag or covering at all about them, get on horseback—a precaution adopted for fear of being laid hold of by the trees or bushes, in making their escape from a very watchful enemy. One of these riders sits upon the back of the horse, sometimes with a saddle and sometimes without one, with only a switch or short stick in one hand, carefully managing the bridle with the other. Behind him sits his companion, who has no other arms but a broadsword, such as is used by Slavonians, and is brought from Trieste. His left hand is employed in grasping the sword by the handle. About fourteen inches of the blade is covered with whipeord. This part he takes in his right hand, without any danger of being hurt by it; and, though the edge of the lower part of the sword is sharp as a razor, he carries it without a scabbard.

“As soon as the elephant is found feeding, the horseman rides before him as near his face as possible; or, if he flies, crosses him in all directions, crying out, ‘I am such a man and such a man; this is my horse, that has such a name; I killed your father in such a place, and your grandfather in such another; and I am now come to kill you; you are but an ass in comparison with them.’ This nonsense he verily believes the elephant understands. Furious and angry at hearing the noise immediately before him, he seeks to seize him with his trunk or proboscis; and, intent upon this, follows the horse everywhere, turning round with him, and neglecting to make his escape by running straight forward, in which consists his only chance of safety. After having made him turn once or twice in pursuit of the horse, the horseman rides close up alongside of him, and drops his companion just behind on the off side; and while he engages the elephant’s attention upon the horse, the footman behind gives him a drawn stroke just above the heel, or what in man is called the tendon Achilles. This is the critical moment; the horseman immediately wheels round, takes his companion up behind him, and rides off full speed after the rest of the herd, if they have started more than one. Sometimes an expert Aggajeer will kill three out of one herd. If the sword is good, and the man not afraid, the tendon is commonly entirely separated; and if it is not cut through, it is generally so far divided that the animal, with the stress he puts upon it, breaks the remaining part asunder. In

either case, he remains incapable of advancing a step till the horseman's return, or until his companions, coming up, pierce the brute through with javelins and lances; he then falls to the ground, and expires from loss of blood.

“The Aggajeer nearest me presently lanced his elephant, and left him standing. Ayto Engedan, Ayto Confu, Guebra Marram, and several others, fixed their spears in the other before the Aggajeer had cut his tendons. My Aggajeer, however, having wounded the first elephant, failed in the pursuit of the second; and being close upon him at the entrance of the wood, he received a violent blow from the branch of a tree which the elephant had bent with his weight, and, after passing, allowed it to replace itself, when it knocked down both the riders and very much hurt the horse. This, indeed, is the great danger in elephant-hunting; for some of the trees that are dry and short break by the violent pressure of so immense a body moving with such rapidity, and fall upon the pursuer, or across the road. But the greatest number of these trees being of a succulent quality, they bend without breaking, and return quickly to their former position, when they strike both horse and rider so violently that they often beat them to pieces.”

The above account of Bruce's, as to the manner in which the elephant is killed in Abyssinia, has recently been most fully corroborated by Sir Samuel Baker, who, as it has been said, not only made the acquaintance of certain of the “Aggajeers,” the famous Nimrods spoken of by Bruce, but hunted for a con-

siderable time in their company, and was a witness to their wonderful performances. And, though in the main the same tale is told by both the distinguished travellers, still, as the subject is interesting, and Sir Samuel goes into more details, I will take leave to quote what, in substance, he says of the remarkable men in question.

“They, the Aggajeers, belong to a particular tribe of Arabs — the Hamrans — inhabiting the country south of Cassalá, between that town and the Base country, who are only to be distinguished from the neighbouring tribes by an extra length of hair, worn parted down the centre, and arranged in long curls, and who, when about to attack the elephant, are merely armed with the sword, which differs not in form from that usually worn, but is bound with cord very closely from the guard for about nine inches (Bruce says fourteen) along the blade, to enable him to grasp it with the right hand, whilst the hilt is held by the left, thus converted into a two-handed sword. The scabbard (Bruce speaks of the weapon being without that appendage) is strengthened by an extra covering formed of the elephant’s ear.

“Their way of hunting the elephant differs. Those hunters who cannot afford to purchase horses hunt on foot, in parties not exceeding two persons. Their method is to follow the tracks of the elephant, so as to arrive at their game between the hours of 10 a.m. and noon, at which time the animal is either asleep or extremely listless, and easy to approach. Should they discover it asleep,

one of the hunters creeps stealthily towards it, and with one blow severs the trunk whilst stretched upon the ground; in which case the elephant starts to his feet, whilst the hunters escape in the confusion of the moment. The severing of the trunk causes hemorrhage sufficient to ensure the death of the elephant within about an hour. On the other hand, should the elephant be awake on their arrival, it is impossible for them to approach the trunk; in such case they creep up from behind, and give a tremendous cut at the back sinew of the hind leg, about a foot above the heel; such a blow disables the elephant at once, and renders comparatively easy a second cut at the remaining leg. The arteries being divided, the animal quickly bleeds to death. These are the methods adopted by poor hunters until, by the sale of ivory, they can purchase horses for the higher branch of the art.

“ When provided with horses, the party of hunters should not exceed four. They start before day-break, and ride slowly throughout the country in search of elephants, generally keeping along the course of a river, until they come upon the tracks which lead them to the spot where a herd, or a single elephant, may have drunk during the night. When once upon the tracks, they follow fast the retreating game. The elephants may be twenty miles distant, but that matters little to the Aggajeers. At length they discover them, and the hunt begins. The first step is to single out the bull with the largest tusks. This is the commencement of the fight. After a short hunt, the elephant turns upon his pursuers,

who scatter and fly from the headlong charge until he gives up the pursuit ; but he again turns to bay when further pressed by the hunters. It is the duty of one man in particular to ride up close to the head of the elephant, and thus to centre its attention upon himself. This ensures a desperate charge. The greatest coolness and dexterity are then required by the hunter, who, now the *hunted*, must so adapt the speed of his horse to the pace of the elephant that the enraged beast gains in the race until it almost reaches the tail of the horse. In this manner the race continues. In the meantime, two hunters gallop up behind the elephant, unseen by the animal, whose attention is completely directed to the horse almost within his grasp. With extreme agility, when close to the heels of the elephant, one of the hunters, while at full speed, springs to the ground with his drawn sword, while his companion seizes the bridle, and with one dexterous two-handed blow severs the back sinew. He immediately jumps out of the way, and remounts his horse ; if the blow be successful, the elephant becomes disabled by the first pressure of its foot on the ground ; the enormous weight of the animal dislocates the joint, and it is rendered helpless. The hunter who has hitherto led the elephant immediately turns, and riding to within a few feet of the trunk, he induces the animal to make another charge. This, clumsily made, affords an easy opportunity for the Aggajeers behind to slash the sinew of the remaining leg, and the immense brute is thus reduced to a stand-still ; it dies of

loss of blood in a short time, *thus positively killed by one man with two strokes of the sword.*"

"That the above extraordinary style of hunting should be attended with superlative danger, and that the hunters should frequently fall victims to their intrepidity must," as Sir Samuel Baker truly remarks, "be evident to every one."

Still further, however, to shew the courage and daring of the remarkable individuals in question, it may be proper to mention that on a certain occasion a number of men were sent by Sir Samuel into the forest to bring home the flesh and spoils of several elephants shot on the preceding day, and that on the return of the party, one of the three Aggajeers, named Ioli, who had accompanied it, was borne on a litter to the encampment with a broken thigh. The cause of the accident was thus explained by Abou Do, one of the unfortunate man's companions.

"While the party of camel-men and others were engaged in cutting up the dead elephants, the three Aggajeers had found the track of a bull that had escaped wounded. In that country, where there was no drop of water upon the east bank of the Settite for a distance of sixty or seventy miles to the river Gask, an elephant, if wounded, was afraid to trust itself in the interior. One of our escaped elephants had, therefore, returned to the thick jungle, and was tracked by the Aggajeers to a position within two or three hundred yards of the dead elephants. As there were no guns, two of the Aggajeers, utterly reckless of consequences,

resolved to ride through the narrow passage formed by the large game, and to take their chance with the elephant, sword in hand. Ioli, as usual, was the first to lead, and upon his little grey mare he advanced with the greatest difficulty through the entangled thorns, broken by the passage of heavy game; to the right and left of the passage it was impossible to move. Abou Do had wisely dismounted, but Suleiman had followed Ioli. Upon arriving within a few yards of the elephant, which was invisible in the thick thorns, Abou Do crept forward on foot, and discovered it standing, with ears cocked, evidently waiting for the attack. As Ioli followed on his light grey mare, the elephant immediately perceived the white colour, and at once charged forward. Escape was next to impossible. Ioli turned his mare sharp round, and she bounded off; but caught in the thorns, the mare fell, throwing her rider in the path of the elephant, which was, within a few feet behind, in full chase. The mare recovered herself in an instant, and rushed away; the elephant, attracted by the white colour of the animal, neglected the man, upon whom he trod in the pursuit, thus breaking his thigh. Abou Do, who had been between the elephant and Ioli, had wisely jumped into the thick thorns, and, as the elephant passed him, he again sprang out behind, and followed with his drawn sword, but too late to save Ioli, as it was the affair of an instant. Jumping over Ioli's body, he was just in time to deliver a tremendous cut at the hind leg of the elephant, which must otherwise have killed both horses,

and most probably Suleiman also, as the three were caught in a *cul-de-sac*, in a passage that had no outlet, and were at the animal's mercy.

“ Abou Do seldom failed; it was a difficult feat to strike correctly in the narrow jungle passage, with the elephant in full speed, but the blow was fairly given, and the back sinew was divided. Not content with the success of the cut, he immediately repeated the stroke upon the other leg, as he feared that the elephant, although disabled from rapid motion, might turn and trample Ioli. The extraordinary dexterity and courage required to effect this feat can hardly be appreciated by those who have never hunted a wild elephant; but the extreme agility, pluck, and audacity of these Hamran sword-hunters surpass all feats that I have ever witnessed.”

In concluding these few particulars respecting the Aggajeers, I would remark that Sir Samuel Baker, in his first interview with these men, and prior to seeing for himself their brave deeds in the field, pays the following just and honorable tribute to their merits.

“ As I listened to these fine fellows, who in a modest and unassuming manner recounted their adventures as a matter of course, I felt exceedingly small. My whole life, from early manhood, had been passed in wild sports, and I had imagined that I understood as much as most people on the subject; but here were men who, without the aid of the best rifles and deadly projectiles, went straight at their game, and faced the lion in his den with shield and sabre. There is a freemasonry among

hunters, and my heart was drawn towards these Aggajeers; we fraternized on the spot, and I looked forward with intense pleasure to the day when we might become allies in action."

After Sir Samuel had associated with them, and had been an eye-witness to their wonderful performances, he adds:—

"I have been rewarded by this alliance in being now able to speak of the deeds of others that far excel my own, and of bearing testimony to the wonderful courage and dexterity of these Nimrods, instead of continually relating anecdotes of dangers in the first person, which cannot be more disagreeable to the reader than to the narrator."

To proceed after this long digression. Besides being hunted on horseback and on foot in the daytime, and shot during the hours of darkness, when repairing to the water to quench its thirst, the poor elephant is destroyed by the natives of Southern Africa by a variety of other means.

Occasionally, as said, it is taken in the "pitfall," in such as are dug for the rhinoceros, the giraffe, or other of the larger denizens of the African wilds; but, with the exception of calves, this is a somewhat rare occurrence, the great sagacity of the animal enabling it, in most instances, to avoid the toils.

Another plan is for the hunter to conceal himself amongst the branches of some umbrageous tree, under which the elephant is accustomed to take shelter during the noon-tide heats, and when the unfortunate creature makes its appearance, to let

fall on its body a heavy-weighted and poisoned assegai, which soon does its deadly work.

From the enormous bulk and power of the elephant, and the consequent fear that its presence creates amongst lesser animals, it cannot be said to have many enemies besides man. Even the lion himself slinks away from its presence, though its young, when straying somewhat away from the dam, occasionally fall a prey, as elsewhere said, to the ferocious beast.

With the rhinoceros it has also occasional conflicts, which no doubt at times end fatally. When at Omenbondé, we were told by the natives that a short time before our arrival a furious fight had taken place between the two animals. The rhinoceros made a desperate charge at the elephant, striking its long sharp horn into the belly of the latter with such force as to be unable to extricate the weapon, and the elephant, in its fall, crushed its antagonist to death.

Major Lally stated to the author of "Oriental Sports," moreover, that he himself once witnessed from a distant hill a most furious combat between a large male elephant and a rhinoceros, in which the former was worsted and fled.

At times, also, the elephant succumbs to the elements. Whilst a party of Bushmen were following up the spoor of one of these animals that I had wounded on the preceding day, they came upon the carcase of a female who had been struck dead by lightning. This was the first instance I had known of these huge creatures being destroyed by the

electric fluid, though it often occasions the death of the smaller kinds of game. The natives, however, assured me that the occurrence was not at all an unfrequent one during the rainy season. They had once stumbled, they told me, upon the remains of a full-grown male, whose head had been completely severed from the body by a thunder-stroke, and all his bones completely smashed.

CHAPTER IX.

CASUALTIES TO ELEPHANT-HUNTERS—DEATH OF WAHLBERG—
 CAREL KRIEGER'S FATAL ADVENTURE—REVENGE OF A WOUNDED
 ELEPHANT—REMARKABLE ESCAPE OF LIEUTENANT MOODIE—
 LIFE OF THE ELEPHANT-HUNTER—DANGERS AND HARDSHIPS
 TO WHICH HE IS EXPOSED—MAD WAGER AND ITS FATAL RE-
 SULT—ELEPHANT-HUNTING, BLOODY AND UNDESIRABLE WORK.

CASUALTIES amongst elephant-hunters are of frequent occurrence. Not a few of those, indeed, who systematically follow the pursuit, whether for sport or commercial purposes, come to grief sooner or later. One of the best-known victims of the infuriated animal was my friend and countryman, the late Professor Wahlberg, of whose tragical end it was my painful duty to send the following account to the Cape of Good Hope Press:—

Professor Wahlberg met his end whilst hunting to the north-east of Lake Ngami. A Swede by birth, he arrived for the first time in this colony (Table Bay) in September, 1838. He remained at the Cape until the following April, 1839, when he embarked for Port Natal. Hence he penetrated into the interior, considerably beyond the Zulu country, extending his expeditions even as far as the banks

of the far-famed Limpopo. At one time he was accompanied by the French naturalist, Delegorgue, known to the world by his works on south-eastern Africa.

M. Wahlberg's principal object in visiting this part to the globe, seems to have been for purposes of hunting, and the study of natural history, which science he pursued with so much zeal, and to such great advantage, as to be able to ship, from time to time, to his native country, many tons of curiosities, consisting chiefly of first-rate and beautifully preserved specimens of almost all the quadrupeds—from the bulky elephant down to the insignificant mouse—indigenous to that part of Africa, besides a great number and variety of birds and insects. The collections, which were finally secured by the *Kongliga Vetenskaps Akademien* (Royal Academy of Science) of Stockholm, were considered of so much value and importance that, when difficulties arose as to procuring the necessary funds for the purchase, the King of Sweden was heard to exclaim—“*The means must be found;*” and through the generous interference of His Majesty, the money was forthcoming. In a pecuniary point of view, however, M. Wahlberg, derived no benefit; for, if I am rightly informed, the amount obtained for the collections—though by no means inconsiderable—was barely sufficient to cover the expenses incurred.

The Professor remained hunting and exploring in South Africa until the month of May, 1845, when the duties of his profession compelled him

to hasten back to Sweden. But, as with almost every other traveller who has once tasted of (was poisoned by, would perhaps be a more appropriate expression) the sweets of roaming in unrestrained freedom over the boundless plains and deserts of Africa, he longed to revisit a land that stands unrivalled in the beauties of nature, and in the exuberance of its animal and vegetable productions. A further inducement once more to behold and explore this mysterious continent was afforded him by the discovery of that "world-renowned" Lake, the Ngami. Accordingly, he applied for fresh leave of absence; and again we find him in Table Bay towards the end of the year 1853, bent on gaining fresh laurels, and adding to his already extensive store of knowledge.

The route to the Lake from Walwich Bay having then just been discovered, M. Wahlberg, it seems, fixed upon this as the most eligible for penetrating to the Lake regions, where he was in hopes of finding a new and extensive field for his investigations. Without delay he shipped himself and goods for the port in question, which he reached in safety. About this period I was on my return from the Ngami, and being informed of the intentions of the distinguished naturalist, I looked forward with very great pleasure to the prospect of making his acquaintance, but circumstances prevented the fulfilment of my agreeable anticipations.

Whilst the Professor was making his final arrangements, my friend, Mr. Frederick Green, well

known as an indefatigable sportsman and traveller, having decided upon making a hunting expedition to the Lake country, also arrived at Walwich Bay. The pursuits of the two adventurers being in many respects similar, an intimacy soon sprang up between them, and it was agreed upon that they should make the journey together. However, Mr. Green, owing to sickness and other causes, was long detained on the coast, so long, indeed, that M. Wahlberg found it necessary to proceed without his new acquaintance; but, travelling very leisurely, my friend was eventually able to overtake him a few days' journey on this side of the Lake. Here they again separated. M. Wahlberg, accompanied only by a few Damaras, started on a foot-expedition up the Tionghe River, chiefly with a view of hunting elephants. In this he was very successful; and after an absence of about five months, and after having penetrated to Libèbe (also called Debabé), a place several hundred miles north of the Lake, and never before visited by Europeans, he returned in safety to his encampment on the Ngami, laden with the spoils of the chase. In the meantime, Mr. Green, and a Mr. Wilson whom he met at the Lake, had also made an excursion up the river in question, chiefly performed by water. But I will now let my friend tell the story in his own words. In a letter (a copy of which has been placed at my disposal) addressed to the Swedish Consul-General, Chevalier Letterstedt, Mr. Green thus writes:—

“ Upon my return from Debabé (my own jour-

ney, during which I had met M. Wahlberg on his way back to the Lake), having been accomplished chiefly by water, it was my intention to have retraced my steps to Walwich Bay, but circumstances prevented the intended movement; and as my friend decided upon spending the summer months in the desert to the north-east of the Ngami, for the purpose of hunting elephants, and completing his collection of curiosities, and as he expressed his anxious wish that I should accompany him, I was prevailed upon to do so. Accordingly, we took our departure from the Lake on the 22nd of November, but did not reach the land of elephants until the beginning of February. After having hunted the animals in question for some time, and with various success, M. Wahlberg one day (the 28th of February) left the waggons, accompanied by two Damaras, one of whom (Kooleman) was his constant attendant on his shooting excursions, and much attached to his master, who, on his part, I know, looked upon him as a good and faithful servant, as well as a brave hunter. He also took with him a Makalaka and a Bushman. The same morning I also set off for the purpose of seeking elephants, though in a direction different from that which my friend had selected; for owing to my being subject to frequent attacks of fever, with which I was seized previous to our departure from the Lake, and the long duration of Mr. Wahlberg's expeditions generally, I could not accompany him, but was obliged to limit my distance so as to enable me to return to my waggon the second or third

day. On the present occasion M. Wahlberg had intimated that it was his intention not to be absent long; and although his surmise proved incorrect, yet, owing to his hunting excursions being so very uncertain with regard to time, we did not entertain that anxiety for his return which we should have felt had he been more punctual, knowing that, so long as he was amongst the game he was in search of, a month might elapse ere he made his appearance. However, after waiting ten days in vain for him, I became uneasy, more especially as I could gain no information from the natives respecting his whereabouts. Owing to my people, as well as to myself, as before stated, suffering severely from fever, I had determined on removing the waggons to a more healthy situation, when, upon the eve prior to my intended movement, the startling intelligence that my unfortunate companion had been killed by an elephant was conveyed to me by his servants. The feelings of pain and sorrow which so shocking an event occasioned to all who were acquainted with him, cannot be easily imagined, and will, I am sure, never be effaced from my memory.

“ The following are the particulars of M. Wahlberg’s death, as related to me by the Damaras who accompanied him :—‘ We proceeded,’ said the men, ‘ from the waggons in a westerly direction, and on the day of our departure we struck upon the spoor of a young bull-elephant, which we followed until the third day, when we came up to him in company with three others, one of which master

shot; another was killed by Kooleman. Thence we continued on the spoor of the two remaining, one of which we fell in with and shot on the following day. The fourth morning we recovered the track of the young bull which we had taken up on the day of leaving the waggons. Not being able to come up with him before nightfall, we slept (as we had done on previous occasions) on the spoor. The next day, feeling hungry, and having managed to shoot a zebra, we camped for the night. The ensuing day, still continuing on the track, we reached a vley, where we bivouacked. Next morning we passed through a village situated on the banks of a large river called Tamalakan, or Tamamale (see Dr. Livingstone's Map). The inhabitants were Bakoba, from whom we obtained some pumpkins, our master's provisions being exhausted. In the evening of this day we at last overtook the young elephant, which we found standing together with another elephant (an old bull), in an open flat near a small vley. We approached them with difficulty. Our master and Kooleman fired three shots at the larger elephant, which then fled towards the river, where we soon found and overtook him. M. Wahlberg now sent us forward to turn the elephant towards a point where he took up a position in order to intercept him. We succeeded, and having fired a shot at him, he ran furiously in the direction of our master, but out of range. M. Wahlberg, accompanied by a Bushman from the west we had passed through, then followed his spoor. Shortly afterwards, hearing the elephant trumpeting, we

hastened to join our master, but had not proceeded far when we met the Bushman running in breathless haste towards us. We inquired for M. Wahlberg and were told that the elephant had caught him! Hurrying to the spot indicated, we found only the mangled remains of our poor master, which the enraged beast had just quitted; there was no sign of life. Indeed, the body was so fearfully mutilated as to be scarcely recognizable; we carefully collected and buried the remains.'

"I deeply regret that, owing to the weak state of my health," Mr. Green goes on to say, "I was unable to proceed to the fatal spot; but even could I have reached the place, at least twelve days must have elapsed from the time of the catastrophe, the distance from our waggons being very considerable.

"M. Wahlberg was a most determined and a most successful elephant-hunter, but he was far too adventurous, and his bravery throughout this dangerous hunting placed him in extreme peril with elephants upon numerous occasions, and, alas! terminated at last so fatally.

"I had frequently endeavoured to impress upon M. Wahlberg the danger of 'foot-hunting,' but he always insisted upon its being the most safe; and, though I myself had never thought of pursuing such a course upon any former trip (nor had I ever met a European during my journeys in this portion of Africa who hunted elephants in any other way than by means of thorough good horses), yet from the success that attended my friend, I latterly also became a foot-hunter. It was M. Wahlberg's opinion that

he could always turn an elephant in his charge by giving him a shot in the head, but, alas! it seems that on this occasion my unfortunate companion had not even time to raise his gun to his shoulder ere he was hurled to the ground and pinioned between the tusks of the enraged brute. M. Wahlberg's rifle was discovered broken short at the stock by the elephant, as if the animal was possessed of the intuitive knowledge that it was the weapon employed for its destruction."

Poor M. Wahlberg seems to have had a presentiment of his approaching fate. In another letter from his head-man, Mr. Charles Cathcart Castry, also addressed to Mr. Letterstedt, it is thus stated:—"Some time previous to this awful event, M. Wahlberg came one day to me (Castry) and said, 'If anything serious should befall me, I wish you to take my effects, collections, &c., to Mr. Letterstedt, my agent at the Cape.' On asking him why he thought he would not return home alive, he replied: 'Why, I have had several narrow escapes from elephants.' Upon this I remonstrated with him on his apparent recklessness, and begged of him to be more cautious and careful in his future dealings with elephants. To this he seemed to turn a deaf ear, merely remarking, 'I cannot help myself; when I get sight of the brutes, I seem to lose all apprehension.'"

Though M. Wahlberg's career as an African elephant-hunter was rather a short one, I think I may safely venture to affirm that the feats performed by him have never been surpassed, either in daring or

hardihood. I will only mention one instance out of many which might be brought forward. Thus, on a certain day, and in a few hours, he killed single-handed no fewer than four elephants, besides wounding a fifth! Mr. Oswell, unquestionably the best elephant-hunter that ever rode on African soil, once performed a somewhat similar feat (he killed five bulls out of the same troop in a forenoon), but then it must be remembered he was exceedingly well mounted; the Swede accomplished his *on foot!*

The natives, who greatly respect courage and boldness, almost worshipped M. Wahlberg. In their expressive language they have been heard to say of him that the Great Spirit *Moremo*, must have given him a great heart. Or—that though “he was a little man (he was of rather low stature), his heart was larger than that of the biggest man.”

Again, “Carel Krieger,” says Mr. Burchell, “was an indefatigable and fearless hunter, and being also an excellent marksman, often ventured into the most dangerous situations. One day, having with his party pursued a wounded elephant, the irritated animal suddenly turned round, and singling him out from the rest as the person by whom he had been wounded, seized him with his trunk, and lifting his wretched victim high in the air, dashed him with fearful force to the ground. His companions, struck with horror, fled precipitately from the fatal scene, unable to turn their eyes to behold the rest of the tragedy. But on the following day they repaired to the spot, where they collected the few bones

that could be found, and buried them near the spring. The enraged animal had not only trampled his body literally to pieces, but could not feel its vengeance satisfied till it had pounded the very flesh into the dust, so that nothing of the unfortunate man remained excepting a few of the larger bones."

Many and many are the extraordinary escapes that people have had from wounded and infuriated elephants. That of Lieutenant Moodie, as recorded by himself, is perhaps amongst the most remarkable. After telling us that in the year 1821 he had recently joined the semi-military settlement of Fredericksburg, on the picturesque banks of the Gualana, beyond the great Fish River, and that on the preceding day the party had shot a female elephant he goes on to say :

"On the following morning, one of our servants came to inform us that a large troop of elephants was in the neighbourhood of the settlement, and that several of our people were already on the way to attack them. I instantly set off to join the hunters, but, from losing my way in the jungle through which I had to proceed, I could not overtake them until after they had driven the elephants from their first station. On getting out of the jungle I was proceeding through an open meadow on the banks of the Gualana, to the spot where I heard the firing, when I was suddenly warned of approaching danger, by loud cries of *pus-qi!* (look out!) coupled with my name in Dutch and English, and at the same moment I heard the crackling of

broken branches, produced by the elephants bursting through the wood, and the tremendous screams of their wrathful voices resounding among the precipitous banks. Immediately a large female, accompanied by two others of a smaller size, issued from the edge of the jungle which skirted the margin. As they were not more than two hundred yards off, and were proceeding directly towards me, I had not much time to decide on my motions. Being alone, and in the midst of a little open plain, I saw that I must inevitably be caught, should I fire in this position, and my shot not take effect. I therefore retreated hastily out of their direct path, thinking they would not observe me until I should find a better opportunity to attack them. But in this I was mistaken, for on looking back I perceived, to my dismay, that they had left their former course, and were rapidly pursuing and gaining ground on me. Under these circumstances I determined to reserve my fire as a last resource, and turning off at right angles in the opposite direction, I made for the banks of the small river, with a view to taking refuge among the rocks on the other side, where I should have been safe. But before I got within fifty paces of the river, the elephants were within twenty yards of me, the large female in the middle, and the other two on either side of her, apparently with the intention of making sure of me; all of them screaming so tremendously that I was almost stunned with the noise. I immediately turned round, cocked my gun, and aimed at the head of the largest—the female. But the gun un-

fortunately, from the powder being damp, hung fire, till I was in the act of taking it from my shoulder, when it went off, and the ball merely grazed the side of the head. Halting only for an instant, the animal again rushed furiously forward. I fell; I cannot say whether struck down by her trunk or not. She then made a thrust at me with her tusk. Luckily for me she had only one, which still more luckily missed its mark. She then caught me with her trunk by the middle, threw me beneath her fore-feet and knocked me about between them for a little space. I was scarcely in a condition to compute the number of minutes very accurately. Once she pressed her foot on my chest with such force that I actually felt the bones, as it were, bending under the weight; and once she trod on the middle of my arm, which fortunately lay flat on the ground at the time. During this rough handling, however, I never entirely lost my recollection, else I have little doubt she would have settled my accounts with this world. But owing to the roundness of her foot, I generally managed, by twisting my body and limbs, to escape her direct tread. While I was still undergoing this buffeting, Lieutenant Chisholm, of the Royal Artillery Corps, and Diedrich, a Hottentot, had come up, and fired several shots at her, one of which hit her in the shoulder; and at the same time her companions, or young ones, retiring, and screaming to her from the edge of the forest, she reluctantly left me, giving me a cuff or two with her hind feet in passing. I got up, picked up my gun, and staggered away as

fast as my aching bones would allow me; but observing that she turned round, and looked back towards me, before entering the bush, I lay down in the long grass, by which means I escaped her observation."

The life of the professed elephant-hunter is one of great peril and privation, and there are few who engage in it that do not, sooner or later, "go to the wall." I was surprised to hear D—— say," so writes Mr. Rose, "that it was his wish to leave his present life, and to settle down quietly on his farm. 'Indeed,' I said, 'I should have thought that this wild pursuit, and your former dangerous trade (that of a smuggler), would render a quiet life somewhat sleepy.' 'I have a wife now, and shall have children,' he replied, 'and have been driven to this by debt and necessity. I have nearly got over my difficulties, for in twenty months I and my Hottentots have killed eight hundred elephants; four hundred of them have fallen to this good gun, and when I am free I quit it. Scores of times have the elephants charged around me, even within a yard of the bush under which I had crept; and I feel that it was a chance I was not crushed. Once I had fired at a large troop in a deep ravine, one side of which was formed by a steep cliff, which echoed back the sound of the firing, and a hundred elephants, with upraised ears, and loud screams, and tossing trunks, rushed down the narrow pass, and charged the echo, being the opposite side to that where we stood when we fired, and the one to which we had now moved; myself and Hottentots lying

in the bush whilst they rushed past us. The boldest hunter is killed at last. When pursued by a rhinoceros I have sprung down a high bank, not knowing its depth, or whether I might not fall on a rock or stump. No, sir, it is a life of no common hardship and danger. I have been obliged to eat the "veldtschoon" (untanned leather shoes) from my feet.'"

The daring of some of these elephant-hunters almost exceeds credence. One of the most remarkable instances on record is that given to us by Thompson, on the authority of a relative of the hero of the story, a man named Marić, a famous Nimrod, who, in his day, had slain upwards of forty of those animals. At a convivial meeting of friends and neighbours to celebrate New Year's day, when the company were heated with liquor, and each one had boastfully related deeds of hardihood he himself had performed, Marić laid a wager that he would go into the forest and pluck three hairs from out of the tail of a living elephant!

This extraordinary feat he actually performed, and returned safely with the trophy to his comrades. But not satisfied with this specimen of his audacity, he laid another bet that he would return and shoot the same animal on the instant. He went accordingly with his mighty "Roer," but never came back again. He had approached too incautiously, and his first shot not proving effective, the enraged creature rushed upon him before he could reload or make his escape, and having thrust its tre-

mendous tusk through the poor fellow's body, trampled him to a cake.

In closing this account of the chasse of the elephant, I cannot refrain from remarking that, however exciting the sport may be, it is after all somewhat bloody work; and it is impossible not to feel regret at slaughtering these fine and harmless creatures—more especially for mere amusement—and I am not alone in thus thinking, for Captain Harris, when describing to a friend his sporting exploits with elephants in Southern Africa, says: “But I must confess that, after the novelty had worn off, I did not take much pleasure in the destruction of this noble beast.”

THE END.

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