

SERVICE & SPORT
ON THE TROPICAL NILE



C. A. SYKES.

Barry J. [unclear]



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SERVICE AND SPORT ON THE
TROPICAL NILE





Clement Sykes

SERVICE AND SPORT ON THE TROPICAL NILE

SOME RECORDS OF THE DUTIES AND
DIVERSIONS OF AN OFFICER AMONG
NATIVES AND BIG GAME DURING THE
RE-OCCUPATION OF THE NILOTIC
PROVINCE

BY CAPTAIN C. A. SYKES, R.H.A.

WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
PHOTOGRAPHS AND FROM DRAWINGS MADE
BY MAJOR E. A. P. HOBDAY, R.F.A.

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
TO
MY MOTHER

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PREFACE

IN venturing on such a subject as Uganda, after the appearance of Sir Harry Johnston's magnificent volumes upon that interesting country, I think I ought to say that I have an object quite apart from his. That author has minutely described the people and animals of those regions. I would modestly make some of these people speak, and give those animals a being, in so far as they affect man, especially the sportsman. Sir Harry has shown in glowing colours the splendid scenery, the mountains, the rivers, and the forests: I would but show the manner in which these affect the traveller. I write in no scientific spirit, but shall have done all I essay if I can depict in words the ordinary vicissitudes which attend a man when he cuts himself off for a time from civilisation. I must apologise for the erratic nature of my narrative, and that none of my facts are correlated. I can only say that events do not occur in any particular order, nor are one's ideas connected in regular sequence. I have written them down as they occurred.

There is humour to be drawn from most inci-

dents by those gifted with the sense, and in these pages occasionally at my expense. But it is not a country of much humour, and excitement, sickness, cruelty, pathos, courage, devotion, privation, must all take their places in these pages, as they do, indeed, in all places.

Since my sojourn the whole face of the land has changed. Doubtless, as far as civilisation and the expansion of our Empire is concerned, for the better; but immeasurably at the expense of romance and adventure. The steam-whistle has superseded the snort of the rhinoceros, the telegraph and red tape have found out the haunts of the elephant. Where there was solitude in nature, one now hears the ceaseless hum of human beings. But the wilderness must ever give place to advancing civilisation, and the wild beasts seek more and more sequestered spots. Happily sanctuaries and laws have been made early in the career of the Protectorate, and preservation is the order of the day. As far as the human beings of those parts go, they learn much, but become less attractive.

When men return from travels, they are assailed by a disease known as “Cacoëthes scribendi.” I am in that case, and, like such men, I am giving way to it.

C. A. S.

April 1903.

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SERVICE AND SPORT ON THE TROPICAL NILE

CHAPTER I

MARCH TO THE GREAT LAKE

Pistol. Why then the world's mine oyster,
Which I with sword will open.
Act II. Scene 2, *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

The fashion wears out more apparel than the man.
Act III. Scene 2, *Much Ado About Nothing*.

TOWARDS the close of 1897, something possessed me to seek the wilds. It is difficult to define that something, but that it comes to one is true, and truer still that it returns again after a lapse of time. It is an undoubted fact also, that he who drinketh of the waters of the Nile returneth to the same—at any rate he has the desire to do so. And the wilds of the valley of the Nile, near the source of that once mysterious river, are those which I sought and found.

The opportunity of gratifying my desire to see the "something new" which, according to tradition, always comes out of Africa, occurred when Uganda was in danger. The Soudanese troops, who garrisoned Uganda, had revolted, and I became one of those officers, urgently asked for by the Foreign Office, to help in quelling the Mutiny. Though still in the air, there was also the idea that a movement would be made down the Nile through a country which, since Emin's day, had reverted to savagery, ultimately to join hands with Sir Herbert Kitchener at Khartoum: a programme to thrill English blood. But man only proposes; and though I was two years in those regions, I was not there long enough to see the sudd cut, and communication opened up with our fellow-countrymen from the North.

Those two years were spent in establishing England's power from the Great Lake to the North; in wandering on the face of those remote spots; building forts; subduing Chiefs, and trying to show the poor, ignorant native that the English meant to deal with him honestly.

There is no necessity to describe the voyage to Zanzibar; a day or two on that island; nor the few days' delay at Mombasa, purchasing some of the necessities for a sojourn in the interior. Let it suffice that such cries came from Uganda for officers, that, with a few others, I did not wait for

my baggage—which was following me in another ship—but started up with the Commissioner himself. What this meant, can be guessed, when I say that my baggage contained two years' provisions, my rifles and ammunition. It meant consequently that during the greater part of my time on the Nile, I never saw a whisky and soda, nor a loaf of bread, and that I had to face the pachyderm with nothing but a .303 rifle, or such rusty old Martinis as had for generations been served out to the troops.

Then, in the scurry, I had to seek through hundreds of the most villainous countenances man ever beheld, in the purlieus of Mombasa, for items of such vital importance as a cook, upon whom one's digestion depended; a gun-bearer, upon whom one's life depended; and a boy, upon whom—worse than all—one's temper depended. I obtained the cook, who cooked one meal atrociously, and then bolted from human ken with two months' advanced wages! I did not get the gun-bearer; but I got the boy, with the resounding name of Tewfiki-bin-Ibrahim, who knew nothing, and seemed to care for nothing but stealing my salt and sugar. However, I think that during the two years I had the honour of his acquaintance, I managed to get even with him.

One lovely morning, with the thermometer about 110 in the shade, our caravan started for better or

for worse, amidst the cheers and good wishes of the few Europeans who eke out a sultry existence in Mombasa. The great Uganda railway, then in its infancy, conveyed us precariously about 100 miles, when we got off with a sigh of relief, and commenced the longest trudge I am ever likely to undertake.

I cannot describe the first few marches, as, owing to the terrific heat, they were effected during the night. I have, however, every reason to believe that they were through hopeless desert and bush. Our possessions, such as they were, were laboriously brought along by porters with soft feet, and donkeys with sore backs. These last, in the darkness wandered from the path at intervals, and then lay down where they could not be found. We ourselves generally arrived hours and hours before the first of them, lay down in our dripping clothes, took 10 grains of quinine for supper, and returned in our dreams to our soft beds at home, so recently vacated.

Thus, in time, we reached a place called Kibwezi, and had to wait there five days for our loads to arrive by driblets. Those of our donkeys which had not died of thirst, starvation, or exhaustion—for there was precious little water, and less food—were bitten by the tse-tse fly, became inflated, and died a hideous death. Fortunately the belt of country in which this scourge prospers, is only about 60 miles in breadth, and as the railway has

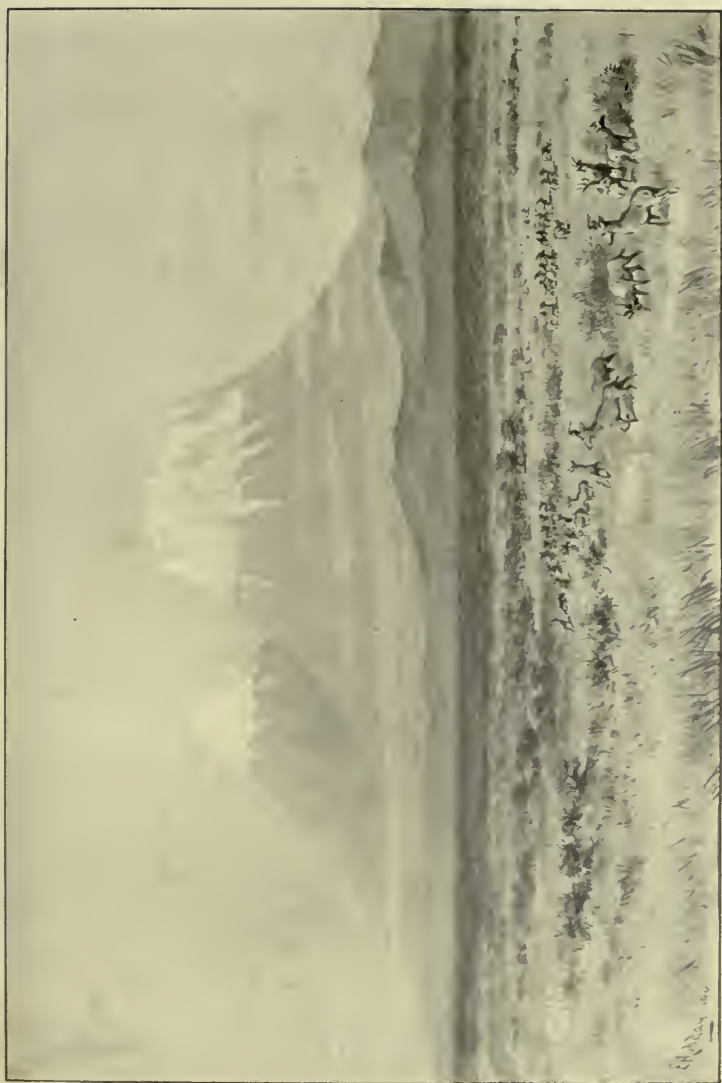
long since passed through, it does not now enter into the traveller's calculations.

One early morning, we got a glimpse of the majestic Kilima Njaro, which remains, to my mind—though I have since travelled through Rhodesia and most of South Africa—the most glorious sight on the continent. Mountains as a rule, of 20,000 feet and upwards, rise from a lofty plateau; but Kilima Njaro stands on a pedestal of some 2000 feet, and raises its 20,000 feet sheer up from this. The last few thousand feet are covered with eternal snow, which glitters in the fierce sunshine, and delights the eye with every kind of lovely hue.

At Kibwezi we managed to replace our departed donkeys with some human beings of the Ukamba tribe. This was practically the first we saw of the naked savage, who shocked us then; but by being constantly with us, afterwards became more interesting. Some few of them did wear something, but from Kibwezi to Uganda, I should think tailors were superfluous. One pays these people in beads, and this was the first of a series of nuisances that rage all over Africa. Imagine such a thing as fashion entering into the lives of these creatures! Nude as they are, they are as particular in fashions as our fine ladies at home. Each tribe affects a certain style in beads, and gives little account to any other. One wants pink, another white, another blue; some want large, and some small, and the difficulties of purchas-

ing can be imagined when I say that a traveller into the interior passes through perhaps twenty different tribes. They are all the same—even the practical Soudanese make as much fuss about the sit of their tarbooshes as the *jeunesse dorée* of Bond Street do about their tall hats.

These Wakamba appeared physically to be hopeless ; but, when put to it, they got their loads up the Kiketi heights as soon as we, with any degree of comfort, got ourselves up. Their method of carrying loads is very curious. The load rests on the back, and is kept in its place by a broad strap which is fastened to it, and passes round the forehead of the porter. It seems marvellous that they should not suffer from headaches. On the contrary, they suffered more in the other extreme, owing to the quantities of lava which had to be crossed, for this cuts and blisters the feet when the midday sun has baked it, and occasionally the carriers lose the whole sole of the foot. Our caravan now consisted of the Commissioner ; some eight or nine officers, who, though they were going to command infantry, belonged mostly to the mounted branches of the service ; one or two civil officials ; a number of Swahili porters ; and lastly some Swahili soldiers, at least they were to be soldiers—up to then they were only a collection of blackguards. The Swahili, or, as he should be called, the Zanzibari, had developed himself into a porter ; and here he suddenly



KILIMA NJARO.

found himself a soldier, armed with a weapon about which he must have had misgivings, and expected to cope with a brave, warlike, and capable set of Soudanese desperadoes. And we unfortunate officers were to lead them! At the time, we did not think much of that; but limited ourselves to teaching them the elements of their suddenly assumed profession.

The first little rift within the lute occurred when they refused to go into the jungle to collect firewood, on account of the growling of the lions. However, after a few minutes' interview with us, they seemed to prefer the lions to the camp. When the Swahili knows you, it is wonderful what he will do for you, and with what alacrity it is done. There is a magic wand in Africa more persuasive than a king's sceptre, which, when used with justice and tempered with mercy, overcomes apparently insuperable difficulties. It is called the "kiboko," and is hewn out of the broad back of the hippopotamus. Its effect is felt throughout Africa, from north to south, from east to west, and it is as inexpensive and expeditious as it is wholesome and necessary.

After Kibwezi the country is open, and we had the enormous relief of marching in the day-time, the water question being easier; and having ascended into a cooler atmosphere, night marches were unnecessary.

Game of every description swarmed on all sides, but I need give no hunting experiences here, as I wish to reserve that for wilder regions. Enough to say that we saw tens of thousands of head of game daily. Antelope of all kinds, rhinoceroses, leopards, lions, ostriches were represented close to the road we were passing along, and all officers, except those in charge of the rearguard and transport, were shooting daily, for miles around the route. Though these beasts, in 1897, grazed within a few hundred yards of the road, and appeared to take only a passing interest in a caravan, they realised that it was not always above suspicion, and kept a sharp look-out. The year of grace, 1900, saw the Iron Horse take the place of the caravan, which would appear to be a sufficiently terrifying substitute to cause a universal dispersal. But it was far from being so, and all animals learnt to look upon the Iron Horse as a far gentler intruder than the caravan, and found that they could graze unharmed within a few score of yards of its metals.

Menus were somewhat mixed, and the efforts of the various cooks made dinner an exciting study. There was no knowing whether the soup was hartebeest or wildebeest, whether the chops were zebra or palla, the brains on toast those of Grant's or Thomson's gazelles. By the way, let it be known to all travellers who do not already know it, that rhino tail soup is a delicacy, which, were it

possible to put in front of an alderman at a city banquet, would oust turtle soup from the lofty position it now holds. The flesh of the zebra is sweet, but at times acceptable ; that of the harte-beest is tasteless ; but far the most succulent of all is that of the smaller gazelles. Bustards, both the great and the lesser, guinea-fowl and partridge, abound in the vicinity, and, but for the cooks, would have been delicious fare. Livers and kidneys varied the diet, and these we always cut from the beast and cooked fresh, as soon after death as possible.

Occasionally a zebra was shot as a benefit for the porters, in the hopes that it might make them a little stronger, and enable them to get our loads along a little faster. Directly they realise the magnanimity of the bwana or lord, as they call the white man, they throw down the loads, and rush for the spoil. They swarm round, fighting to get the front row, tearing out the entrails, and hacking off the meat and drinking the reeking blood. I watched one small porter who arrived late, and could not find enough room for a cat to have got through. After waiting for some time exasperated, he took a long run, and, plunging over the heads of the crowd, landed with a yell in the slush. When I next saw him, he was a frightful spectacle. The custom seemed to be to wind the intestines round a stick, and to chew them off gradually. If I watched any individual one daily, it would get beautifully less, until it finally disappeared.

The next place at which we halted was Machacos, remarkable at that time as being the spot where the celebrated chigger had arrived, in his invasion Eastwards. He had come from the West, and has long since reached the East coast, and is now spreading himself North and South. Will he get into India? I trust not, for the sake of the Hindoos, who suffer more even than the natives of Africa, from ignorance of how to deal with these insects. Curiously enough, we found them worse as we got up country, until in Uganda, their ravages were terrible; but on my return to the coast, they seemed to get worse as I neared Mombasa, showing that they had indeed trekked Eastwards. It is not generally known that the chigger is a small insect, picked up from the ground by the bare feet of man, which penetrates under the skin, and there lays eggs. These must be removed, in the small case formed, most carefully with a pointed stick; otherwise, if broken, they cause a festering sore, which grows until sometimes the whole foot is lost. Of course, Europeans suffer comparatively slightly, with their shod feet and cleanly habits; but the native is an easy victim. I found the best preventative was to rub my feet with vaseline every morning after bathing. At first the feeling was very unpleasant; but I soon got used to it. It keeps the feet supple, and the chigger cannot face vaseline. Down the Nile this pest does not exist after that river flows from the Albert Lake. He

cannot abide damp, and if one waters one's house, he has to leave. During the rainy season, as can be imagined, he has a very poor time. There were some Indians at Kampala, to whom I was Adjutant for a short time, and 60 per cent. of these troops were laid up by the tiny mites. With their eggs they are only about the size of a pin's head; but the damage they do is incalculable. This monster was the chief topic of conversation at one time, and sweepstakes were organised for the benefit of the first sufferer! One of our party is to this day known as the "Chigger": to us he has no other name.

We soon entered the country of the warlike Masai, and found them most friendly. At that time they would barter anything for a teaspoonful of iodoform, and their faith in this odoriferous powder remained unshaken until some dishonourable people adulterated it with Colman's mustard. Of course, they would not carry our loads—these lords of the land—and this menial work was performed by the Kikuyu tribe, who are not so fastidious. The Masai condescended to carry the mails, and this service they rendered most expeditiously. Their running powers were so extolled that I ventured to challenge a young blood to a 50 yards' race, not feeling capable of much more myself. The poor youth looked most uncomfortable, and it was explained to me that the white man ranks amongst the gods, and that if he dared to commit such a breach of etiquette as to outspeed me, I might

wither him up! Of course, I did not wish to resort to that, and so the match was off. I shall not describe these various tribes passed on the march into the interior: that has been admirably done recently.

We reached the lovely Eldoma ravine, with its perfect scenery and glorious climate; but before arriving, one of our party, a gallant marine, whilst following a wounded Granti, lost himself. The night he spent was quite a change for him—half on the ground and half up a tree. A Masai had followed him, possibly in the hope that he might come in for some pickings, and of course this individual saw nothing unusual in spending the night out when hunting. Poor C.'s efforts to convey that he was lost, were lost on the savage. In vain he imitated the crouching attitude of the lion, his awful roar, and the desirability of lighting a fire, for these only caused amusement to the Masai, who thought the white man was doing it all for his private delectation, just to make the evening pass pleasantly! Considerable hunger ensued; but fortunately a small antelope devotedly arrived on the scene, and gave up his liver and kidneys without question. Daylight brought an end to fearful visions, and when our friend rejoined us he looked like one who had recently passed through a sad time. This loss of oneself occurs at times to most wanderers in Africa. On this occasion we were not alarmed; but when it happens in a

waterless region, or amongst hostile people, it is frequently fatal.

Marching on, we crossed the Mau Plateau, and all felt the intense cold at night so much that we had a fire at each end of the tent. I personally slept in two shirts, a sweater, coat, greatcoat, four blankets over me, and four under me! Even then, I awoke occasionally with the cold; and this was on the Equator! The altitude was considerably over 8000 feet, and water was frozen on the surface most nights. The contrast between this cold and the hot midday sun was trying to the unaccustomed.

We had in this country obtained carts drawn by bullocks; but as the latter were overtaken by an epidemic of lung sickness, we were temporarily stranded. I cannot convey in words the ravages of this terrible disease—its suddenness, and rapidity of action. I need only mention that in a few days 294 out of about 300 succumbed, and lay strewn about in our path.

After this we entered the great primeval forest of Nandi. I always loved marching in forest, if only for the respite it affords from the scorching rays of the sun. The dampness, the chattering of the monkeys, the great density of the undergrowth—composed in many spots of the wild raspberry—make the whole scene seem mysterious. In the forest the more beautiful butterflies come and seek the many putrefactions always to be found amongst

trees. The exquisitely feathered and gorgeous Charaxes are here found in a drunken condition, and though very strong on the wing in the open, are easily caught when gorged. The less favoured Pieridæ flit over the grass plains. Thousands of brilliantly plumaged birds are to be seen amongst the branches of the trees, which are themselves most magnificent; notably the mulberry and the mahogany, and there is many a pretty peep through.

Having passed through the forest, we descended somewhat abruptly 4000 feet, down to Mumias, which seemed to us, after the highlands, a veritable furnace. Here we encountered a King—one of the most extraordinary looking beings I ever set eyes upon. He wore a red coat and about a hundredweight of brass wire. He was attended by his jester, who, if he never made a jest for his living, was jest enough himself—at least to our eyes. He was plastered from head to foot with cowrie shells and beads, and from every odd corner depended bells. With feathers on his head, and grimaces on his face, he begged description. With some difficulty we managed to get a few sheep and some honey out of his Majesty, chiefly owing to the fact that the Great Lord, *i.e.*, the Commissioner, was with us.

A few days after this, for we hurried through this potentate's dominions, we got our first glimpse of the vast Victoria Lake, along the banks of which we were to travel for many a mile. A short cut

across the water takes one to Ntebbe (18 miles from the capital of Uganda); but there was not nearly a sufficient number of canoes for such a party as ours. A journey made thus in those days occupied about fourteen days, a camp being pitched every night on one of the innumerable islands that make the lake so lovely. Before leaving Kavirondo I must say a word for its porters, with whom the worthy Monarch supplemented ours. They are fine, lusty fellows to look at, and as merry as crickets. Nothing seemed to fatigue them, and they carried their loads of 65 lbs. without straggling or halting for a moment. This is no mean accomplishment, when I add that they maintain a speed of 3 miles an hour in the stifling heat, even for a march of 20 miles. Directly they arrived in camp, they ran off to collect materials for the huts they rudely fashioned for the night. Their food consists of a few sweet potatoes and bananas, and their reward a few strings of beads and a yard or two of cloth; but what the latter is for I cannot imagine, as neither they nor their lady friends wore a stitch of it. They prefer their beauty unadorned!

In a few more days we entered Usoga, and those interminable banana groves which form such a feature of Uganda, and amongst which we were to reside for some months. The bananas grow in myriads and in every variety. They have many and wonderful uses. Firstly, when picked fresh off

the trees they are most luscious. Then, as flour, made by a drying process, they give one bread, which tastes like earth. Then, as yeast, which it is believed, makes the earth rise ; though I should say no advantage was gained thereby. Then, as beer, or rather a stimulant known as Pombi. It is better not to know how this is manufactured, for it is put in front of you as though it were nectar. It loses its attractions if one watches the bananas being squeezed in the dirty fingers of the manufacturer, and diluted with some buckets of water drawn from the nearest swamp. By exposing it to the sun it can be made intoxicating, and one can speedily become drunk. What a drunkenness it must be ! Then the plantain species, which is not sweet, can be steamed, and makes an excellent vegetable. Its leaves make paper, and its fibre rope, and it even looks down at you in your bath, asking if it can do anything for you in the soap line. But my advice is to avoid that soap. It takes the good out of everything it touches. Wash your head with it, and your hair never lies down again—your clothes, and they become as bricks, moreover it is the most valuable irritant for prickly-heat. You cannot hope to escape the banana, with all its fascinations, when once you have entered Uganda.

Parrots are prolific in Usoga, and their screeching is audible at all times. They tame very easily—at least the grey species, which is the commonest—

and most of our party possessed themselves of these companions before we emerged from Usoga. Some of them learnt to talk wonderfully, and such sounds as cows, goats, sheep, monkeys, and dogs emit, they imitate exactly. One I knew copied the piteous howls of a dog, or a porter, receiving a hiding, to the life. He also knew his drill and manual exercise perfectly, and it was generally thought that he could weigh off a prisoner with credit to himself and justice to the offender. No secret was safe in his hearing: he watched the removal of my first and only chigger with keen interest, and afterwards, alas! repeated my language! They are affectionate too, and show unmistakable signs of pleasure at the return of their master, even after a trifling separation. Though they will not make themselves amusing when watched, they are fond of society, and crawl all over one's person by means of their claws and beaks.

Having reached Fort Lubwas, where the chief of the tribe resides, we took to canoes, and crossed the arm of the lake from which the Nile flows. These crafts are most picturesque, with their prows adorned with the horns of antelope. They are formed of strips of wood, sewn together with fibre; and are propelled by paddles, the paddlers singing to their strokes quite musically. Music seems to help all black men to work. The Swahili porters love to sing as they trudge along. They organise

a sort of wild concert. The leader in a great deep voice chants something unintelligible, possibly an exhortation to forget their burdens, and concentrate their minds upon their prospective dinners and the hours of ease round the evening fire. At intervals the panting followers make responses in unison by simultaneous grunts, ending with a rigmarole that possibly signifies acquiescence with the leader's sentiments. It seems to act as a stimulant and also as a relief, for gloating upon labour only feeds the pangs of it.

Landing on the opposite side we ascended the hill, which was ablaze with flowers and butterflies, and found ourselves in Uganda proper. The view from this hill across the lake I always considered by far the most beautiful of all. The vast sheet of blue water, as I saw it then, lay stretched at our feet like glass dotted with little islands that sparkled like gems, almost as far as the eye could reach, the shores and islands being covered with magnificent trees and glittering verdure. The scene reminded me of the Lakes of Killarney, only of course much magnified. But a storm soon sweeps over the waters, obscuring all that is beautiful, and making all tumultuous. Majestic waterspouts stalk solemnly around; the lightning is continuous and blinding; the thunder deafening, and chaos reigns. The first of these awe-inspiring tempests visited us two days after our arrival in Uganda, and levelled

my tent—amongst others—at once, my boots next morning having two inches of water inside them. There is only one way to take these things, and that is philosophically : it is no use raging. The great solace of Equatoria is, that one can rely upon the chief source of much joy and many sorrows rising in the morning in all his glory, ready to dry all the tears of the previous night. I daresay I was in scores of storms, but the great majority occurred after midday, and the sun almost invariably shone next morning. One could not expect always to escape a soaking ; but marches could almost always be completed and tents pitched before rain appeared, and such a curious country is Uganda, meteorologically, that there might be rain during any period of the year.

We trudged on to Kampala, the European hill in the capital, and made the acquaintance of those undulations, with swamps at the bottoms and bananas at the tops, from which one does not escape until one quits the confines of Uganda.

The natives were extremely friendly, and brought us presents of food and beer, and received us everywhere with their stately salute and quaint greetings. Except that of the Soudanese, I considered the salutation of these people the most graceful of all I encountered. They raise their hats and bow, and say in their tongue how glad they are to see you, and you in your turn are expected to say, " Please

don't consider me ; but tell me about yourself." He replies, "No, no, it is you and not I that must be considered," and so on, and so on. This, I believe, was the old-fashioned method ; but it was so tedious to meet a friend and go through these formalities, that they have been corrupted and condensed into grunts, which one alternates with the other. These grunts continue as you separate, and are carried on until each is out of earshot of the other ; but I don't know how long they will grunt with you, for it appeared to me there was no limit, and I was always the first to grow weary of it. Perhaps the polite people considered it inhospitable to leave off grunting first.

Most tribes have their own particular form of salutation. The Bakamba tribe gives a feeble apology for a hand-shake. The Masai, a more manly and decided one, at the same time planting his spear in the ground—the token of friendship in most parts of Africa. The Nilotics, always in my day and doubtless still, plant their spears in the outskirts of a fort or town before entering. If by any chance they retained them, it was with a conviction that they were trusted ; and they much esteemed this privilege. The Jaluos of Kavirondo make a low obeisance and call "Iambo," to which one returns, "Iambo." The natives of Usoga grovel on the ground, with their hands crossed to one side, and generally disgust one. Of course, I am speaking of the time when the

mutiny was in progress ; but I think this politeness is still in vogue.

The Soudanese salute in the military style, and if you are personally known to them, they advance and kiss your hand, and hope you are in good health. They become much attached to their white officers, mutiny or no mutiny ; and the latter warmly reciprocate the feeling ; but of these blacks, more anon. I never saw, until I wandered into South Africa, the stately raising of the right arm, high above and to the side of the head, and the word “Kōs” uttered at the same time.

One thing I could not help but notice was the total lack of religion, except in Uganda proper. Nowhere did I see a pretence at worship in any form. These pagans have their totems and mild superstitions, which Sir Harry Johnston has described elaborately ; but if one leaves out the accumulating of live stock and women, there is no worship in its strict sense. After all, the amassing of wealth, for cattle and women constitute wealth in those parts, is a god that is worshipped all the world over. It only takes a curious form with these savages. In contrast to home affairs—where a wife is an expense, and one is at times too many—there, she is a source of riches. I am sorry to add, that I do not think these gentlemen love their wives for themselves alone ; but for the fact that they represent so much money, and that some-

times occurs likewise at home. Human nature does not seem to vary much wherever you examine it.

Near the coast a certain amount of Moham-medanism is affected; but not seriously, and the Soudanese at times call upon Allah—but without conviction. If a wart-hog, whose flesh is toothsome, chanced to be shot, the Prophet was at a discount. But in Uganda this is not so. There flourish all religions, from Christianity to Cannibalism; though I am credibly informed the latter is now extinct. The Arabs and Indians had brought their private beliefs with them, and the Christians their various assortments, which were not at first an unmixed blessing.

We found the capital comparatively quiet, as the mutineers, after having had things their own way for some time, had been driven into the dismal swamps of Unyoro and Ukedi. We were received with open arms by the Europeans, partly for our fresh English faces, and partly on account of the reinforcements we brought with us. Such reinforcements too! They were perhaps a trifle more gregarious than when we started; but in no other way had they become soldiers. I am afraid that when they were inspected, they must have caused misgivings. Still, one cannot always judge; for Major Macdonald had found that similar porters when suddenly armed and attacked, had fought with considerable courage.

At any rate, the influx of so many Europeans was a great event, and it must be remembered in those parts the white man's prestige gives him a value equal to forty untrained blacks—by native computation. In the latter end of the mutiny, nothing more convinced Kabarega, the once all-powerful King of Unyoro, of the hopelessness of his cause, than the presence of so many fresh white faces. In his earlier days, Europeans appeared singly and at long intervals; but when he saw one replaced by another, in two-fold and three-fold ratio, and in quick succession, he realised that his time had come, and that his mighty power was at an end. The fall of such a man, whose name was a terror to all neighbouring tribes, brought to their senses many tribes who would otherwise have been fractious.

And so we strangers were received within the gates of the capital with much honour and hospitality, and we were all invited to a banquet by the acting Commissioner, and spent the evening in singing and hilarity after the manner of the English nation. Another reason for our popularity was, that we relieved many unfortunate civilians from onerous duties. This scarcity of white men had brought about such incongruities as collectors for captains, clerks for orderly officers, and the Judge himself for adjutant. The latter, with much feeling, handed over his duties to me. But so

adaptable is the Englishman to his surroundings, that the senior officer told me that these men, in their several capacities, had shown great ability and, of course, devotion, and had inspired him with much confidence.

On the afternoon of our arrival the Commissioner held a levée. We soldiers went in uniform, or such approach to uniform as we could arrange; the lady missionaries in their best; Bishops in robes; the Judge in his wig; and civil officials in their varieties of full dress. I could hardly believe that I was in the heart of the great continent, and that this was not a fancy dress ball in some dream, and I was glad to get out of the stifling heat into a flannel suit. I wandered forth to see the sights, and presently strolled into a green field, where I found a football match of Baganda in progress! An archdeacon was in the thick of it, and appeared to be getting knocked about considerably; but as he was in the country for the benefit of the savages I presume he did not mind. This sort of thing was not much to my taste, nor to the liking of any of us who had come to seek the wilds, not that I wish to find fault with the introduction of the game; only the missionaries and ourselves looked upon the matter from different points of view. It was undoubtedly good for the savages not to mention the missionaries.

CHAPTER II

THE SOLDIER OF SOUDAN

He is a soldier fit to stand by Cæsar.

Act II. Scene 3, *Othello*.

Like a good and hardy soldier.

Act I. Scene 2, *Macbeth*.

IN Kampala were those Indians who had helped to save Uganda, and also the loyal Soudanese troops. These last had been up in Unyoro when the mutiny broke out at the Eldoma ravine, and for many anxious months it had been in the balance whether they would join their brethren or not. The mutineers advanced into Uganda, and for some little time the situation was critical, and let it be put to the credit of these loyal men, that they never swerved in their allegiance, though the temptation must have been acute. They had been disarmed with great presence of mind by a British officer, and in this condition we found them. It fell to my lot, a few months afterwards to command a company of these

men, and I became much attached to them. They were a motley crew—some had served under Samuel Baker, others under Gordon, and others again under Emin; and when Stanley carried off that gentleman to the coast, they were left behind to their own devices, until re-engaged by Lugard and brought into Uganda. There can be no doubt as to the wisdom of that course, for these soldiers are eminently adapted to the peculiarities of the country. Fearless and resourceful, hardy and healthy, they combine all the qualities necessary to such a climate. The Indians and Somalis suffer greatly from fever, the former require special food which has to be brought from India and carried up on men's heads, whilst the latter are altogether too delicate for such a damp climate. The Soudanese are hardly ever ill, and they live on anything the country provides. They are gifted with a delightful cheerfulness, under the most adverse circumstances, and are the most thoroughly professional soldiers I have ever met. When recruits are wanted, it is only necessary to walk through their village and select the most likely looking youngsters. You find them ready-made soldiers, for the children drill each other as soon as they can walk, and I have often seen one child manœuvring about several smaller children. He will first form them up, give general instructions and see them carried out, chiding his squad for slackness or inattention, all with the serious air

of his father. They are first enrolled on half pay until they are efficient as trained men, when they receive the full pay. They are excellent tailors and make their own undress clothes and under-clothing; they make their own shoes; they build their own houses; they till the soil and are first-rate agriculturists. They thoroughly understand the farmyard, a most useful accomplishment, and are equally at home in the garden. In a company one can always find a good shikari, capable of guiding without ever losing himself, and of tracking intelligently, for they have the eye of the hawk and a very keen sense of hearing. Curiously enough their sense of smell is very weak, a blessing for them, for in Africa that sense is more often offended than pleased. They are as a rule devoted to their English officers, who in their turn become equally fond of them; but with all this, when their blood is up, they can be as cruel and inhuman as the veriest savages. Witness the mutiny. But mutiny is in the blood of all black men. Is it not in that of white men also?

These men had grievances, but whether the grievances were real or imaginary, it is not for me to discuss. I can only say I have always found them the most obedient men I ever saw. My word was law, and when I had decided any point, it was final, nor did I ever hear any grumbling or discussion afterwards. They always seem to think their white officers incapable of injustice, and accept

their sentences as they accept kismet. They are most intelligent and ready to learn anything you may like to teach them, and above all, they like to be understood and appreciated. Are we not all the same? They are conservative and dislike change, more particularly in their officers than in any other respect ; but unfortunately the poor white man cannot live in health for more than two years on the banks of the Upper Nile, and so, constant change of officers is unavoidable. The tears came to my eyes when my time came to bid them farewell, and I had not the heart to tell them I was leaving them for ever. I knew one officer whose men loved him so much, that one of them offered all his pay as a gift if he would only return to them, and when he lay seriously ill, his two native officers took it in turns to sit at his door for the purpose of keeping out death. I think they considered his subsequent recovery was entirely due to their watchfulness.

Of course, to get on with them it is necessary to learn and to recognise their customs and privileges. For instance, if a man dies, his wife and belongings are then the property of his brother, and it is the white officer's duty to see these goods and chattels transferred to the brother, even though it entails a walk of five or six hundred miles upon the wretched family. When they go forth to war, they like to know that their families are safe and being cared for. Indeed, after all, they are human beings like the

rest of us. By looking into all such matters, and by paying them regularly only can one command their esteem and affection. And are not these the qualities, combined with courage, which make men of any nation follow their officers to the death?

Some of these men shall speak and act for themselves, and I hope that others may then be inspired with the same respect and admiration for them that I have. Their love for their profession is phenomenal. Of course, it is their home—their all; but there were some amongst them who were more than seventy years of age, and who had been serving our nation for years and years. They have a great *esprit de corps*, and rightly consider themselves immeasurably superior to all other natives of Africa, with the exception perhaps of the Dervishes, who had of old administered sundry defeats to them. When they learnt that the great nation they served had broken and scattered the power of the Kalipha, and that Khar-toum had fallen once more, their wonder and admiration were unbounded. Their love for fighting is insatiable, and it is typical of the race, that, when led against their own countrymen, they never swerved, though in many instances they were opposed to their own brothers or fellow-villagers. I am bound to admit that they are much addicted to loot, and it is most difficult to keep them from it, for the old law of strong and weak will assert itself in their natures.

There are many other pleasing traits in their characters, none more so than the fact that in their community there are remarkably few thieves, and in my dealings with them I can remember very few cases of that crime. They are most hospitable, and their manners never offend one. They are as simple and laughter-loving as children, and some of the happiest days of my life were spent amongst them.

It would be as well to mention here that they were recruited from Nilotic tribes, such as the Baggaras, Dinkas, Makarkas and Niam-Niams, Madis, Baris, Mondus, Alurus, Shulis, Shilluks, Nurs, and, perhaps, a few others.

Though these tribes are mere savages, some of them even cannibals, it is notable that their representatives amongst the Soudanese troops lose their savage traits and become at once such as I have endeavoured to describe them, for the cannibal will not admit that he has ever partaken of human flesh, and looks hurt if such an aspersion is cast upon him. Their teeth, however, filed to a point, proclaim their proclivities, though this mutilation is not always the attribute of cannibalism. Some will even pretend they have never handled bow and arrow; but were born in the purple, and had always shouldered the aristocratic gun, and this little foible is also found near home. They are, almost without exception, vain and particular about dress, though some of them must have worn little else than beads for the first

twenty years of their lives. They are thrifty and love to put their money into securities that will bear interest, such as cattle, sheep, goats, and fowls.

But that is now enough concerning these people, whom my partiality would, perhaps, make paragons, for we are always blind to the faults of those we like, and they can do nothing wrong. I can only say I believe my opinion to be shared by all those officers who had the privilege of commanding Soudanese companies, or who lived amongst them for any length of time.

It was a surprise to enter this town of Mengo after so many weeks in the wilderness. Its many hills covered with houses and huts, its plantations, its markets and thousands of human beings flitting to and fro, combined to make a busy scene. After the miserable efforts at cultivation on the part of the barbarians, whom we had passed through, Mengo seemed a Garden of Eden. English vegetables and flowers gladdened our eyes; papaws prospered, and even the mango had been introduced by the missionaries. What is more, these trees, after seven years of childhood, had become mature and bore their precious fruit. Brinjalls, Cape gooseberries, and guavas all flourished—to us ambrosia!

The food question had always presented difficulties on the journey up. What can a man eat for his breakfast when eggs and fish are not available? A mass of grain made into porridge, followed by a

lump of meat, was what it came to, until some unpardonable person introduced the stock pot. Into this engine of destruction to digestions was flung every odd atom of meat and bone, some of which one would not have the face to offer a dog. It made its appearance at all times, more especially when it was not wanted, and digging one's breakfast from its recesses is even now one of my worst forms of nightmare. It pursued us for hundreds of miles, until I at last secretly persuaded the cook to drop it into a swamp. He was most reluctant, seeing that the implement saved him an infinity of trouble; but I put the matter so forcibly to him that he gave way.

Talking of cooks and cooking vessels; it was just about this time that there entered into my life one of the quaintest things in the world. I happened to be searching through my pots and pans, more or less on a tour of inspection, with the trembling cook behind me. He was not really a cook; but he helped another to cut lumps of tough meat off a goat, and to stew them in a pot. Well, during this investigation I saw crawling behind a frying-pan what at first seemed to be a member of the family known to science as "Insecta." On looking closer, however, it became obvious to me that the creature, anatomically considered, must be classed in the genus "Homo." It was very minute in body, with large bat-like ears and immense feet. As an anthropo-



THE "INSEK."

[To face page 32.]

logical study he might have been anything, though it was soon evident that either his father or mother—and both of them were mysteries to him—had been Soudanese. Moreover, he muttered the Arabic word "Kidima," which I already knew to mean work, from its extreme unpopularity in Africa. Thinking he might be useful to Tewfiki-bin-Ibrahim, I handed him over, with orders to find out if he knew anything, or was likely to learn anything. Tewfiki later told me he knew nothing; but he thought he might by a course of lectures get him to boil the water. I was not, however, to look upon this as a *fait accompli*. I thoughtlessly called him "Insect," and this name clung to him—he was never known by any other. The only difference was that the final "t" seemed an effort to the natives to utter and they, deeming the possessor unworthy the effort, simply omitted it. And so the "Insek" became my retainer and served me very faithfully until, alas! but I will not anticipate. I do not know where he came from; nor can I tell where he has gone to. Whether he was a boy or a man it was impossible to judge. Many thought he was a young boy; but even to this day I am not at all certain that he was not an old man. There was one certain thing—he was a curiosity; and incomprehensible as he was, I grew to be fond of him.

Almost at the same time another domestic joined my menage who was civilised enough to have a name.

He was the offspring of a Swahili porter and a woman of Uganda, and was known as Mabruki. As he occasionally showed glimpses of intelligence, he was appointed to the position of chef, with a salary of 5 rupees a month, out of which he had to feed himself. Of course he fed himself out of my saucepans ; but in any case, in that country, it was quite possible to live on 3 rupees per mensem, leaving him the handsome sum of 2 rupees to squander in dress, amusements, and general dissipation. This he and the "Insek" appeared to do invariably the day after pay day, for on that day they always became suddenly ill, and as far as I was concerned, that day was always a "dies non."

Mabruki measured more than 4 feet 6, whereas the Insek can have touched little more than 4 feet ; and the former had the advantage also in looks, and was indeed a handsome boy—as handsome boys go in that land.

By the way ; pay day was an elaborate infliction. The current coinage of Uganda proper was cowrie shells ; at least that was the small change of the country. These were strung together in hundreds, and at the time I am speaking of about 400 went to the rupee ; but later, when the railway overcame difficulties of transport, as many as 700 went to the rupee. As cloth of all sorts was also legal tender, the payment of a hundred porters occupied a long time. This was even worse in the Nile

district, where the requirements of life could only be purchased by beads, brass wire, and cloth.

The issuing out of a month's pay to a company of Soudanese was a whole morning's work. Private Murjan Timsah (*anglice*, Murjan Crocodile) would come forward for his monthly $22\frac{1}{2}$ rupees. All the various wares were spread out—the beads, the wire, and the many-coloured cloths. Wondering whether yellow or red better suited Mrs Murjan's particular style of beauty, he would stand and scratch his head for some minutes, and eventually he would probably take a pound of beads (valued on the Nile at 2 rupees, 8 annas), 4 lbs. of brass wire at 2 rupees a lb., 5 rupees' worth of cloth, and the remainder in specie. Then one would gasp for patience and face the remaining 120!

The rupee and half-rupee were introduced later in my career, and now, I suppose, pass muster; but it was amusing at first to see the savage when he was given a silver coin. Of course, he thought it was meant to be worn as an ornament in his nose or ears or anywhere else, and he could not see that ten of these insignificant tokens were worth as much as 4 solid lbs. weight of beads. Accounts had to be kept of every penny-worth of beads expended, and rendered in duplicate to headquarters monthly. Picture the anguish of the poor officer, worrying out these details in a temperature of 105° in the shade! It will be a great boon when the monometallistic

form of payment is established. Bimetallism has many terrors at home ; but polymetallism is chaotic. But I am anticipating ; this only came on as the country became settled.

All these poor Soudanese had received no pay during the mutiny, and consequently many of them were six months in arrears. One of our first duties was to pay them up in full, and as no accounts had been kept, in most cases the words of these simple men had to be taken. Be it said again to their lasting credit that, with such an opportunity, they scorned to take an advantage, for each man claimed his just due and no more, and this was verified by officers who came in to Ntebbe afterwards, and who had not been able to be present at the time of payment. Nor can I ever remember a Soudanese soldier claim more than his lawful amount. Of course, he looked upon the white man, with his pens and paper, as infallible, and knew that he was likely to be found out sooner or later ; still, I do not think that was wholly the reason. In a great measure, I believe, it was the simple element of faith and trust, such as children have in their parents, which civilisation with its pens and paper soon destroys.

A number of captured mutineers were in our hands, and had to be tried. I was given the unenviable position of prosecutor upon the court-martial. There were nearly sixty, and they had to be tried in a few cases singly ; but for the most part

in batches. The difficulty of collecting evidence, unravelling it, and having it presented in an intelligible form to a court-martial, was well nigh insuperable, as no Soudanese seems capable of giving a direct answer to a question. He must always begin at what he considers the beginning; work through masses of irrelevant matter, halting in his narrative to give it colour by some anecdote not bearing on the subject, and, amidst the breathless excitement of the listeners, arrive at the point. Not recognising it as the point, he misses it as often as not, and it is hopeless to interrupt him and exhort him to part with some important detail of the evidence, for it only has the effect of making him commence the whole long-winded oration again. The court has to pick out such gleanings as it can. Fortunately our task was much lightened by the fact that all their stories agreed in almost every detail—the prisoners and the witnesses for and against them. How tedious all this was, can be judged when I add that it had to pass through the mouth of an interpreter, and that Arabic and English are most difficult languages to intertranslate literally.

At times some prisoner would be taken with an uncontrollable fit of jabbering, which nothing relieved until I spoke to some stalwart Sikhs who were performing the duties of escort. These gentlemen, who had sundry old scores to work off, looked like despatching the miscreant forthwith before justice

could claim her own, and had the effect of silencing him at once.

After twelve interminable days' work we managed to wade through the whole lot, and the result of our labours was that about a dozen were shot and the remainder received sentences from three years' imprisonment downwards. The shooting was done by the Sikhs. One bloodthirsty fellow in hospital, who had lost a leg in action, implored that he might be carried out and allowed to help in the carrying out of the sentence. He was much hurt when his request was not granted.

Several little expeditions were sent forth to keep Mwanga, the deposed King, and his Mohammedan rebels in check, until the mutineers were finally finished off. Mwanga had been deposed for his inhuman barbarities, his dislike of civilisation, and his impossible form of government. He had now, having escaped from custody in the German territory, made common cause with the mutineers. His own followers were mostly comprised of Mohammedan Baganda, and they probably thought that as Allah had at first deigned to look favourably on the cause of the mutineers, it was the best one to join. We gradually moved the remainder of the troops to Ntebbe on the Great Lake, and about 18 miles distant from Kampala, the European part of Mengo. Our marine had taken the first detachment, and next morning his cook was eaten by a crocodile. I

regret to say the intelligence was received with roars of laughter : one could only remember his lamentable efforts in the cuisine.

My friend C. was sitting in the shade one morning, when one of his boys came running up shouting and gesticulating violently, apparently anxious to attract notice. On getting close he said in English, which he spoke perfectly, according to himself, "Masta, Sadiki am gone dead!" Seeing that Sadiki was his chef, C. jumped up hastily and followed his boy, who conducted him to the border of the lake and showed him a pathetic little pile of dirty clothes. As the former owner was nowhere to be seen, it seemed obvious where he had gone. No amount of cautioning has any effect on some men, and this luckless youth had provided his last meal on earth. C. in his wrath ran up and got his rifle, and came tearing down again with vengeance in his heart. Searching through the papyrus and reeds that infest the margin of all lakes and rivers, he beheld innumerable hippopotami and crocodiles basking and disporting themselves. He could not bring retribution upon the whole genus, and so he made up his mind to bring it upon one at least. He had not loved his cook in the life ; but such a horrible death clamoured for revenge. So he selected one gigantic monster who was half snoozing on a muddy island, and had all the appearance of being gorged to repletion. His bulging sides and heavy

breathing looked suspicious. To get a shot, our marine had to climb on to the back of an unfortunate porter, put his arms round his greasy neck, and be conveyed to a neighbouring island. This was effected and a steady aim taken. It is, perhaps, best to shoot a crocodile just behind his forearm, where most of his vital organs exist. You can put as many shots into his stomach or his aft as you like; they would only assist his digestion; and the only other vulnerable portion of him is his vertebræ. This was the shot our friend selected, and brought off. With his first discharge he slew the reptile, which never moved again. According to their custom the natives with much clamour and rejoicing dragged the carcase to the shore and half way up the hill. There a post-mortem was held, and when the skin was opened, to the horror of the assembled multitude, a human arm appeared, sticking straight up! This spectacle appeared to be too much even for the oldest hands, who remembered Mtesa's massacres. The very cannibal refused to go near the hideous object, and there it slowly rotted itself away, making the neighbourhood unapproachable. Sadiki's friend recognised the arm as having once belonged to poor Sadiki, and we could only hope that it gave in death as much indigestion to the reptile as in life it had given its owner's master! I have told the tale of this tragedy at some length, as it is one of frequent occurrence: two days afterwards two more men were

gobbled up by two more crocodiles. An enormous number of human beings must be hurried out of Africa in this manner every year. The native refuses to learn the lessons of experience, and even when dealing with such sensible people as the Soudanese, we were obliged to set aside and rail off special places for bathing, drawing water, and washing clothes.

A few days after this all the available soldiery, which was not out on expeditions, had been congregated at Ntebbe, and a thorough cleansing of the Augean stable had commenced. The men, having had their pay claims satisfied, were all re-armed with the Martini-Henry, and were regularly drilled and put through their musketry. I must say I enjoyed the few weeks during which I stayed in Ntebbe. The scenery is very beautiful, and though there is not much game to be got, the woods are teeming with all the beauties of bird and insect life. Everything had the absorbing interest of novelty, and one was constantly seeing and learning something fresh. There was nothing to pall, and each moment brought a change.

Here I began to learn Arabic with the aid of a Syriac clerk—or rather, it was the peculiar patois spoken by the Soudanese troops. It is exceedingly easy to master, devoid as it is of grammar, and bearing only a slight resemblance to the classic tongue. Still, to pass the examination was an advantage, not only in enabling you to speak to those

under you and to enter into their affairs ; but also in that it carried with it an emolument of £50 a year. I think perhaps the soundest way to learn the language is to commit to memory as many words as possible, and with this equipment, rush straight into conversation with the people who speak it. The rest soon comes. The chief difficulty lies, not so much in the phraseology, as in the manner of uttering it. Sometimes a sentence, though correctly spoken, may not be understood, owing to the manner of uttering it. Emphasis must be laid correctly, and the peculiar intonation of each phrase cultivated. This applies also to all languages learnt and spoken orally, and in countries where letters are unknown.

A gravel tennis court gave us some recreation and exercise in the evenings, and I made the Insek useful in picking up balls ; but he did not seem to appreciate such kindness. I suppose he had a soul above such things. But in many respects he was advancing. One of his duties was to pull aside my mosquito curtains in the early morning, and I found this particularly trying, for to my half-wakened senses he appeared like a gigantic cockroach, until I grew accustomed to the apparition. He was certainly the ugliest human being I had ever set eyes upon. I can see him now, his two eyes glaring forth from the recesses of an old white cricket hat of mine, making me shudder at times.



SOUDANESE ON PARADE IN FULL DRESS.

A certain native officer had offended by spreading false alarms about the mutiny, and by generally behaving like an agitator at home. It was decided to send him forthwith, with his wives and chattels to the coast. It fell to my lot to see him off, and I had quite a cheery time, especially with the wives. Oh, why did heaven institute the state of matrimony? They set upon me with howls and gnashing of teeth, with occasional gestures of throat-cutting and other pleasantries. Trying to pacify them was a charming morning's occupation, and after I had got rid of them once, they returned again to the charge; but I eventually beat them off.

When I got home again I was met by the cheerful news that two men had just been drowned by hippopotami. As if I had not had enough for one day! These amphibious beasts were having a good time at our expense. In an ordinary way the hippo is a harmless creature; but he sometimes attacks a boat that may be rash enough to get between him and his deep water. Cows are dangerous also when they imagine their young to be in any danger. They will swim at a boat and upset it; at times going so far as to fix their great tusks into it. In the confusion and tumult a wretched man has but a small chance of escape. It was very interesting to watch these beasts playing in the water in families. They emit a series of discordant grunts ending in a high note.

Every minute or so they come to the surface for breath, and one sees their enormous hideous heads emerging warily to spy around. For a moment they gather in breath, and their absurd little ears shake the water off. If they detect any danger it is marvellous how rapidly they disappear. The next time they come up it is sure to be some distance off, and thus they are difficult to shoot. If in a boat, one rests one's rifle on the side and aims where one expects him to appear next, which is quite a matter of chance. He will give you only a second to fire in, and a remarkably small target to fire at, viz, his brain. This is to be reached through the nostrils, or close to the ear ; but in either case the target is very small. Of course, if he is discovered on dry land, he presents the comparatively easy heart shot behind the point of the shoulder ; but the hippo is rarely seen on land, as he is a nocturnal feeder, and exceedingly shy at other times. He will go considerable distances for his food, especially for certain kinds of grass which he particularly fancies ; but his ordinary habit is to feed close to his own private deep waters. On the Nile where they live in millions there is no harm in shooting numbers, as they provide nitrogenous food for the natives for miles around. They are usually covered with fat also, and though this was supposed to be valuable for cooking purposes, I could never enjoy any food fried in it. The only use I had

for it was to grease my boots, and it made them offensive too !

Their curved ivory tusches are very beautiful trophies, but the ivory is intrinsically of little account, being only about one-fourth the market value of elephant ivory ; their skins, however, are always in request for thongs, hide, and flails.

I obtained two local retainers at Ntebbe ; one to provide me with fish, the other with fruit, vegetables and anything he could find in the native "shambas" or gardens. The former spent all his days on the lake fishing, and I should think he ended them in a crocodile, unless he grew more careful of himself after I left. He managed to catch something every day : I do not think he would have dared to return without anything. The latter had to scour the country armed with a few strings of cowry shells, to buy what I wanted. The Baganda are excellent hagglers, and I usually rewarded him if he out-haggled the vendors. There was supposed to be a market ; but it seemed to be only a half-hearted affair with none of the zest of that in Kampala. Eggs are always scarce in Africa, at least fresh eggs : doubtful eggs can always be got in thousands. I always got in a large consignment and put them through the water test. If they sink and lie flat, they are fairly recent and may be fit to boil. If they are inclined to point upwards, they are eggs ; but if they come upwards with a tendency to

float, they should be returned to the hen, for they are useless to human beings. In this way, when in luck, I used to get about 25 per cent. edible eggs.

During this period, after trying a few on approval, I obtained an orderly, one Bazruta Mersal, who served me faithfully during most of my career. He hardly ever left me, in peace or war, in danger or safety, and was very rarely more than a dozen paces from me. After some time I felt quite unhappy unless he was handy, as he did almost everything for me. He cleaned my weapons, and carried them when I went shooting; he tracked for me; took care I never lost myself; he kept my boys in order and saw that my orders were carried out. His tastes were simple and he was contented with one wife who did most of my sewing and darning for me. Her darning seemed to convert a pair of socks into a tangled mass of wool, the entrance to which was not easy to find. He was indeed to me all that I required and more, for he was a "fidus Achates."

But that such a man would be out of his element at home, I should have liked to bring him with me, as on many occasions he showed extraordinary devotion, and was as good a comrade and companion as man could wish for. Like all black men, the Soudanese, when taken from their own country or community, are afflicted with nostalgia, and it is almost a cruelty to try and persuade them to leave it. And so I suppose he still lives in those remote

places and serves the white man as honestly and uprightly as of yore. His only idea was to do the behests of his master, and even now I often think of him and hope he is happy.

At Ntebbe, Tewfiki-bin-Ibrahim was taken sick with what I diagnosed to be congestion of the lungs. I found him in the early morning in great pain with Bazruta taking drastic measures to relieve the same. He had cut sundry gashes in the luckless Tewfiki's breast and applied a cow's horn thereon. Through a hole at the end, he had sucked out all the air, and this primitive form of cupping seemed to give considerable relief. Bazruta was a bit of a surgeon in his way, which was somewhat rough and ready. On another occasion some man's uvula was worrying him, whereupon my orderly fastened a loop of giraffe's tail hair round the offending organ and whipped it off in a trice. He then cauterised the part with a burning stick, and that uvula worried no more!

Fever had begun to make itself known even to the freshest of us; but I was not to make its acquaintance yet—my time was coming. I was, however, suffering considerable pain from what I subsequently learnt were malarial ulcers. They attacked my feet and originated in insect bites which I must have scratched and allowed to fester. I had about eight on each foot, and as I treated them several times a day with pure carbolic or copper lotion I endured at such times fearful torture. I afterwards learnt the use-

lessness of treating red-hot sores in such a manner. At any rate, through swamp and jungle for three months I had to march with my feet in this state until I was told to put a tincture of lead and opium on them hot, with plenty of bandages, and they all vanished in three days. What a pity I did not learn this beforehand! There are a thousand things one should know before visiting the wilds and leaving civilisation.

Equipped with knowledge, a traveller would not have to waste many weary days in finding things out for himself: for the light of nature is not sufficient even for the cleverest of us. For instance, I spent some months in experiments trying to make bricks. I tried first one way, then another, as I shall mention later, and many different ways of burning them, and thought I had arrived at a satisfactory brick in the end. At all events, *I* was satisfied, until an expert came along and told me my bricks were the worst he had ever seen, and in five minutes he explained to me the proper method of manufacture.

CHAPTER III

A PLUNGE INTO SWAMPLAND

Myself were mudded in that oozy bed.

Act V. Scene 1, *Tempest*.

THEN happened to me what happens to all soldiers in that country. I was given half an hour to pack up my traps and set off on an expedition. The arrangement of such an affair in Uganda is the work of a few minutes. Such is the discipline of the feudal system, that porters are obtainable almost at once, and I was well provided in that respect. The food question was simple, as I was not likely to get out of the banana country. My troops were heterogeneous, consisting as they did of eleven Somalis, one or two Soudanese, including my orderly, a Swahili or two, and forty wild Baganda armed to the teeth. Though they had no knowledge of their weapons, they were most anxious to acquire it. My own anxiety on that score can be imagined, when I state that I was sent forth to prevent the union of 200 fierce mutineers and a Baganda rebel with the

archangelic name of Gabrielle, who had a following. That these willing men should be at once taught which end to shoot from was essential, and I found Bazruta invaluable. He had the knack of making himself understood by any tribe he came in contact with, and was a first-class drill instructor. He had them out at all sorts of odd moments for the manual exercise, and it was his great joy to get these forty gentlemen into some sort of square, with the front rank kneeling, and the rear rank standing, and to leave them there motionless whilst he hurried round to bring me to witness his work of art before it collapsed. I should be sorry to say how long he had been shuffling them into their various positions. I would always arrive when the scene was ready, like a *tableau vivant*, approaching with the lofty mien of some great general. They would assume set faces like the last eleven at Maiwand, and the curtain would fall amidst the plaudits of the onlookers. A knowledge of military matters raises a man immensely in the social scale in those parts, and was thus a great inducement to the native to learn. Bazruta would always let me know when he considered them ready for me to handle in any particular exercise. They were ready to be drilled at any time, even after the longest march, and as keen as possible to learn any military knowledge ; but was useless to attempt anything during a march, as their weapons were generally covered with bananas, which somewhat impeded

their manipulation. I found them wonderfully quick at picking anything up.

The Somalis were also excellent material as far as actual fighting was concerned, but their delicate constitutions made them almost useless in other respects. I nearly always had half of them down with fever or lung troubles. It was remarkable how difficult it was to teach them to march in step, not that it was any use to them ; but at first they seemed unable to acquire what seems to us easy enough. The long-striding men could not reduce their strides, nor the short-stepping ones extend theirs ; and they had all the wildest ideas about time. Still, time works wonders, and they eventually became as good as was wanted.

My difficulties were not decreased by the fact that all these people under me spoke different languages, and I had no interpreter. I set myself to learn Arabic as speedily as possible by the simple expedient of asking Bazruta the Arabic for every object I could see, and putting it down in a note-book. Verbs were always a stumbling-block, for how are you to explain to a black man such abstract ideas as thinking, believing, imagining. However, necessity sharpens the wit, and in about six weeks I was able to make myself understood through Bazruta, by all my subordinates. I would classify all minerals, animals, vegetables, and artificial things separately, and also such easily-translated verbs as, to carry, to

undo, to hit. By listening carefully I acquired the abstract ones, though not always correctly. For months I went about with wrong meanings in my head; but found out my mistakes when I subsequently met white men who knew the language.

So with my unbeaten army I set forth towards a place called Lwekulas, about 130 miles distant, with the chief Lwekulas himself, who had come in to the capital to ask for protection. I was also accompanied by another chief, whose duty it was to see me properly provided for by the various minor chiefs whom I was to visit. He, himself, looked upon this as an opportunity not to be missed for learning English, and though his manners were most polished and his compliments quite ornate, his importunities were at times distressing. Not that he in the least wished to be importunate; but, as I was always tired after a long march and after resting wanted a bath, and after a bath wanted my dinner, and after my dinner my bed, his opportunities were limited. At first I pointed out how much shadier a tree was than my tent; but when my temper was not equal to these delicacies, I had to get the "Insek" to conduct him elsewhere. He always took this in very good part, and when we subsequently parted we were and remained the best of friends. Certainly his presence made things easy. Food for my troops and porters, and small luxuries for myself always appeared in time to be cooked for the evening meal.

Jamesi, that was the nobleman's name, was always followed by a beer-bearer, who rushed up and offered me his fluid whenever I stopped by the roadside to rest myself. At first I drank immoderately of the beverage, until Bazruta once incidentally mentioned to me that it made one's legs very weak. I could not make out why I always went at the knees at a certain period when climbing a hill, and this, of course, explained the mystery at once. Certainly, when I dropped the practice, I went much stronger. In this curious effect it resembled our own national beverage, but I never discovered any other reason for its being called beer. The beer made by the Nilotics from the sorghum was much nearer the mark, for after wading through a long drink of earthy substance, there remained in the palate a faint soupçon of stale beer.

Early in our march we got into a sugar-cane district, and the sucking of a stick of this fruit was most grateful and refreshing. After a six or seven hour march I could get through perhaps 4 or 5 feet of the commodity, and found it also sustaining during a march. It is always the custom of the traveller in Equatoria to have tea made immediately upon arrival in camp, and I could manage six cups in quick succession without any inconvenience. By perspiration, it comes straight out of the skin. I later contracted the habit of halting in the middle of a march, or wherever a particularly shady tree was

reached, and brewing a pot-full. It is a delicious stimulant, and soon soothes and invigorates the system. The labour of a long march is greatly reduced by this, followed by a pipe and half an hour's snooze. I prefer it to any other drink when one has the delicious boon of fresh cow's milk to add ; but during all the earlier part of my travels I had to do without this great luxury. It was a hardship when the water was at all ferruginous, as an infusion of tea at once became black and the flavour was destroyed. One of the best investments is a cow and calf. The calf generally dies, or has to be carried through the swamps ; but in the former case, the old expedient of stuffing the skin and letting the cow lick it, is usually successful. It is one of the most ludicrous spectacles imaginable, but unless the mother is thus humoured, she almost invariably declines to part with any of her precious fluid. A porter carried one of the effigies for me for hundreds of miles, and the expression on its face never failed to tickle my sense of the ridiculous. The parody on nature was lost on the native, who looked quite seriously upon it, and he could never understand why I always laughed when the mock calf was brought up. Even the old cow, when she bent her neck round to bestow a caress upon her late lamented one, did not seem to see that there was anything funny in it. Tufts of grass stuck out from the nostrils, and it seemed never to get on with the

enormous mouthful of grass it had plucked. There it stood, motionless, with its stiff stick legs, enough to provoke a smile in the sourest nature. When the porter came and picked it up and walked off with it, the old cow would fondly follow. If one continues marching for more than a fortnight, the cow will most likely become dry. Then it is time to exchange her for another, which has not come to such a pass, paying the difference in their respective values. A cow and calf have an average value of 50 rupees, and such a purchase is one of the soundest. It is always as well to make certain before commencing a journey, that there is some one in the caravan who can milk. The Baganda, as a race, are not adepts, and only a certain number of Nilotics have the knack; but almost all the Soudanese soldiers have acquired the art to perfection.

Two or three marches west landed me in a mosquito infested district, and one can hardly exaggerate the purgatory they make of life. Up to this time they had been nothing more than a nuisance, but here they made life a burden, after sunset. I tried all manner of expedients, such as burning green wood and sitting in the smoke; but this made me cough so, and my eyes so sore, that it was doubtful if it was a relief at all. Then I burnt camphor, and the gum I had picked off incense trees; which the mosquito laughed at. At last I was forced to seek refuge in curtains, and there

have my dinner carefully passed to me like a wild beast. However carefully I tucked the netting around me, the insect, by slowly searching the whole area, would eventually find an inlet, and be followed by hundreds of its fellow torturers. In the morning, glutted and intoxicated, they would fall an easy prey to the "Insek."

The marching, even in the early cool, was a great labour. Until 10 o'clock the grass would be soaking with dew. Its great height would cause it to festoon across a path, and my body being tall, would be saturated with wet, while the younger shoots would do the same for my feet. Then the swamps, which in those days were not bridged, had to be plunged into, and emitted a most poisonous smell, making me almost sick. Their ever-varying depth would make each step a glorious uncertainty, and I could never say whether it was a matter of having my knees or my neck immersed. It was as cold as ice, and must have given one's system a considerable shock. Fancy jumping from a warm bed into a succession of quagmires! How the little porters managed to keep their footing was a mystery to the white man, for it seemed as though they were swimming at times. Of course, an occasional squelch indicated that one of my precious loads had disappeared with an unfortunate human being underneath; but they always came to the surface again, puffing and struggling for dear life. Once

the cook's box vanished and a treasured bottle of piccalilli was fractured, giving all my food a jaundiced appearance. My two wee domestics dived into the box, and their joyous peals of laughter showed their enjoyment. When they showed their heads again, they looked like a pair of yellow locusts.

Some of these swamps were a mile in length, and many a day had a dozen or so of them to be traversed. I remember one of five miles long, which exhausted the whole of my caravan. Sheep and even goats failed to survive such an ordeal. The substance for the most part is an indelible black porridge-like composition, and I can leave it to the reader to picture a caravan as it emerged and slowly wended its way up a hill, only to get dry and ready to face another. A delicious respite from the apathy of the natives occurred at intervals when they took it into their heads to cut the stalks of the papyrus which grows in myriads in such a soil, and strew them so as to form a rough bridge; but at their best these bridges are an even chance. Nowadays however, the natives have been roused and induced to erect bridges, substantial enough for the pedestrian, by pouring earth upon these mattresses and binding the whole with withes. This they do with their always delightful neatness, and journeys are comparatively luxurious. I hated these baths to such an extent that I issued an edict, that when a morass was over my middle, a fatigue

party was to assemble at once and convey my valuable form, unscathed, to dry land. Under the persuasive education of my orderly, they soon became most accomplished at this duty. With one arm around Bazruta's lily neck, and the other around a second greasy prop, with a woolly head thrust through the fork of my legs, and each extremity held by some individual, I was borne in triumph horizontally across the many chasms. This may sound effeminate on my part; still I am convinced it saved many an attack of fever and rheumatism, to say nothing of boots and socks. How these good creatures kept their vertical attitudes I never inquired; but I suppose my uplifted arm, like the sword of Damocles, had something to say to it.

A pleasing contrast to the dismal paths were the wild flowers, which grew sometimes amongst horrible surroundings; moreover the jasmine and honeysuckle were very sweet, which is more than you can say of most flowers in the Dark Continent. Neither the Soudanese nor the natives had got so far as giving separate names to these pretty fancies of nature, and I never got more out of Bazruta to put into my vocabulary than "Zahrah," which signifies "flower" in his tongue. Trees were more honoured on account of the various uses to which they were put.

The buffalo had a habitat in these regions, especially in Singo, which lay on my right flank; but I found nothing more than his tracks, and had

no time to go far afield to hunt him. But for a few varieties of antelope, game was conspicuous by its absence, and it was not until the drier plains of Toru and the slopes of Ruwenzori, that it became abundant again.

Occasionally the path led us over some precipitous mountain, and I shall never forget one named Chatu, which was the sheerest slope I have ever ascended. Even the Insek was too busy to listen to my commands, and he looked like a fly on a ceiling. It seemed as if the whole caravan must tumble down like a house of cards upon my devoted head, and it certainly would have, if one of the foremost porters had slipped. But these tenacious little carriers, looking like so many ants with their burdens, were as wonderful in this predicament as they were in the swamps. Down a rocky cleft rushed a torrent of sparkling water, clear as crystal, and wine to the palate, after the horrid beverage selected from the quagmires. In these latter one could drink of any hue ; purple, violet, chalky-white, iron red, or inky black. Bazruta seemed to have a certain knowledge of the good and the bad, and would inspect and give his verdict on all the assortments, before he allowed me to drink a drop. He almost always passed the unappetising milky looking liquid as sound, and I consequently had to swallow it. Sometimes it was brackish and highly medicinal, at other times thick and earthy. I can

remember the wonder-filled faces of the assemblage, when I stirred it with a piece of alum and precipitated the dirty portion to the bottom. The danger was that the simpletons thought this mystic "dawa" or medicine would cure water of all its ills, and my difficulty was to explain to them that it would not. Fortunately for me, most natives are rather particular about their drink, and search for some time around the camp for the best available. Of all waters, those which I most enjoyed and sought for, were the soft rains held in the cups formed by elephants' footsteps; quite clear and fresh, for this water could always be depended upon.

These beautiful streams tempt one to drink a deep draught, a fatal indulgence, and sometimes rendering one unconscious by the shock to the over-heated system.

I strove to improve my Arabic by conversations with the Insek, and at times I gained considerable knowledge by his discourse. Once I asked him what a "farkah" was, knowing it to be a hen. He struggled hard for some time to enlighten me, but failed, until a brilliant gleam illuminated his countenance, and he replied in his own extraordinary lingo "The wife of the cock." He had a depraved habit of retiring to a sequestered spot with some hideous morsel of decaying meat, and there abandoning himself to the pleasures of the moment. Now and again he would indulge in deep chuckles and even

immoderate laughter ; but as he had not the gift of handing on the cause of his mirth, much precious humour was lost in the desert air. One of his duties was to unfold my X pattern bed, which puzzles greater minds than his. I found him once mixed up with the spokes, and extricated him in an exhausted condition, and had to relieve him of this duty. Yet, though his mental achievements read poorly, he had his uses, for he once conjured three eggs out of somewhere, which defied explanation, as there appeared to be no birds within fifty miles.

The comfort of my progress was not enhanced when I entered a land of giant thistles, which scratched my hands and face badly, and tore large pieces of flesh out of the poor natives' legs. Passing through this I got into a patch that nature, for some whim, had drained properly. Swamps ceased to worry, and the ground was strewn with gigantic round lumps of granite, as though the neighbouring volcanoes had suddenly left a game of marbles. All the vegetation seemed to respond, and grass looked like English hay.

At last, after about a hundred most arduous miles I arrived at Bukumi, which is within a march of my destination Lwekulas. There flourishes a French Roman Catholic mission of white Fathers, whom I shall always remember with feelings of gratitude for the kindly hospitality they extended towards me.

There were three of them, and they vied with each other in doing friendly actions, insisting upon my partaking of the meagre store of Algerian wine and cigars, which they kept, I believe, only for the benefit of wanderers. I found it at first beyond my powers to converse with any fluency, but they all helped me so skilfully and with such tact, that my laid-aside French began to come back to me, but I had the usual difficulty of those trying to remember an old language, that new words always came when old ones were wanted. Their flock spoke the Bunyoros tongue, which I, of course, did not know. I stayed there two days and had all my meals with them, and very much enjoyed their society. They were full of praise for the British officers, who, by checking the mutineers in their career westward, had saved them and their mission from some fearful calamity. They had, themselves, erected a rough fortification round their home, for in such places it behoves the priest to have something of the soldier in him. One of them had served formerly in the Chasseurs d'Afrique, and, perhaps, from him came the bastions and quaint corners to be found in the fort. Under their practical care a European vegetable garden gave them its products, as succulent as any I came across in Equatoria. All over Uganda proper and its damp environments, it was possible to grow most of our English vegetables, and such as leeks, carrots,

beans, and tomatoes flourished; but in the drier district of the Nile, potatoes, cauliflowers, and cabbages fared miserably. These good people had built a picturesque little church of sun-dried mud bricks; and taught their parish an honest and practical religion which showed itself in contented airs and peaceful occupations.

I reached Lwekulas, and just before arriving, was overtaken by some natives with a present from the charitable Fathers, in the shape of a big basket of vegetables and a bottle of fresh milk. One does not forget such little acts in remote regions. Lwekulas received me with the usual dignity, and his band played a selection on tom-toms and other musical instruments. In spite of his efforts to make my time pass pleasantly, I cannot say I enjoyed my visit to his ancestral province. His water supply was of the worst, and the best for drinking purposes was tinged with a violet colour.

Then I had to search his country for a site suitable for defence. Of course there were impregnable sites with no water, and there were indefensible sites with water, and there were sites with neither characteristic. I eventually hit upon one with a touch of each, which was covered, as everything was, with dense elephant grass. This had to be cleared before we could see a yard, and I had to wait whilst Lwekulas sent to some distant relation for hoes, as he had wisely sent them all to a place of safety on the approach of

an enemy. In the meantime I started my own men to work with their bayonets, which was a laborious process as the grass had all to be uprooted. I patrolled the surrounding country for miles; but fortunately for me, Gabrielle did not seem to be about, nor any mutineers either. I suppose they had heard of my unconquerable army, and feared the many things it might do if roused.

One afternoon, for a whim, I thought I would try the temper of my tigers. I went out after a herd of hartebeest, which I soon neglected, and with my trusted Bazruta, bending low, crept back on my tracks. Suddenly I fired a shot right over my camp, sending the bullet sufficiently close to ensure the whizz of it being audible to the men. I was not disappointed, for instantly, with a terrific hullabaloo, the entire mob came tearing down, spoiling for a fight. Such a pace did they come down, jostling each other, some firing from the hip, others from accident, that I had barely time to show myself and avert disaster. With difficulty could I restrain them from killing each other, so thirsty were they for some one's blood. I felt much more comfortable after this incident, which was opportune, as two days after, they brought in one or two luckless savages with bullets through them, and I anticipated something serious in the immediate future. However, it turned out that it was the work of some of Kabarega's robbers, who infested the district, and were ever

ready to massacre anything but their own tribe. The wounded ones were brought to me to be cured. At that time I had seen little of wounds, but I could not afford to give this away, for all Englishmen were warriors by repute, and familiar with such trifles. So I put on the air of one whose whole life had been filled with wounds and death, and perceived that the bullets had luckily gone clean through, and that there was nothing further to do but to dress the aperture, and top up with a dose of quinine which had gone bad. I told the creatures that they would live, and live they did. One can rely upon faith a good deal when one begins prognosticating. My practice after this had no limits.

Thinking that Lwekulas might some day become a British stronghold, I began to do something for it as a place of residence, and started a plantation of bananas, hoping it would bear fruit some day. It is a simple process; one cuts down an old stem, and takes the young shoot disclosed, and plants it. It bears fruit in most parts in about fifteen months, in some cases more and in some cases less, according to the soil and rainfall. But like so many other sites, its use was purely temporary, and was wanted only for a critical period. *Tempora mutantur* and the Empire's requirements change with the times. This was but the first of four forts and towns, with the outset of whose careers I was associated, and which were afterwards abandoned in favour of preferable

localities. How often have we British missed choosing the best sites! I suppose we always fail to grasp the marvellous rapidity of growth of our own possessions. How often does one not hear the remark "Why was that town built there? of course it should have been somewhere else." I wonder how many cherries we have taken two bites at.

The chief was most courteous, and brought me little presents every half-hour, to which I replied with others every two days or so, for it was impossible to keep pace with such a man. He sent round dishes of diminutive tomatoes, about the size of marbles, which grow wild all over Equatoria. They are very sweet, with no skin inside for divisions, but all juice. Bananas were always forthcoming; and at night torchbearers illuminated the whole hill, which saved my small stock of candles.

The porters and workmen supplied locally, began to tire after about a week, as is their custom, and I found it necessary to exhilarate them with the sound of the swishing kiboko. A swarm of bees also gave me considerable assistance by attacking them during a period of lethargy. They, of course, fled incontinently, pursued by their tormentors; but the faster they went the more fun it was for the bees, who punished them more completely than I could ever hope to do.

The soldiery one evening brought in a miserable wretch, bound and gagged, asking for authority to

polish him off forthwith as a thief and bad man, but I found on investigation that he was the harmless offspring of a neighbouring chief, who had wandered somewhat indiscreetly. One had to be careful with such zeal, as it might have brought us into trouble. On another occasion the same thing occurred to a friend of mine, who gave order for the captive to be tied to a tree, which was done, until his piercing howls called for immediate release. It was subsequently found that he was a sentry, sent by some friendly chief to guard the white man's property, and so he had to be given a handsomer present than he would otherwise have earned.

After a few weeks, finding that there was no immediate danger, I made up my mind to report the same, and to suggest my return. Knowing that a contemplated advance down the Nile was impending, I did not like the idea of being so far from headquarters. My messenger must have met another, who bore an order for my immediate return, which saved a lot of time. I was to leave a certain number of men, who were to go to Bukumi, to give confidence to the Fathers. I considered it a good move to form up the army and make a farewell speech. I got Bazruta to interpret to them in a solemn tone that they had behaved to my utmost satisfaction ; how glad the Great White Queen would be to hear it ; that I hoped they would always be the same and drive away all her enemies ; and that nothing but a

peremptory command would have induced me to leave them. When I had finished, they raised a great gibberish, which the chief informed me meant that "the Commandant was good," which had the effect of making me feel thoroughly ashamed of myself. I have been called many things but never that. I blushed and was awkward, and felt my conscience poking fun at me, and calling quietly, "Look at the good man!"

Then I plunged again into the swamps, and soon began to draw near the capital. The natives have some delightful traits. Before leaving, I had sent off one with a couple of hundred shells to scour the country for eggs or hens. When he got back he found me departed; but the conscientious barbarian followed me up, and one evening caught me up with a hen, a dozen eggs (of which only two were wrong) and a hundred shells change. The good fellow had covered over 80 miles of abominable country! Though I was uncertain whether this came from an innate honesty, or from a knowledge of the length of the white man's arm, I was so truly grateful, that I gave him the remaining hundred shells as a fitting recognition of such zeal in my service. This, of course, put him at once into affluent circumstances, and I trust enabled him to buy a few more clothes.

During my journey I was unfortunate enough to accumulate a musician, whose peculiar instrument might almost be called a flute. It was made from a

common reed, and emitted hollow sound by means of holes. The effect at first was quaint and not unpleasant, but a little of it went a long way. I found out afterwards that he had been sent by the chief to soothe my dull moments and make my life cheerful. Of course, the good man looked upon it as his duty to keep ever near me, and render an everlasting tune with a range of three notes. Occasionally I plunged into almost impenetrable grass, where the flute got entangled in the vegetation, and there I got brief respites, but at last I got Bazruta quietly to dispose of him into the tail of the caravan, before I should murder him. My nerves could not stand the hopeless monotony of his lay. Another compliment the thoughtful chief paid me, was to supply a being to make smooth my way, and show me the dangerous holes; a sort of forerunner, to suffer all things and forewarn me. This he did, stopping the whole caravan to point out some chasm, whilst he ignored small holes, likely to twist one's ankle, as unworthy of the Mcubwa or big man's notice. That was my native name!

The natives always give names to the white man. His proper name is usually too much for the ordinary savage. At times he lapses into unconscious humour in these names, though he does it in all seriousness. One of us was the "angry man," another the "man with the bad digestion," and a third the "little man." Some of us liked our names, whilst others did not.

By some natives I was known as the "father of two hats," on account of an old double terai I used to wear. Poor Emin Pasha was known as the "man with four eyes," as he always wore a pair of spectacles. Samuel Baker was known as the "great" or "strong man" on account of his enormous physical power. They had a happy knack as a rule of hitting off some main characteristic. These names were not often far-fetched, but usually obvious.

But to return to my story. I got rid of this man too. These little matters have to be managed tactfully, as such courtesies are prompted by the kindest feelings, and it would be mannerless not to notice them or to fail to appreciate them. Thus, when a chief pays one a visit, his retainers all squat on the ground in a circle; but he himself would be much hurt if he was not offered a chair. Good breeding and good manners would seem to be amongst the oldest of virtues, and are rightly esteemed above most others.

It was a great disappointment to me to leave that part without actually visiting the Ruwenzori range, which was little known at that time, but has now been familiarised to us by several writers. I had to be satisfied with a glimpse from a distant hill, and saw it enveloped in that cloud of mist and rain from which it seems very rarely to free itself. The snow, which in the tropics, is so beautiful as almost to baffle description, was not visible. I passed

through a place called Makonzi, which, in spite of the fact that it consisted of two or three huts, apparently built two days before, was formerly marked in old maps of Africa with letters as large as those used for important towns.

Half a dozen arduous marches got me near Kampala again, and I experienced the delight of returning to comparative civilisation after solitude, for the first time. In the evenings I sometimes tried to draw the merry little porters from their ceaseless chattering, and see if they had any ideas at all in common with me. They were always so extraordinarily cheerful and happy, I felt I should like to catch the infection. I asked one prehistoric looking individual if he had any brothers or sisters, and he said his father had got some more sons by another wife, and what should he call them. I told him we called them half-brothers, which seemed to defeat him. I think he wondered which lot were cut in two. It is always a difficult matter to get any further with creatures whose invariable topic of conversation is food and females. They delight in the simplest jokes, so simple that the European can see nothing to laugh at. A second meaning is always lost on them. Grotesque mimicry appeals to their risible faculties, and is the surest means of pleasing them. Coarse jests are indulged in by them; but not indecent as a rule.

The most incomprehensible part of them is their

habit of only eating one meal a day when marching. They start in the early morning carrying a load for seven or eight hours in the hot sun on an empty stomach, and they hardly touch a drop of water till the end, when they commence sipping in small quantities. I asked one how he managed it, and he said it was a bad thing to eat before a march as it took away the strength. It appears to have the opposite effect on them that it does on the European, who is always the better for a little food. Indeed, it is a dangerous practice for the white man to commence a journey in the tropics without breaking his fast, and none who has had any long experience of the same, would think of doing such a thing. Of course, a heavy meal might be equally disastrous; but there is little inclination to indulge in one at 4.30 A.M.

The question of food, I believe, depends on the individual. Some men believed in quantities of nitrogenous food, and ate meat three times a day. Others preferred an almost exclusively vegetable diet, like the natives, thinking it less heating. But I am personally of opinion that one's requirements are nearly the same in such regions as they are at home, at any rate for some time, only greater moderation must be practised in every article, for one's organs become more delicate in the tropics. As regards a vegetable diet, bananas, which are always obtainable in Uganda proper, contain nitrogenous, saline,

fatty, and indeed all the elements required to support human life ; but the proportions are not such as the white man is accustomed to. Of course he is not used to the new climate, which suggests the change of food ; but I think the European resists a sudden change of climate more easily than a sudden change of food, and the latter, if adopted, should be gradual. Anyhow, after experimenting on every form of diet, I came back to the ordinary European one, when it was possible, as the most satisfactory. As regards alcohol, I think most men are agreed that it is most pernicious as long as the sun is visible ; but that when it has sunk below the horizon, a small quantity may be beneficial. Every man soon becomes his own doctor, for excess in any form is not followed by a gradual retribution as at home, but by an immediate and violent one. With myself there were some things which would bring on fever at once. Much valuable knowledge is gained under these conditions, which should be treasured, against a day when the digestive organs become impaired.

CHAPTER IV

THE NILE

A fever in your blood.

Act IV. Scene 3, *Love's Labour Lost*.

Put the wild waters in this roar.

Act I. Scene 2, *Tempest*.

What manner of thing is your crocodile.

Act II. Scene 7, *Antony and Cleopatra*.

They take the flow of the Nile.

Act II. Scene 7, *Antony and Cleopatra*.

WHEN I reached Ntebbe I found every one busy with preparations for the expedition down the Nile, and was, of course, called upon to take my part in the same. I was much pleased at being given the command of a Soudanese company, which was very soon equipped for the journey, and a day or two afterwards a start was made. I was in charge of one column, composed of two companies of Soudanese, numbering about 250 in all, some of their wives and families numbering, perhaps, another 300, and

about 500 porters carrying cloth, wire, beads, etc., to present to chiefs and barter with natives for the necessities of life. They also carried tools, ammunition, and part of the families' goods and chattels, besides as much reserve of flour as could be added. It may seem strange that an expedition should start accompanied by women and children, impediments to swift movements; but it must be considered that though our ambitious programme was to anticipate the French, and overcome the Sudd in the Nile, and further to join hands with Sir H. Kitchener when he had defeated the Dervishes, still we meant to occupy the Nile by posts, at which garrisons would have to be left. It certainly appears to have been a risk to escort all these families through a country more or less infested by an enemy; but this may have been our only opportunity for doing so. It must also be remembered that though the women question had not been one of the causes of the Soudanese mutiny, it appeared to have been a judicious course to allow the wives to accompany their husbands so far as possible. The Soudanese soldier can give the European lessons in fidelity, for he never likes to be parted from his wife. The women, of course, themselves carried small loads, as did some of the children, and the whole caravan when strung out on a native path in single file occupied some miles. It was wonderful how all these people managed to trudge through the swamps

and get into camp every day. Some of the children that strode manfully along with a cooking pot or something of the kind on their heads, cannot have been more than three or four years old, and on one occasion as much as 25 miles of country was covered. The marches usually exceeded 12 miles, and for some days passed through a foodless district.

My first destination was to be Masindi, the capital of Unyoro, where a short halt was to be called. The time-honoured war with Kabarega had left Unyoro almost a barren waste, and we scarcely saw a native anywhere. With the exception of a few who lived near Masindi those who had not been exterminated were in arms under their king, who was at this time across on the right bank of the Nile. The desolation on all sides was most depressing. The little gardens and plantations were rank with weeds and completely deserted, and the few wandering natives we met looked half-starved.

During the few marches before and after the Kafu River was crossed, no food of any description was obtainable. I dared not encroach upon the reserve of flour so early in the expedition, and nothing remained but for me and my brother-officer to go out after pitching camp in search of game. This was no mean task, as the caravan numbered over a thousand souls; and although they could exist on a marvellously small quantity of food, they could not live and travel on nothing.

On one occasion we left camp at 5 A.M. and marched till 3 P.M., during which time we were almost constantly up to our knees in swamp. After pitching camp in a morass, the best at hand, my brother subaltern the "Chigger," and I took an hour's rest and then set out to shoot some game. Fortunately, just as the sun was sinking, we got a pair of fine antelope, which the soldiers with us cut up swiftly and carried on their backs and shoulders. Before getting home we were overtaken by a terrific storm and darkness, and were drenched to the skin. The thunder seemed to crash on to our heads, and the lightning to strike between the men. I expected every moment that some one would be obliterated; but we got to our tents safely, only to find no fires, no dinner, and six inches of mud to spend the night in.

The cooking of the meat was out of the question, and a considerable portion of it must have been devoured raw. The poor creatures, however, showed their gratitude to their commandants by kindly glances and cheerful faces. I told them that, perhaps, we should have many hardships together, and they said I was not to mind as they would make the best of things.

In the morning that dear old benefactor, the sun, wiped out all traces of the previous night's misery, which was soon forgotten as our clothes dried and our limbs lost their numbness. What a pity the

sun should mix his rare gifts with so many evils! Sometimes what he gives with one hand he takes away with the other. He must always be treated with respect, for he never fails to take advantage of any neglect, and though he guides one's footsteps and is the great source of life, he is likewise the friend of fever and death. Though men do not realise the fact at the time, long hours spent in the sun induce fever perhaps more than other causes.

Next day, in order that the food supply might not be quite so casual, we sent forth two of our most experienced soldiers in quest of meat. These particular individuals enjoyed reputations as hunters and unerring shots, which led us to entrust them with three doubtful rounds of ammunition apiece, with which to pile up sufficient meat for one thousand souls. Considering the wariness, speed, and marvellous powers of mimicry possessed by antelope, their long-suffering vitality which makes it sometimes most difficult and always laborious to secure them when wounded, three cartridges cannot have been considered, even by the veriest red-tape, an extravagance. A buck can travel for miles with a wounded leg, or even a part of its entrails protruding and dangling against its hind legs; but notwithstanding this, the good fellows returned to camp in the evening with two hartebeests Jacksoni, two cartridges, and a long-winded history about the two others.

Of course, the active black is a fine stalker with a keen sense of when he can be seen or scented. His slim, lithe figure makes it a comparatively simple feat to crawl on his belly for a mile; thus he often gets his shot at 50 yards, and at that range he is undoubtedly a first-class marksman.

So we eked out a living until we got to Masindi, which had a few inhabitants and an old fort. Masindi will be remembered by readers of Sir Samuel Baker's works as the scene of his poisoned beer adventure with Kabarega. It also marks the furthest limit of Christianity in those parts. Beyond was paganism wherein missions had not penetrated.

Close here we encountered a Church of England Mission Station where they had got as far as marrying and giving in marriage. Quaintly enough the father of the bride was entitled to the dowry (the marriage having that amount of paganism in it), and this individual generally saw he got it too. On one occasion the ceremony was somewhat rudely interrupted. The bride, blushing possibly—for who could tell—arrayed in a becoming piece of bark-cloth, and attended by several giggling bridesmaids, was about to have her finger encircled with a sardine-tin opener, when her irascible father burst in and made so much altercation that the service had to be temporarily abandoned. He fiercely reproached the bridegroom (who looked wretched under the circumstances) with the thin and emaciated appearance of

the dowry goat. The agreement appeared to have been that he should receive a fat goat, and this was a thin one. Chafing under such a wrong, he stood on no ceremony, however dignified, and his great anxiety seemed to have been that he would be too late. Fortunately, the minister was equal to the occasion and rapidly estimating the value of the fat in question, which should have been there, he handed over its equivalent in cowry shells and thus quelled the disturbance. Savages do not like being "done" any more than we do : it is an ancient trait.

On another occasion the bride and bridesmaids got mixed up—they are all alike, and none of them know what is happening—with the result that a bridesmaid got married by mistake ! I suppose they arranged the matter amongst themselves ; but it is usually considered a difficult knot to untie.

I arrived at an outlying village after a march and finding a nice clean, well-swept hut with its door open, I walked in and had my lunch. It seemed it was a church, and the native minister, thinking I probably wanted a service, rang the bell to collect a congregation ; but as this did not arrive as quickly as might be desired, he got my Yusbasha, or native captain, to help him. The latter soon drove in a number of people and came in and reported the congregation all present, thinking it was my wish to have a service, and deeming a congregation a necessary adjunct.

I soon left Masindi and pursued my way towards the meeting place of the expedition, Fajao. This place is on the left bank of the Nile, and situated immediately below the Murchison Falls. After a long march over mountains and streams and through swamps and down rocky precipices, I reached the summit of a hill overlooking the mighty river.

Suddenly there burst on my sight the most majestic spectacle I have ever beheld, perhaps excepting the mountain, Kilima Njaro. It would be difficult to determine which of these impresses a man more. The Murchison Falls are the more awe-inspiring, and on first looking upon them one feels that one's labours have been amply rewarded.

The great river, after flowing out of the Victoria Lake, varies in breadth from a mile downwards and suddenly converges to a point. Through a narrow, rock-bound opening, across which an active athlete could jump, it pours its multitudinous waters. Side by side is another fall, lovely to see, but insignificant in volume. Though the drop of the greater is only about 120 feet, the mass of water precipitated down makes a sound that is nothing short of stunning and bewildering. The spray rebounds again higher than the banks. As I lay in camp at night a mile and a half distant the gigantic roar kept me awake.

Below is the veriest chaos imaginable. Whirlpools and eddies and foam twist and curl and make an almost indescribable scene. Hundreds of croco-

diles bask on rocks and sandy spots, or leisurely float about waiting for the various filthy morsels which are carried over the precipice and form their daily food. Families of hippopotami disport themselves below, grunting and looking for tangled grasses which grow luxuriantly on the banks. These are densely covered with forest, through which the blue river courses with a current of about four miles an hour, the whole making a scene of such beauty as to defy the pen. By moonlight the scene is equally inspiring. The silvery schist glimmers on the rocks, and the foam and spray take wonderful colours.

And yet, with all this to fill the eye, it is, like so many other fair scenes in Africa, a hot-bed of sickness. In less than ten days the whole assembled expedition was struck down with fever. I was one of the first to suffer, and though I was in the place for three weeks only, I had three sharp attacks in succession. This was my first experience of the dread scourge, and from that moment for five subsequent years I had periodical visitations. In all, I think, I have had about sixty bouts, but at last am fairly free from it. My first symptom, as a rule, was a dryness of the skin and a desire to go and sit in the sun. Sometimes the first indication was loss of appetite; but I always felt the approach by a general weariness and apathy. My temperature, especially at night, generally rose to 104° and occasionally 105° . My usual course, when possible, was



MURCHISON FALLS.

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to go to bed, cover myself with blankets, take ten grains of phenacetin, and a bowl of hot soup, and endeavour to sleep. This would induce the sweating stage, after which relief came and the temperature fell.

At that time I did not understand the proper use of quinine as a preventative, and always utilised it as a cure. By the judicious and timely use of this wonderful drug fever can, to a great extent, be kept at bay, or in any case mitigated. Reckless use of it only upsets the digestive organs, and defeats its own object. There is a peculiar moment when one instinctively realises an impending attack, and an exact quantity, the knowledge of which is only born of experience, which, if carefully noted and taken advantage of, averts much illness.

Some men had an idea that a long course of arsenic built up one's resisting powers and enabled one to stave off the enemy ; but few of us believed in it after we had been any length of time in the country. A man must realise that he is infested with malarious microbes, and that under certain conditions these will gain the mastery over his own bodyguards. These conditions are brought about by chills, exposure to the sun, or by over-eating or over-drinking, and should be thought of and their effects anticipated. At one time, if I ate too hearty a lunch it was followed in half an hour by fever ; or if I forgot to take ten grains of quinine overnight, it came home to me the next morning.

Let no man who thrusts himself into the interior of Africa imagine that he can escape fever, however robust he may be ; but still, I can hardly remember a single occasion when I was laid up that was not due to my own carelessness or thoughtlessness, or to some preventable cause. Men are apt to grow callous as well as careless, and not to mind if they get fever or not ; but that is due a great deal to being run down. True, familiarity breeds contempt, and after all fever is not a terrible thing. Certainly it wastes the tissues ; but as far as it is itself concerned, I would rather have it than a severe cold in the head. It makes a man feel wretched, but does not incapacitate him. One is always able to do one's work, and on several occasions I have marched considerable distances with my temperature at 103° . A strong effort of will does wonders. Sometimes a little excitement just gives a fillip and enables a person to combat the disease successfully.

I can remember once starting for a shoot with fever on me, and after an exciting encounter finding myself much revived. On another occasion when marching, I lay under a tree trying to muster sufficient strength of mind to proceed ; some man provoked me and I got up and cuffed him, which did us both a world of good.

After all, malaria is the principal sickness the white man has to contend with in the wilds of Africa, if one excepts—and it is a big exception—blackwater

fever, of which more anon. Cholera, influenza, typhoid, pneumonia, and lung troubles are terrors but in name, and there is very little dysentery. The interior of Africa is sparsely populated, and the diseases of crowds occur but little.

This is, of course, with the proviso that a man starts sound. Should there be a weak spot, it is soon discovered and brought to book. Unfortunately, he does not commence the battle equipped with that knowledge which experience alone gives.

The expedition was delayed at Fajao for some weeks on account of the fact that we knew nothing of the natives or country on the right bank of the river. The porters who had brought us so far were Baganda, and were engaged to go thus far and no farther. The unknown has always a terror for the savage, and he was most unwilling to enter that undiscovered country from whose bourne, as far as he knew, no traveller returns. Thus the arrangement for transport forward was no easy matter. The Baganda eventually were persuaded by promises of reward to cross the water and advance another hundred miles; but this was only for one journey, and still left our communications precarious.

At that time we knew not what was in front of us. Whether the country could feed us, and would do so in a friendly manner for barter; whether the people would assist our advance by

carrying loads ; or whether they would harass us, hamper our movements or even attack us, were matters of uncertainty. Of course, with six companies of Soudanese we had no fears of attack ; but the two former items were to us of the utmost importance.

All these things had to be done gently or "poli-poli," as the Swahili has it. The savage is easily scared away ; but is quite amenable when he learns that raiding is not the programme. Fortunately, the English name usually carries with it an earnest of honest intercourse.

These people had practically never seen a white man, as few of them were old enough to have remembered Baker, Gordon, or Emin, who were the only men they were likely to have seen and known. White men had perhaps been met with ; but only such as were passing through in their travels and had not remained to be known. So the arrival of a dozen Europeans and 700 Soudanese suddenly on the confines of their country caused a considerable stir.

They gathered on their own bank of the Nile, watching us carefully to see what our intentions might be. We on our part were most careful to show a friendly spirit. By sending across a few men at a time with beads and brass wire to purchase a few things, we made a good start, and soon they in their turn came across and mixed with us.

In about a fortnight's time we had accumulated a good supply of grain—at any rate sufficient to carry us on for a month—so that we intended to float down the river to our next point or post, from which we should again throw out reconnaissances to see how the land lay.

When it is considered that all the Nilotic tribes had for a generation been sleeping peacefully by the banks of their beloved river, more or less under chiefs, and that there had been little strife other than the ordinary minor raids, it may be imagined the sudden appearance of a paramount power in their midst, altered entirely the spirit of their dream, and caused a very complete consternation.

The three tribes with whom we were to come into contact at first were the Madi, Acholi, and Aluru, and it must be said that, with one or two exceptions, these people looked sensibly upon the matter and accepted kismet with that inconsequent *abandon* that is the custom of most Eastern races.

As I have said above, the Baganda porters were persuaded to come on; but the bulk of our impedimenta was to be conveyed by water transport *via* the Albert Lake to Wadelai. Our means to this end consisted firstly, of a few Baganda canoes brought from their country in sections on men's heads and sewn together with fibre at Fajao; secondly, of a few dug-outs we found at that place which had been handed down for ages from one

generation to another, and which included one patriarchal tree capable of conveying fifty men at a time ; thirdly, of a steel boat which had been sunk in the Albert Lake, about 25 miles off, some years previously, and which was at the time being sought for ; and lastly, of a steam-launch which had been brought from England in sections.

I walked to the shore of the Albert Lake to see if the steel boat could be found, and to guide it through the intricate masses of vegetation which abound at the point where the Nile enters the Lake. To my delight the boat was soon afloat and made its way to Fajao by means of paddles as rapidly as possible. Thus we soon had sufficient water transport to meet our first requirements.

Sunset over the Albert Lake was very gorgeous, and though this lake cannot compare in grandeur, size, or beauty with the Victoria, still in its way it is impressive.

I found the margin of this lake the abode of countless guinea-fowl, which are excellent eating ; but which after some months pall on the palate. They are marvellous runners ; but I did not waste much time shooting them by day when one can hardly expect to recover a wounded bird in the dense scrub, or in the uncertain expedient of shooting them on the wing. The best method, when the object is to fill the pot, is to wait until the birds roost as the sun is sinking. Sometimes fifty of them will settle upon

a single tree, and though they are shy of a man walking erect, if he will bend down and dissemble, they will allow him to get almost under the branches. This seems confiding of them ; but they have never known man armed with the shot-gun, and they know they have nothing to fear from most four-footed creatures.

Thus a man—under the circumstances he can hardly be called a sportsman—looks up, and selecting a branch with a row of innocent birds lulled to sleep in fancied security, he drops with one shot sufficient food for himself and his attendants for two days. Like all birds in Africa, the flesh of this one is more tasteless and insipid than that of his European brother ; but it makes excellent soup. The Soudanese calls it “Gedada Wadi” or Valley Fowl.

I shot a partridge later, and asked my orderly what that was called ; he said it had not a name, but was the guinea-fowl’s brother. Likewise, the bustard seems to have been a first cousin ; and all the birds must have been relations to one another. Of course, the dear fellow had not studied natural history in a modern school, and the world was roughly divided for him into birds, animals, fish, etc. ; though at times he divided fish into assortments, such as flat fish, the “Father of the bayonet fish”—which requires no explanation—the Germūt, as he called the saluroids, which abound in Nilotic waters, and a few others. He had names for most

animals, on account of their various characteristics ; but I never asked him what relation they were to one another.

On my return to Fajao a terrible tragedy occurred in my household. My little boy "Insek" while trying to cross the Nile in a rickety little dug-out, had lost control in the stream, struck a rock, and been launched into the water, and thence into eternity. He never appeared again, but was snapped up by one of those terrible capacious mouths, always ready for unconsidered trifles. It took me some days to get over this loss. His quaint little ways, so totally unlike anything else in the world, his eagerness to earn a kind word and his usefulness in small matters had made me grow to be quite fond of him. At first I missed him at every turn, and to think of such a horrible death was sickening.

We used to watch these revolting reptiles packed on some rock as close as sardines, basking in the sun when gorged, and opening their hideous jaws at intervals to yawn. After this grim episode there was no mercy given, and even at the expense of much valuable ammunition there was a constant sound of pick-pock from various points on the Nile, where we had pitched our camp and erected a few rude storehouses for grain. Each one of us, as he arrived, gave his tribute in token of man's eternal loathing. Parties went forth looking for their nasty,



THE INSEK'S FATE.

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chalky eggs, and all did what could be done to exterminate the disgusting creatures. Such efforts were but drops in the ocean, and a whole regiment let loose would have found it a task beyond their powers to make any impression on their numbers. One day I persuaded our marine to turn his Maxim gun on a batch of them, and one of his bullets luckily struck one in the back and paralysed him. His friends abandoned him to his fate in a great hurry, rushing into the water with loud splashings, and we watched the wounded one making agonising efforts to follow them. He lingered on and gradually became still, when his devoted bosom companions returned and devoured him!

CHAPTER V

AGRICULTURE, ARCHITECTURE, AND ADORNMENT

He that has a house to put his head in.

Act III. Scene 2, *Lear*.

Go root away

The noisome weeds, that without profit suck
the soil's fertility.

Act III. Scene 4, *Richard II*.

Now by two-headed Janus

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time.

Act I. Scene 1, *Merchant of Venice*.

THE natives soon became most friendly, and every morning the market was quite a busy scene. Prices were fixed to the satisfaction of all parties—for these savages were easily pleased. As usual they had their vanities, and their favourite one was glass. Out of a bottle they would file a long pear-drop, which they would thrust through a hole bored in their under lip. The ornament projected outwards, and waggled up and down as they spoke. Truly

there are some quaint ideas in this world, and in its way this little bit of glass was not unbecoming. So, for a bottle, one could obtain a great basketful of sorghum grain, which was almost their only saleable commodity, and their chief means of sustenance.

Another favourite weakness was in the coiffure and head ornaments. The hair on the top of the head was mixed with beeswax, and made to congeal into a small cone, and upon this was placed a device of beads, hollowed out to the same shape, and secured at the back of the head by a few strings of beads or teeth strung together. In undress this ornament was not usually worn, but on such occasions as dances, funerals, or public functions, it was donned. When one met any number of natives thus got up, it was a sure sign that some festivity was about to take place. The men were also much addicted to the use of ivory armlets; but it was most difficult to get them to part with these, for they had some superstition that if they once parted with them, they would die soon afterwards. By paying exorbitantly I managed to get a few to bring home, but failed to buy some of the more massive and valuable ones. Their superstitions cannot have been very deep-seated: for though two rupees is a large sum in that land, a man would hardly part with his life for such a consideration. Chiefs wore a special design of copper armlet; it was larger and heavier than any worn by the rank

and file, and was always recognised as the emblem of chieftdom. Though many of the chiefs became great friends of mine during the next two years, I never induced one of them even to remove this ornament from his arm. Only the chiefs of large tracts of land, with many villages, wore these, and I do not think the ordinary Sheik-el-beled, or village chief, was entitled to the honour. Likewise was the leopard skin the badge of chieftdom. The large chieftdoms were nearly always hereditary, the most presentable of the sons being chosen. The lesser ones were not necessarily hereditary, but unanimous agreement was sufficient to raise a man to such a dignity. Every little village, however small, invariably had its chief; but many of these had little or no power, and they acted more as spokesmen than as beings invested with authority. The greater lights undoubtedly had power, and it always required the exercise of good judgment in determining the power, and consequently the responsibility of these men, when they had to be punished. One could make some of these chiefs responsible for the acts of his followers, but not others. They would, when taxed, always plead inability to elicit obedience; but of course this had to be taken *cum grano*. Sometimes outlying villages would maraud other outlying villages of a neighbouring chief, which perhaps would, in their turn, make reprisals. Afterwards each particular white officer would be held responsible

for the maintenance of peace in his own province, and such differences would be brought in front of him for settlement. I am speaking of the days when the occupation of the country was military alone. Most of such work is civil, but, of course, as there were no civil officers, soldiers acted in both capacities. The management of a district was thus most interesting.

We got wind that a certain section of this Acholi tribe was in league with Kabarega and hostile towards us. They dwelt some miles up the Nile, and had some dug-out canoes which would be most useful to us. I made a reconnaissance by order, and found them near their canoes: they were on the opposite bank, and before I showed myself I was anxious to find out their sentiments towards myself. So I ordered some of my men to strip, as their clothes would have inevitably given them away, and to shout to the enemy to come over in their canoes. Though my Nubians acted well by calling out that they were hostile to the English, and wished to see King Kabarega, it was evident that a rat had been smelt, for the barbarians opposite laughed consumedly. As I did not appreciate the joke quite so much as they did, I came out into the open, and told them they had incurred the wrath of the Englishmen, who would come and punish them, and take their boats. This I effected next day by crossing the river lower down, making a wide *détour* of some 15 miles, and

surprising them from the rear. I found the simpletons near the water's edge, all armed to the teeth, and watching for my approach from the opposite bank. I did not desire any bloodshed, but I was to learn at once that a Nubian looks upon such an enterprise as his day out, and is not easy to control on these occasions until one understands his little ways. Before I could realise what was happening, they fell upon the unfortunate enemy, and in about two minutes had the canoes and all available loot within the cluster of villages hard by. The enemy fired off their few rifles and fled; a small proportion remaining for a short time to brandish their weapons for honour's sake. In the scuffle eight of them were killed and eight wounded. We were almost too late for the canoes, as sundry savages were endeavouring to hustle them away when we arrived; but some of my Soudanese pluckily plunged into the water and captured them. Amongst the loot were two excellent canoes, about fifty loads of grain, many goats, fowls, arms, and some women. It was an amusing spectacle to see some soldier at the end of the day arriving for the muster, driving a lady before him, dragging two goats behind him, and bearing in his arms about 40 lbs. of grain and several spears, bows and arrows, with possibly some fowls hung about his person. In such an affray the Nubian is in his element, laughing all the time and enjoying himself to his heart's content. In the evening the

question of the looted ladies had to be decided, and finding no better solution, I served them out to the most deserving of my men. In those climes marriages are quickly arranged, and the preliminary love-making is perhaps too hurried to suit our tastes. In one case I saw the old old story being rapidly told on the battlefield. It must have been love at first sight! As the gentleman had rendered me valuable services as guide, I gave the bride away then and there with a goat. The ladies seemed perfectly contented, and it is just as merry as the marriage bell.

Strange to say, about twelve months afterwards, these people came and gave us their allegiance and begged for their wives back. After twelve months complete change, the latter returned to their old dull routine of working, whilst their lords sat and looked on, and they were probably all the better for the change. The canoes had to be dragged on land over dongas, through forest and swamp to Fajao, as of course they could not be got down by water owing to the Murchison Falls. This laborious proceeding was accomplished in nearly three days by about a hundred men, all singing as they swayed to their work. The poor wretches who allowed the canoes to fall into our hands must have wept bitterly that night, as their heads could not have been worth a moment's purchase when Kabarega found out the loss. It was his best means—

always limited—of crossing into his one-time kingdom, and also of escaping from it in a hurry.

About this time a flight of locusts visited Fajao—a fairly common occurrence; but such a hungry lot were these that they even ate great holes in our shirts. They came in such myriads that they quite obscured the sun, and devoured everything they could get their teeth into.

Our priceless chickens were the only creatures that welcomed their advent, which varied their diet. I shared a meal with the fowls, but found it insipid. One can eat them like shrimps, or fried or curried, but whichever way it is, one gets no satisfaction out of them: they are tasteless.

At this time the sole doctor of the expedition was not with us, being away nursing one of our number, who was already down with blackwater fever. So, of course, there occurred one of those mishaps so frequent in out-of-the-way places; and which are sometimes attended with serious results. A certain officer had been suffering from dysentery, and was in a very weak state. For some reason, best known to himself, he elected to wander out from his tent and into the granary. He stepped on to the grain to try and reach a small basket on the top, the grain slipped from under him, and he fell. From sheer weakness he was unable to recover himself or fall advantageously, and so landed on one of his shoulders, which had at intervals

during his life been dislocated. He called out to me to come and put it in again, mentioning at the same time that on one occasion four doctors had failed to reinstate it, and that I had no mean task in front of me. I solemnly sat down on the ground facing him, put my foot into his armpit, and pulled as if for dear life. For upwards of half an hour I struggled thus with a Herculean labour, during which time he bore his agony without a murmur. My exertions brought on an attack of fever, which for the previous twenty-four hours had been lurking about my bones, and I found myself prostrated with exhaustion.

After a brief rest I resumed my operations without any sign of success ; but my heroic patient still urged me on by informing me that unless I got it in during the next two days, he would have a stiff shoulder for life. It then became a question of whose pluck would last the longer. I desisted again to search the camp for chloroform which, when administered, would cause a relaxation of the muscles and make the work comparatively easy. Not that I knew how to administer it or in what quantity I could safely give it to him. Luckily, perhaps, I could find none ; but in desperation I told him I had my hypodermic syringe with me. He at once ordered me to inject a dose of morphia : at that time I knew nothing of hypodermic syringes ; but making a frantic guess at the quantity, I put it into the tiny pestle and mortar attached, and made a solution. Inserting

it under the skin of the arm, I squirted the whole contents into his system. He responded at once by relaxing off-hand, and I feared he was going to relax altogether. Seizing the moment, I got into position again, tugged at his arm which, with a sickening thud, returned into the socket. I bound him up carefully, and retired to bed for a sweat. I never want such an experience again!

Whilst lying thus I had the great joy of receiving a mail from home. Mails found their way up-country at uncertain times, and were always a delightful surprise. In five minutes I lost myself in home news, and soon forgot that I was lying on a bed of sickness, a thousand miles from civilisation. At last one fine day, all arrangements for an advance having been completed, we crossed the Nile and entered that district which I always shall look upon as the wilds. In three marches we reached Wadelai, formerly held by Emin, but for many years forsaken and abandoned to savagedom. Here we hoisted the flag, and began to build a fort, for it was obvious that at that place a post would have to be left, to form another link in our line of communications. The surrounding country was a vast improvement upon Unyoro. For the time being we said good-bye to swamps, and entered a land of palm trees, sandy-bedded streams of clear water, and park-like stretches abounding in game. It was hot and feverish, though usually a breeze sprang up

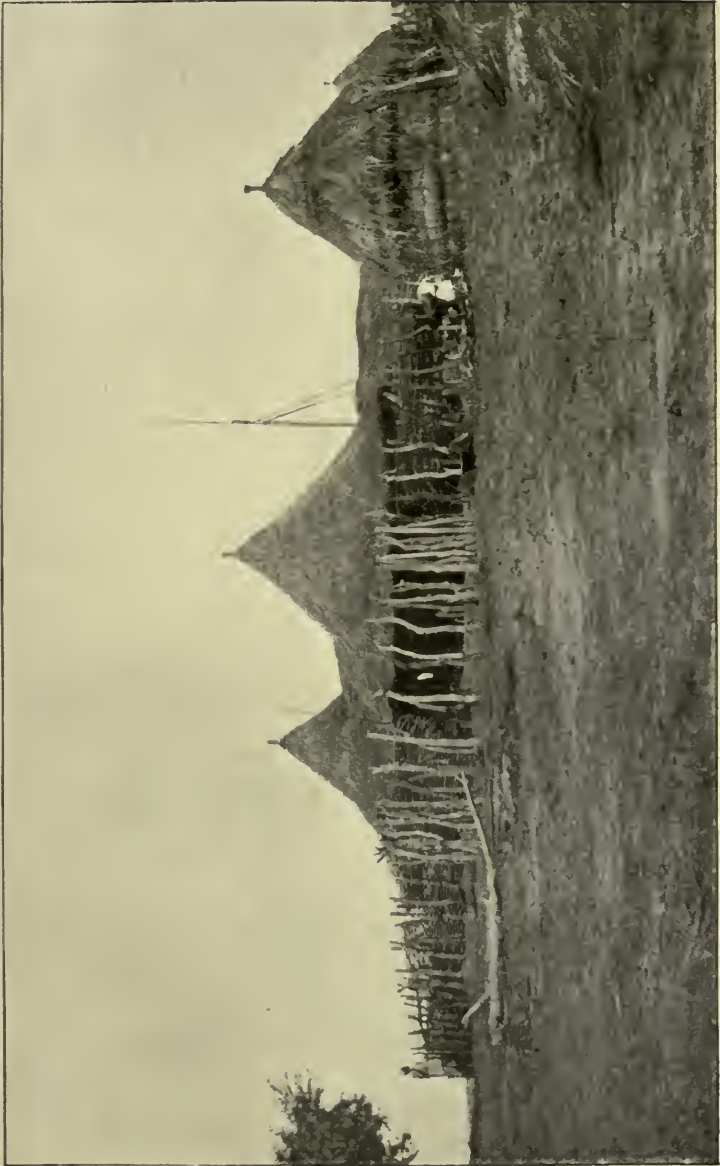


THE NILE NEAR WADELAI.

at 10 A.M., and again in the evening. The latter, as one dined in one's shirt sleeves in the open, was especially delicious, and during the greater part of the year the nights were fairly cool. Of course, they were less so than those of Uganda; but it must be remembered that Uganda has an altitude of 4000 feet, whereas Wadelai is only about 2000, and the lower one gets down the Nile, so much higher is the temperature. A good average temperature, inside a double-fly ridgepole tent was 100°, which all old Indians will laugh at; but they must recollect that in that wilderness there were no houses, verandahs, or civilised means of getting cool. Of course, at that time we were all constantly in the sun, working and sweating; and the latter is the best valve for the enormous heat generated in the system. To our commanding officer's great grief, orders arrived for two companies of our troops to be left in Unyoro. This was inevitable, as, though the mutineers had had reverses and were scattered, there was nothing to prevent them, after our departure, reassembling and threatening Unyoro. So one company remained with an officer, at or in the neighbourhood of Masindi, and another with a luckless subaltern at the poisonous Fajao. At Wadelai, the officer left in charge at once commenced converting a hill into a fort and town—a kind of work with which all of us were to be associated during the next two years. The building of such a place,

with plenty of time upon one's hands, was a most interesting occupation. We were not bound down by any rules or precedents, and could give full play to our individual fancies. There was a fort to be erected with offices, stores, and magazines within its walls; dwelling-houses to be made; villages to be laid out, and as much of the surrounding soil to be tilled as labour could be found for. It was no mean task when it is considered that some of the sites were covered with forest which had to be levelled to the ground, or by thick jungle which had to be cleared.

As a rule the fort was commenced first, the outline traced, and digging started forthwith. The labour at one's command consisted chiefly of Soudanese soldiers, who were excellent. They thoroughly understood the art of constructing houses composed of mud, wood, and grass, and always worked cheerfully for at least six hours a day when called upon to do so. These are long hours, for the day has a duration of only twelve hours, most of which must be spent in the scorching sun; and in addition to such work as this, the soldier has to do his parades, musketry, and ordinary military duties. This labour was unsatisfactorily supplemented by whatever porters were at one's disposal, and by the natives, who were practically useless. The porters could be utilised for bringing in trees felled in the forest, and for clearing away grass; but work requir-



A FORT IN COURSE OF BUILDING (OLD STYLE.)

ing skill was beyond their powers. As for the natives, they required such a lot of watching, that it is doubtful if they were any advantage at all. We went to the local chief, and by dint of presents, extracted from him a promise to arrive at sunrise with a certain number of his men. He generally stipulated that a proportion should be left behind to work in their own fields, which was preposterous, as the women did all that ; though it was possible that some men had to stop behind to see the women did their work, and to prevent their being stolen. Sometimes they would even urge that half their number ought to be in their homes in the event of surprise and raiding. This was equally absurd in the proximity of such a force as a company of Soudanese ; but it was always well to humour the savages, and, as I shall relate afterwards, forced labour in those parts is not a success. On one occasion I remember having collected a mob of these creatures and set them to work to make a road, which meant simply to uproot the grass and tangled vegetation, and clear a narrow strip about 10 feet wide. Their chief stood by, ceaselessly clamouring and urging them to redoubled exertions, and for a time all went well, until unhappily some vultures appeared and began those slow sweeping circles, which indicate that some poor creature *in extremis* had been spied out. Eagerly these were watched by all the pairs of eyes, which should have been turned towards the

ground, and when the vultures got close enough to show the exact position of the prey, every human soul suddenly vanished, leaving the road to take care of itself. I saw them all scudding away through the grass, until they were lost to sight.

I waited patiently for a while, and presently saw them returning, some of them hung with small shreds of flesh. They had evidently just won the race with the vultures, and wore the happy expression of victors. They then condescended to return leisurely to their road, but what could one do with such easily diverted labourers?

The tools at our disposal were a few spades and saws brought up from Uganda, and hoes borrowed from the savages. The fort was generally comprised of a rough parapet, made of a double row of stakes driven hard into the ground, interlaced with withes or split bamboos, and the space between the rows filled in with earth, which was excavated from a ditch outside. Care had to be taken to cut the stakes stout enough to prevent the fencing of the parapet bulging in the rains. The parapet was high enough for a man to fire over, and the ditch broad enough to make a big jump. The corners of the parapet, which was roughly a square, were furnished with bastions to enfilade the ditches, and these bastions had raised platforms to mount the Maxim guns upon. Some of us encircled our forts with a thick zareba of thorns: one of the most insuperable

obstacles for the bare-footed savage. To surmount such a prickly difficulty, he would be obliged to burn it, during which operation he would expose himself at very short range. In any case a fort always carried such a moral effect, that it was rarely assailed and never carried. Even the fearless Soudanese could not face a fort, and that is possibly what saved Uganda at a very critical period. Having finished the exteriors, one could turn one's attention to the interiors. A guardroom for prisoners usually stood at the entrance gate, a storehouse for trade goods formed the exchequer, and a magazine for ammunition completed the more important buildings: the last named had to be made fireproof, and to be sufficiently isolated from the other buildings for safety. Each of us had his own conception of the best method for effecting this. One built it under-ground with a roof of mud and sticks; another utilised a big cavern in some rocks that happened to be handy; and a third made a brick house. Whichever way it was, it was vital that it should never be blown up, as ammunition, from its weight, was difficult to obtain in any quantity. Every round had a considerable value, and it was a regulation to fine any man eight annas for every round he lost. Besides these edifices a few goo-goos, or native granaries, were added in case of famine. These were simply enormous baskets covered with mud, and raised off the ground on piles to keep out

the damp and rats. The supply was always kept fresh in good years by giving away the contents and refilling, or in bad years by exchange. If not carefully watched the grain would soon become musty, fermented, or weevil-eaten; but luckily the Soudanese had sufficient foresight to appreciate this fact, and were ever ready to help in keeping the reserve store fresh.

When these various houses had been constructed, there came the question of one's own dwelling-place. At first it was the custom to build it inside the fort; but this was afterwards abandoned, as it only increased the chances of fire, and the space within four walls is not a desirable spot for a happy home. By taking up one's abode outside, it made it possible to have no fire of any sort inside the fort—a great advantage. The white man's house lent itself to wonderful flights of imagination, and within the reasonable limits of such architecture, the designer could please himself. The Soudanese were always most zealous for their commandant, and put in their best work for his own private comfort.

The oldest form of architecture, corresponding perhaps to the Pre-Norman period, was the ordinary grass house: sometimes two houses with an open passage between the two, and a broad verandah all round. This style soon became obsolete, as it was highly inflammable and formed a charming residence

for all the rats, mice, snakes, beetles, mosquitoes, lizards, and bats in the neighbourhood. Then came what might be called the perpendicular period, when two trees of perhaps thirty feet in height were sunk into the ground to support a ridgepole for the roof. The walls were made by sinking smaller trees into the ground, and binding the outsides with split bamboos: the interstices being filled in with earth, like the parapets of the fort. These, of course, were far cooler than the prehistoric grass houses! The floor was raised two feet by well-stamped down earth, and the thatching of the roof was from eighteen inches to two feet in thickness. The interior of the walls was first plastered with ordinary mud, then with cow-dung, and when dry, with liquified wood-ashes, plastered on like whitewash. It was always a delight to me to watch the men building a house, some bestriding the ridgepole, others on the roof sewing on the thatching with a big wooden needle and green bark, and calling to friends below to receive the needle each time it was thrust through. Then a little way off a few with bare legs, would be making immense pies of mud or wood-ash. Non-commissioned officers would be superintending the cutting and bringing in of shebas, or trees with forked ends, and bamboos from the forest. All would be laughing, chaffing, and giving full play to their good spirits and sunny natures. Then came the brick period, when it was

felt that for very shame we should build our houses of bricks. Those who endeavoured to effect this with sun-dried bricks, only effected a fiasco, as the rains melted them like sugar. After many experiments, a fairly durable brick was burnt in a kiln—my knowledge of brick manufacture was not worth mentioning—but after innumerable experiments, I arrived at a brick which did not break when I dropped it on the ground—if I did not drop it too carelessly! I made about a hundred thousand of these by mixing half river-mud and half white-ant mud, and sprinkling profusely with chopped grass. It was fortunate that I had only made a hundred thousand, because a friend turned up and showed me where to find suitable clay, with which fairly sound and durable bricks could be made.

Before we had all left the Nile, a comparatively splendid villa of two rooms with a verandah had risen on the river's bank. It proved to be infinitely cooler, drier, and consequently healthier, than any other form of mansion. The brick-fields and kilns were always a subject for study. Teaching the Soudanese how to mould, and sun-dry, and finally burn, was to all a novelty, and therefore interesting. It was found that these bricks required about eight days' burning in a wood-fire before they were perfectly done. Of course, this brick period only occurred late in our careers, when we were more settled and established; but for some of us many

months had to elapse before any lengthened rest came.

When the white man's house had been achieved, attention could be turned to agriculture. Swampy ground could, to a certain extent, be drained and planted with white patna rice—a delicacy for the white man's table only. For the soldiers, red rice was grown, and this was a simpler process as it was far hardier and would grow on comparatively dry soil, the slopes on either side of a stream being convenient ground. This red rice was our ordinary fare, as very few officers succeeded in raising the better species. The former cannot be compared to the latter for flavour ; but is a good substitute. A certain number of acres would be laid under sesame, from which a most useful oil was extracted, either for burning in lamps or for cooking purposes. The grain, when roasted and mixed with honey, and sprinkled with chopped ground nuts, made a sweetmeat by no means to be despised. Our home-made lamps, though primitive, answered their purpose of giving a dim light, just sufficient to see by. They were made from a square piece of tin, usually the top of a biscuit tin, the edges being turned in, and the corners bent to form a nozzle to take the wick. The latter generally consisted of some twisted strips of under-clothing that was past washing. With the tin full of sesame oil, and a wick at each of the

four corners, a religious light enabled one to guide one's food to one's mouth. Naturally such an open and easily upset contrivance was a continual source of danger. Occasionally the whole contents of the tin would catch fire, and unless one knew the vagaries of the contrivance, it was most difficult to extinguish. One of the party, finding himself on one occasion in such a quandary, declared he would very soon have it out, and before he could be restrained, poured a bucket of water over the then insignificant flames. The natural result was that a column of fire rose up and set the roof alight, and soon reduced the edifice to ashes.

The greater part of the cultivation was comprised of the sorghum or metammah grain, which there formed the staff of life. It is a hardy plant, and when ripe, with its clusters of red grain, at a height of sometimes ten feet, was quite beautiful. The stalks are very sweet to suck. Upon this farinaceous diet the natives almost exclusively live or rather vegetate. Then one field would be devoted to sweet potatoes, or rather the convolvulus plant, which yielded a fruit something like yams, but with a red skin, and rather more stringy; another field to mealies; and another and very select one to the vain endeavour to raise wheat! A small quantity of wheat was produced, but none of us made much of a success of it. It is to be hoped that our successors have found out the proper method to raise this

precious cereal, for we missed nothing in those wilds so much as ordinary bread. The sorghum would not bind—it always crumbled, unless some sesame oil was mixed with it, and this brought forth a most unappetising form of bread. It was the custom to eat the sorghum either in thin soft wafers, or baked into a kind of chupatty, or fried into biscuits, which, with salt, were perhaps less repulsive than other forms.

When all these things had been accomplished, one could aspire to a vegetable garden. Those of us who had had the forethought to bring with them a tin of Sutton's seeds, were amply rewarded. Most vegetables, with the chief exceptions of cabbages and cauliflowers, would repay the labour and care required for their nurture. One man would have to be told off to water them at sunset, and if one was not lucky enough to have a spring handy, then several more men or women would be required to carry up buckshas, or earthenware vessels of water, from the river. If women were employed they required to be watched, as they would invariably try and save a little trouble by obtaining their water at the nearest point, heedless of any danger. On one occasion a poor damsel returned screaming and terror-stricken, for her robe had been torn and her bucksha bitten in half by a crocodile! It must have been a narrow shave. Some enterprising officers erected Egyptian Shadufs which saved an infinity of labour. Besides the care in water-

ing, it was necessary to keep the fierce sun off these products of temperate climes by means of little grass roofs. In addition to one's own garden, it was well to foster in the men a spirit of emulation to have gardens of their own. At first it was necessary to give them half-holidays, and march them down to plantations told off to them along the river banks, and to watch them at any rate commence cultivating. After a while these practical people found out the good of growing their own green food, and it was a common sight to see a father and his children, and such of his wives as could be spared from other employments, working away in their little gardens. They had their onions, and peas and ground nuts, of which they are particularly fond; their beans, their sweet potatoes, their chillies, their mealies, their lady's fingers, and other native vegetables. Besides these things, each family would probably have a little herd of goats, a few fowls, and the officers a few cattle. Then when all these were in full swing, a commandant could think of such things as cow-houses, market buildings, and saw-pits, to saw planks for doors and windows. The native villages would be laid out symmetrically within a few hundred yards of the fort, giving ground in proportion to rank, with a small outlying village for visitors and guests, when they came to pay their salaams to the paramount power. As soon as it had been ascertained that we were going to hold the country and declare a Protec-

torate, it became necessary that all neighbouring tribes should be made acquainted with the fact, and should come at once to pay the homage due to might. It was a necessary step, as prestige is everything with the unsophisticated black, nor could even indifference towards us be brooked. Some tribes gave out that they did not want us, had never asked us to come, and were not going to have anything to do with us. Although this does not sound like direct hostility, it was liable to be misinterpreted, and if it remained unchecked, would imply weakness to the savage mind, and would be taken advantage of. In the event of truculence, it was customary to send and ask for the pleasure of the truculent one's company at tea, with a full explanation. If the last was not forthcoming, a hasty visit was paid and possibly a few goats borrowed! If silence was still maintained, a few cattle followed, and then a few women, which generally had the desired effect! But if the carrying off of the women did not move the feelings, it was obvious that more than truculence was intended, and the application of a little fire and sword was necessary. There is no other way of convincing their untutored minds. Curiously enough, this drastic method would, as a rule, be followed by complete submission; but until it is brought about, these mere children will continue to be deluded by false hopes, and live in a fool's paradise. One delightfully ingenuous gentleman positively sent to me to say that if I would send a

force and punish him, he would come in, but not till then. I complied at once: I suppose it eased his mind and convinced him of the sincerity of my threats. Promises they do not grasp, nor do they deal with them. Promises are considered according to the reputation for honour enjoyed by the one who promises; but to the savage, the sense of honour is too refined a subject to be cogitated: the present is sufficient to him, and he deals with the future as it arrives. Sincerity is a subtle innovation of civilisation.

However, in our experiences of subjugating the Nile Province, we rarely had to deal with opposition in any but a very mild form. Sheik Ali, the chief of the Aluru, brought me in a beautiful 80-lb. tusk at Wadelai, directly we hoisted the flag, and his example was followed by most other chiefs along the Nile, as we advanced. Of course, these tusks were given to the representatives of the Queen, and so had to be handed over to the Government; otherwise they would have been interesting mementos. Some of the chiefs professed great love for us; but that is their little way: and doubtless it gave them great satisfaction to think that we took it all in like mother's milk. In return for their presents, we always received them with the utmost courtesy, and with as much ceremony as could be mustered with the meagre appurtenances at our command.

In our turn we presented them, from our store

of somewhat tawdry apparel, with a robe embroidered with gold lace, or a gaudy tarboosh, or anything with colour and wherewithal to catch the eye. Their love of dress is extraordinary! A certain commandant happened to have brought up an immaculate suit, the work of Tautz, and this he bartered with a chief for a cow. I think one of the most grotesque figures I ever saw was this same gentleman next day, dressed in the suit; his neck was bare, his feet, except for sandals were bare, and upon his head was a resplendent tarboosh. The air with which he carried himself provoked many a smile, though we all endeavoured to conceal it: uncommonly well the suit fitted him too! The slim upright figure of the savage looks well in anything, but they themselves cannot carry it off; and their manner of wearing the white man's clothes is generally ridiculous. One cannot always excite their fancy, and many little things I had great hopes of, were lost upon them. I had expected much in return for some empty brass Hotchkiss cartridges, which I had taken with me, but whenever I produced them, I was met with a vacant stare. In spite of their love of brass, they could make nothing of such things.

CHAPTER VI

FAUNA, AND DEGREES OF SAVAGEDOM

3rd Fisher. Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea.

1st Fisher. Why, as men do aland, the great ones eat up the little ones. .

Act II. Scene 1, *Pericles*.

The rankest compound of villainous smell,
That ever offended nostril.

Act III. Scene 5, *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Many goodly creatures are there here.

Act V. Scene 1, *Tempest*.

AFTER a short stay I resumed my journey with the flotilla down the Nile. The women and heavy baggage—such as it was—were left, and my company formed the escort. Our next stage was nearly a hundred miles to Dufleh, and our commanding officer accompanied us.

We passed Emin Pasha's old fort of Wadelai which was on the left bank of the river, now leased to the Belgians by Great Britain during the life of

King Leopold ; and it was here that Emin burnt all his ivory and sank his steamer many years before. The parapet of the fort was visible, thickly overgrown with rank vegetation, and the site had become the abode of several herds of that beautiful antelope, the Cobus Kob, and also of his darker and rarer kinsman, the Cobus Leucotis, or white-eared Kob. The former with their elegant horns and bright fawn, almost chestnut coats, made a charming picture. Here and there were gigantic ant heaps showing high above the horizon, and sometimes upon one of these might be seen the motionless form of a Cobus sentinel, safeguarding his brothers and spying around with eagle eye for any signs of danger.

They are intensely inquisitive by nature, and will at times even come towards you to ascertain if you are a cause for alarm. When shot at they are instantly startled, and so deceptive is sound that they frequently come galloping towards you. Suddenly they seem to realise that all is not as it should be ; then they swerve and pass away at full speed. At other times they will guess the direction of the sound correctly and start off as if they were never going to stop ; but, as if overpowered by their innate curiosity, some of them, or perhaps only one, will turn to have that one last look which since the outset of the world's history has so often proved fatal.

I shall later advocate the use of the double-

barrelled small-bore rifle, and my present subject bears example of my opinion. In contrast to the magazine rifle which, when a round has been fired, has to be more or less brought down from the shoulder to refill the chamber, after which a new sight has to be taken, the double-barrelled rifle obviates all difficulties. In addition to this, a subtle alteration in aim can be far more easily judged and allowed for. Many and many a time have I missed with my first shot and waited, without a stir, for the nature of the beast to assert itself, and many a time has he stopped dead and given me my opportunity before he could realise how far he had committed himself. The sentinel himself, who is usually a well-grown animal, will do it; though he is very difficult to get. He is well enough instructed by instinct to stand and watch to leeward, for the herd can smell danger for itself, whilst he occupies a commanding position and relies mainly on his eyesight. Still, it is possible to work round sufficiently to windward to avoid being scented, and at the same time to keep hidden from the keen eyes of the sentinel, if there be not more than one, and thus get a shot. But such wily precautions are nullified with a magazine rifle, unless the first shot is fatal, but even the best of us can never be certain of such being the case. It is most difficult to avoid detection by sight or sound in the process of recharging a chamber and taking a fresh sight. The frightened, but still alert creature, will

seldom fail to spot it, and then there remains nothing but a last despairing and generally cruel shot.

It is a glorious sight to see a herd quietly grazing, some from time to time looking up, others bending round their necks to brush away the flies, others again at play with their horns interlaced, and all in their attitudes and movements perfectly graceful. Suddenly the sentinel gives the alarm, and with one accord they look to him for the direction of escape, and launch themselves into a reckless, headlong flight. Like the rabbit, they have developed white tufts to their tails, as danger signals, and it is wonderful how conspicuous they are as they all turn tail and depart. Thus will they tear along for perhaps a mile, or until they can reach some patch of grass with which the colour of their coats can blend, and they can supplement their first defence—their speed—with one sometimes as effective—their power of mimicry. When they resort to this latter means none but good eyes can define them, unless they are followed and marked down. A whole herd, of course, is too large to escape notice, though I have passed quite close to one without being conscious of its presence. Each separate one is aware that the slightest movement will betray them all, and remains stock still until the danger is past, if it be not too pressing. They know to a nicety when to utilise one method of defence and when the other, or both, in combination.

By long practice I became myself fairly adept at the art of picking out animals in a landscape; but never reached the marvellous acuteness possessed by my orderly, Bazruta Mersal. Often has he suddenly stopped dead and pointed with his hand to some patch of waving grass, softly muttering the name of some animal; and yet I was unable to perceive anything. I would have to put up my Zeiss glasses, which would at once reveal the object with clear definition.

This faculty is inbred in most natives of the wilds; but not to such a remarkable degree as in this man's case. From time immemorial these races have been accustomed to exercise the eyesight in long distances, and it is consequently far superior to that of the white man. Nor has the black man injured his powers of vision by fine work or nocturnal lucubrations. Of course it cuts both ways, for from this very fact he does not approach the white man in looking into little matters. Again, he is often helped by habit, and though he cannot sometimes clearly see what a thing is he will tell you it is so and so, for he recognises its peculiar appearance at a distance, or he knows that with such and such an environment it is most likely to be so. This gift enables him to estimate distances with marvellous accuracy. I have pointed to a hill far ahead in our general direction and asked how far it is away. The

answer I got was that if we walked continuously we should arrive when the sun was "there"—and its position would be pointed out—but that if we rested for an hour it would be "there"—lower down. Nor would these conjectures ever be far wrong. It is the practice of these men to judge by natural and not by artificial means.

So is it with their memories. They have no paper and ink to trust to: all they wish to remember must be kept in their heads, and this necessity has made their memories so active, that they can relate all the details of incidents in their past lives without confusion or mistake. I know it is so, for I have frequently had stories corroborated from the mouths of various people. And it is on this memory that the native mainly relies in refinding his way through any complicated jungle through which he may have once passed.

I once asked Bazruta, when I was myself hopelessly lost, if he knew the way back to a certain place. He at once pointed out the direction, and I asked him—who had no compass and no sun to guide him for it was at the time hidden behind the clouds—how he proposed keeping that direction. Without hesitation he replied that if we walked for half an hour or so we should come to a very large euphorbia tree, when it would be necessary to bear a trifle to the right until we came to the sandy bed of a small stream. Following this for a short dis-

tance we should come upon some red rocks, where we must turn left-handed. And so on, by trees and rocks and hills and valleys he could trace the shortest way to our destination without faltering. Of course, during the time we had been traversing this part I had been absorbed in the chase, and had got into the lazy habit of leaving such matters as direction in his hands. But after this I cultivated the art under his tuition and found it simpler than I had expected.

The native appears to saunter along with his mind unoccupied by mundane matters; but he is in reality taking in much of his surroundings. Instinct is the force caused by environment or external impressions, and prompts a man to act in a certain manner under certain conditions: I believe the savage to have a finer instinct of whereabouts than the white man; but I write this to show that he does not rely mainly upon that instinct to find his way. Nature has made it imperative for him to take pains in this respect; and is not the taking of pains at the bottom of most success? To a great extent too in the lower animals, this faculty, which we call instinct, is supplemented by the capacity for remembering surroundings.

Observation in the jungle is the source not only of safety, but of infinite enjoyment. To the man who observes, the solitude of the jungle is filled with delights. Though a knowledge of these delights

enhances them ; yet it is by no means necessary for their enjoyment. Indeed, is it not by observation that knowledge comes? The ordinary man passes through Africa without looking carefully about him, failing to see half of what is going on, and missing what alone makes the hardships of travel in such a country endurable. The habits of animals and insects, the beauties and changes of nature, are all worth studying. They are always at hand, and require no further equipment to learn than a keen pair of eyes and an ordinarily intelligent mind.

We floated easily down the stream, rising before the sun, and not looking out for a camping-ground until the afternoon was far advanced. Then we would land, and whilst camp was being pitched and dinner cooked, we took our rifles and leisurely strolled in the jungle. If we failed to get anything very interesting, it was always an easy matter to secure a water-buck. As his name makes evident, he haunts the proximity of water, and is never found any great distance from it. The evening is perhaps the best of all times to seek for sport. All creatures after the long hot day are thirsty, and are to be seen slowly wending their way towards the river-side.

Lying in a thicket one can see all manner of beasts coming to have their evening drink. Perhaps, first may come this stately water-buck with his shaggy grey coat and sweeping horns, looking—as he is—one of the most majestic things that walk. He

may be alone, or attended by a few does, who grow no horns and are by comparison insignificant in appearance. His carriage is so beautiful that he is always worth looking at, and, indeed, except as a trophy, he is hardly worth killing, for his flesh is coarse and tough. Then may come two or three wart-hog, or even a small herd, all together, grunting and grotesque. With the exception of the hippopotamus, he might be considered the ugliest of God's works. Hideous excrescences stand out on his face, giving him his name, and his whole aspect is fierce and forbidding. But he always shuns man, and will only turn when cornered or wounded. If he is lying hurt, or even in his death agony, he is dangerous and should be granted a respectful distance, for if he gets a chance, he will charge and with his tusches inflict a terrible gash. He is provided with four curved tusches, the longest of which, in old animals, attain a length sometimes of ten or twelve inches on the outer curve. Setting his whole weight behind his blow, he uses his weapons with lightning adroitness, and should he get near enough to strike, it is almost impossible to avoid the blow. When roused he is courageous, and with his last gasp will viciously jerk up his head in the hopes that he may avenge himself before death.

I remember one that I had wounded and followed, lying in wait for me behind a small bush. He could

get no further for his life's blood was ebbing ; but when he saw me he struggled on to his legs and made a bold bid for vengeance. He just failed to get his dagger home, for death overtook him on the way, and he rolled over on to his side and never moved again. The flesh is white, tender, and most toothsome to the palate. The Soudanese, who are by way of professing Mohammedanism, are of course not supposed to partake of it ; but the temptation was always too great, and abandoning religion, they used to devour it greedily.

The wart-hog is not a common spectacle, as he spends most of his day in the hole he digs for himself in the ground. He makes this a tight fit, and only just large enough to hold him. In order that his head should be towards the entrance of light and possible dangers, he has to retire into his burrow backwards, and it is a most comical sight to see him galloping towards it as if all the fiends were after him, suddenly stop, and reversing the order of things, disappear tail first. Like most of the brute creation he drinks once just before dawn ; then again, if the day is sultry, at noon, and again at sunset ; but at other times one sees very little of him. He furnishes one of the most quaint optical delusions in natural history. In the grey of the morning, if there is mist enough to make the landscape appear hazy, a herd of these pig may sometimes be seen returning from water, and they look for all the world like a troop of

lions! This resemblance is not my own fancy, for it has been noticed by many hunters and travellers, and, of course, arises from the fact that both animals are heavily built in front and fall away considerably behind. Like lions they are easily killed and the small-bore rifle, with expanding bullet, does ample execution. They subsist chiefly on roots, and where these are to be found they are themselves to be found; but they dine very late.

We noticed, in our passage, occasional villages dotted on either bank, and almost invariably very cleverly hidden, for by bitter adversity had these weak tribes learnt the art of concealment. At one time they were never safe from the attacks of Dervishes, slave-raiders, or neighbouring tribes stronger than themselves. Sometimes amongst the intricate masses of sudd, and right at the water's edge, a little hamlet would be nestled. Invisible until one is right upon it, it escapes notice, unless searched for thoroughly; and several times we encamped close to villages without realising their existence. They are defended by heavy stockading, which would not be utilised so much for an active defence, as to give time for the wretched inhabitants to slip out and vanish in small canoes into the sudd. These dug-outs would be hidden by masses of vegetation in little creeks, and so completely as almost to defy discovery. They were formerly their owners' only means of safety, for these were too few and too wretched to cope

with such foes as they had been harassed by in their past history. We should have liked to borrow some of these little craft; but they were too frail to carry more than one or two men, whose lives would be in constant danger from upsetting.

Othervillagers had made use of rocks, and amongst the caverns and little open spots always to be found, they had sought protection. Even with glasses I have declared some cluster of rocks to be untenanted, only to find on closer scrutiny that I was wrong. All these little habitations had to be visited and the natives propitiated. At first they fled, when discovered, at our approach, and only by sending out men one at a time with presents could we in any way gain their confidence. However, a few beads and a little brass wire would work wonders. In some cases these people were so astonishingly out of the world that they had never even heard of the English name; but some chiefs not so hopelessly ignorant, having heard of our approach, would even come out to meet us and offer us little presents of honey and goat's milk. It was not long before they all knew us and trusted us, and they soon got accustomed to the regular stream of different sorts of boats bringing up provisions, stores, or ammunition.

These are, perhaps, some of the most primitive people in the world. Law and order do not enter into their lives. There are no kings, governors, nor, in many cases, even chiefs to give commands, and the

Madi are almost the lowest of all Nilotics in the social scale. In slave-raiding days they were hunted by traders ; but now that their freedom is safe there is nothing else to rob them of : so they live in comparative peace. A few of them have chiefs, or rather spokesmen, who by their own personalities maintain a little authority ; but in many cases they do not understand obedience. This does not arise from a love of freedom ; but from their inability to grasp the advantages of emerging from the condition of animals.

They are behind their neighbours, the Shulis,* who have a sort of king and chiefs with semblances of power. These again are behind the Bunyoro, who had lived quite recently under despotism. The king of that country had acquired an immense power, and ruled without question. His cruel methods had, however, raised his people out of obscurity and made them into a comparatively great people. But these Bunyoro are again in their turn a long way inferior to the Baganda, with their king, their governors ruling provinces, their birthrights, and their feudal system of serfs.

We had made the acquaintance of the sudd at last, destined soon to dash our hopes to the ground and settle the fate of the expedition. It is comprised of thousands of small plants and pieces of vegetation combining together and making small islands, which,

* The name given by the Soudanese. These are the Acholi.

in their turn, combine together and make large ones, until finally some few hundreds of miles down the river there is or rather was a block, and boats could advance no farther. At first the banks were fairly clear, and little more was to be seen of the sudd than islets floating down with the current, now bouncing against each other, now getting stuck against some prominent point, to be possibly carried away later with additional pieces attached to them, or to run into some opening and help to form a permanent mass of sudd. These would have their passages as well as their *culs-de-sac*, and our voyage became for many days merely a voyage of discovery, for we had to find our way through somehow. We did not even know for certain that there was a free passage, and it was most exasperating sometimes to glide down a narrow fissure, perhaps for a couple of miles, only to find that there was no exit. There was nothing for it but to return against the stream and try another place. Sometimes these islands would be firmly established with trees growing upon them and with a comparatively hard soil; but the greater mass of the sudd was soft to the tread and swampy, with papyrus growing thickly upon it.

During a drought or dry season the natives betake themselves to the sudd, and the Nile being low they can find many acres of the most fertile soil for their crops. Some of them even build rude huts and remain there. The water filters through the

soil and several crops a year can be obtained. Thus in a low Nile, when Egypt is in peril of starvation, peace and plenty are enjoyed upon the Upper Nile, though existence on such a damp soil must be frightfully unhealthy ; but in the luxury of having plenty to eat without much trouble in obtaining it, these unsophisticated mortals do not bother their heads with hygienic problems.

Here and there the great river becomes clearer and water stretches uninterruptedly from shore to shore, and in such places one can gauge its width. At some points it cannot be less than eight miles across, yet its least width is occasionally as little as three hundred yards. It is an ever-varying quantity ; but on an average it might be called a mile across. Terrific storms sweep up and down, and then it is most dangerous to be on the banks, as rivers, by the current of air they induce, attract lightning.

One night on the return journey I was lying ill with fever when the tempest ripped my tent from over my head, leaving me to the mercy of the rain. It was not the first time I was called upon to face the elements in my pyjamas ; nor was it to be the last. My excellent Soudanese were at hand instantly, and held the wreck of my tent over me until the fury of the storm had abated ; but I did not escape five minutes' drenching, which cooled my perspiration somewhat unceremoniously. However, such little contretemps are frequently the traveller's

lot, and are by no means confined to that particular portion of Africa.

Such a means of progress as ours was most luxurious, and, compared with the stifling heat of ordinary marching, was deliciously cool. We had arranged an awning out of the sail, and under this we sat, rowed by our Swahili oarsmen, singing in their primitive manner, and did naught but read, write, eat, drink, sleep, or watch the scenery, the birds, and the hippopotami.

In the early morning the birds were always the attraction. Amongst the reeds would generally be some ibises and herons with their wings hung out to dry the damp of the previous night, blinking in the rising sun and making preparations to enjoy the day. Dark red waders with their white caps and long legs would be scudding about the surface of floating vegetation, sometimes rising to fly forty or fifty paces, but always preferring to be on their legs. Peeping down some small tributary one might catch a glimpse of the solemn whale-headed stork (*balaeniceps rex*) slowly waking to the world and pluming himself. In the reeds and grass might be seen gorgeous crimson finches hopping about from stalk to stalk and sparkling in the sun; and by the banks many kinds of bee-eaters with lustrous metallic red and green plumage, darting about and snapping up their food; or close to the glassy surface of the water might come swiftly flying a tiger king-fisher,

in grey and white. In the calms, duck and teal would be floating about, to get under wing at our approach and fly away. In the swampy parts, snipe would suddenly get up squawking and protesting at our intrusion into such undesirable spots. Beautiful little blue-birds would flit about the mimosa trees, upon which also might be seen hung innumerable fruit-eating bats. High up in the heavens some magnificent eagle might be making a journey, and slowly circling somewhere above would most likely be the ever-present vultures and marabou storks. At night, or during the twilight, the night-jar would appear with his uneven flight, awakening the silence with a beautiful liquid voice. The species peculiar to those parts are very weird, for they have two little pennants flying behind them, attached by long sinews to the wings. They use these pennants in the most wonderful manner. When the bird settles on the ground, it raises them erect to mimic grasses in flower, and, with its body lying close to the ground, looking for all the world like a small tuft, it is passed by undetected. The females lay their eggs on the bare ground, and so do not have to move on the approach of danger. Unconscious of their presence, I have often put them up just as I was about to tread on them. Though their note is sweet-sounding, it becomes most distressing to a sick man trying to get to sleep, and many a time have they been cursed for their songs.

These birds were all worth watching, each with his own peculiarity: more especially were the vultures interesting. If one shot by chance some antelope, it was impossible to leave it for a minute and expect it to be intact on return. The ordinary precaution, if a guard could not be left, was to tie a pocket-handkerchief to the horns. I once thoughtlessly left one for a quarter of an hour, and on my return found the eyes and most of the shoulder gone. The sky had appeared to be clear of living things; but whether by sight or scent, or, as is more probable, by both, the unerring vultures had found it out and hastened in numbers to the feast.

On another occasion I had hit an antelope one evening; but seeing it dash off into the jungle, thought I had missed. Happening to pass the same spot the next morning, I saw a vast concourse of vultures and marabou storks assembled behind a mass of bushes. The marabous were standing in rows, apparently replete, and taking no further interest in the proceedings. Evidently the carcass had not been finished overnight. These carrion-feeders will not eat at night, but roost on the tree nearest their forthcoming meal. There remained on the skeleton a few last shreds of flesh, and for these the filthy vultures were fighting amongst themselves. Their antics are most comical and ungainly; the big ones, of course, getting the lion's share, and I cannot think what the lions themselves

can have been about not to have come and taken their own shares. Upon my appearance they all left hurriedly, and the marabous looked particularly annoyed at being disturbed so early after a heavy night. There was hardly a nook or cranny in the carcase that did not show signs of diligent picking, and they had made a very complete job of it.

The kites are almost as ravenous and certainly more insolent and grasping in their methods. My dinner was once being brought to me when it suddenly vanished before my very eyes. One of the birds had swooped down, grabbed it in his claws with faultless aim, and flown away. The bearer's face was a study!

One day, for the benefit of our soldiers, porters, and any other human beings who might like to join in, a hippopotamus was slain in midstream from the boat. He executed the customary death-waltz by turning round and round, sometimes rising high out of the water with gigantic struggles and splashings. His efforts for life carried him down stream so rapidly that we were unable to secure him. Feeling, however, that he would be found before many more days were over, and knowing that the natives are not particular as to the condition of their meat, we shot no more, and told our followers that they would have to wait, and that the white man did not waste his ammunition, nor slaughter recklessly for slaughter's sake. Three days after-

wards we came upon his body. I knew we were drawing near it for many an offensive mile, and it was obvious even to the blacks, whose sense of smell is very poor. At last we sighted him. He was literally covered with human beings, flitting about on all sides of his carcase. He floated like a balloon would, being much distended, and was moored to the bank by one of his legs. His flesh was quite putrid, and upon this was the whole neighbourhood gorging. From preference had they allowed it to arrive at such a condition before they cut a single slice off it, and there they all were, eating like beasts! It was a gruesome and revolting scene. Some were already too full to eat any more, and were suffering frightfully from dyspepsia; others continued eating for hours, as if they could never have enough of it; many of them did not even wait to cook it! Of course, such a windfall seldom came their way; as the hippo is difficult to trap, and these people had practically no firearms and certainly no skill in using such as they had. I never saw the primitive harpoon, which some writers have described as being used on the Nile. But to hungry men who get meat but seldom to eat, Nature has given the peculiar faculty of being able to digest it when decomposing. It would, of course, poison the European; but to these savages it did good, at any rate to those few who did not exceed all reasonable bounds. Nor were our own

people slow in joining the fray ; though I saw some of the Soudanese could hardly stand it. They are one degree higher in the scale of civilisation. The huge hulk was very soon stripped of every atom of flesh, and the remains abandoned to the crocodiles. This was not the last spectacle of its kind I was to witness. In fact it occurs when any large animal departs this life on the banks of the Nile. It was not pleasant, and it took me several days to get the smell out of my nostrils.

Whilst drifting on one afternoon, I noticed a small baby hippopotamus following us, and seeing that the child had evidently made a mistake and looked upon the boat as another of its kind, I made the rowers slow down in the hope that he might come close up to us. But his mother very soon missed him and came tearing along at a great speed. She soon came up to her youngster, jerked him on to her back—which is their manner of carrying their young—and made off like an express train, seeming by her snorts to be rating her offspring for his stupidity. In a cumbersome way it was a pretty act, and amused us not a little.

In five days from Wadelai, Dufileh was reached, and we landed to inspect Emin's old fort and establish ourselves. Some of our men had been present when Emin was forced to fly before the Dervishes and cross the river, many years before. I got a description from one dear old gentleman who went

through the whole scene in detail. His memory seemed to be perfect, for he recounted how the horse-men had arrived first, and reconnoitred and ridden away to bring their foot-soldiers, upon whose arrival a most sanguinary battle ensued. He showed me the place where some effendi had made a stand, and where others had fallen near a tree under which Emin had been wont to sit, and told us how they had all finally rushed for the boats, finding matters too hot in the fort. From the latter they appear to have been ousted for ever. All this was described with the excited gestures and inimitable manner of the Soudanese when telling a thrilling tale.

Since those days the Nubians, as they were called, had a mortal dread of and respect for the Dervishes; and they believe that to have vanquished them we must have used silver bullets dipped in "dawa" or medicine. The fort was in ruins; but the solid brick walls still covered with plaster, and the remains of window-boards, testified to the thoroughness of Emin's work. It was situated on the Belgian bank, and finding the opposite side to be swampy and unsuited to our requirements, our commanding officer elected to fix upon a temporary site close by it, as a station for forwarding on supplies.

Palms grew in profusion in the vicinity; but none of them bore dates, for the date-palm does not grow south of Khartoum. What would we not have given for that fruit! We often looked at them and

sighed. These palms had fruit resembling oranges in appearance ; but with a fibrous flesh, and flavour of turpentine.

Beyond Dufleh are rapids and falls, and the river is unnavigable until Bedden, beyond which there is nothing to stop navigation to Khartoum but the sudd, which we were shortly to learn.

Ah! How we longed to know what was before us, if there remained any glory to be achieved, any fighting to be done, or any startling discovery to be made. A soldier may, I think, be pardoned his ambition. Alas! before another moon had risen to make the night resplendent, we were to learn that the French had forestalled us, and that we had been robbed of what each in his heart had been longing for.

But the glorious news of the fall of Khartoum, and the ruin of the Kalipha's cause, were compensation enough for the destruction of our own petty hopes.

CHAPTER VII

NILOTIC DANCES

Very well become a soldier's dance.

Act II. Scene 3, *Pericles*.

Of moving accidents by flood and field.

Act I. Scene 3, *Othello*.

IT was my task to return to Wadelai to fetch supplies, and also the wives of the men—most of whom were to remain at Dufleh. With such a diminished force, it was impossible to take the same number of boats back again, and so about ten of them had to be left behind. Coming down the Nile was a pleasure to everybody ; but returning against the stream was nothing of the sort. My first day and night were spent in as miserable circumstances as could have been. When in midstream, at one of the broadest parts of the river, and in a maze of sudd, we were overtaken by a storm late in the afternoon. With the gale in our teeth, no headway could be made : the rain was so thick that we en-

tirely lost our way, and darkness supervened. In spite of the plucky efforts of the crew, there was nothing to be done but to fasten the boat to some papyrus reeds, and to pass the night as best we could. Every one was drenched to the skin ; there was no possibility of lighting a fire, or consequently of cooking any food. There we sat as philosophically as we could awaiting the approach of dawn. My worthy crew had the usual consolation that it was kismet ; but I never got quite so much comfort out of this philosophy as they did. As we sat shivering, a belated hippopotamus came up almost immediately underneath the boat, nearly capsizing us. However, there was no danger to be expected from him, as he was far more frightened than we were, and made off without stopping to see what damage he had done. We had lost touch with the rest of the flotilla, but I had no misgivings on its account. To find a safe anchorage was not a difficult task. There was nothing for it but to serve round some quinine to all hands, and swallowing fifteen grains myself—a somewhat meagre supper—I endeavoured to sleep upon a couch of hard corners and damp blankets. Even the most wretched nights have an end, and I do not think I ever welcomed Aurora so gladly as I did on the morn following this one. It was a sunrise of surpassing splendour, such as old Nile excels in, and the whole heavens were lit up with purple and

gold, the colours being reflected upon the waters of the great river. Everything seemed to awaken to cheerfulness, and in the genial warmth of the sun, the past night of discomfort was soon forgotten. All my other boats popped out from little corners that had sheltered them, we soon re-assembled, and I directed them towards a landing-place. As luck would have it, we had rested close to a village, but I am doubtful if we could have reached it, even had we known it. Fires were soon blazing and breakfast cooking, and all our belongings spread out to receive the rays of the sun. A cup of cocoa with some goat's milk was, under the circumstances, a breakfast for a king, and I do not think a king ever partook of this meal with such a relish as I did. We were soon gliding along again, and though the work was doubled, even with empty boats, we had the advantage of knowing our way. I was unfortunate in not seeing any elephants, as other officers did afterwards, in the Nile. It was then quite a common sight to see a herd drinking or bathing close to the bank, or even swimming across the river, and scrambling up the other bank. I was to make their acquaintance at no distant date upon the dry land; in the meantime I had enough to engage my attention in sickness, which again assailed me. A voyage with such environments must of necessity be unwholesome, and being only mortal, I succumbed, and during the rest of the

journey to Wadelai, which occupied nine days, I had fever daily. A year after, the disease took the tertian form, and returned every other day with its remarkable punctuality; but at first I was visited with the quotidian kind—and in no mild form—for my temperature was 105° at nights, putting me at intervals into a delirium.

My days were spent in the bottom of the boat, where I lay covered with blankets and bedding and my tent itself, to induce a perspiration. What I felt more than anything was the inability to go shooting in the evenings. My opportunities were unfettered by any duties, and it was certainly exasperating to have to lie there and take no advantage of them. In one spot I was visited by a big chief, who came to explain that he hated the Belgians, and wanted to come to an understanding with the English. I let him know that the English had not come to take anything out of the country, but, on the contrary, that he would find we should put a good deal into it: that we should take nothing by force, but pay honourably for everything we wanted: on the other hand, we should require him to do as he was told, and when we wanted a few loads carried, the porters must be forthcoming, and their services would be rewarded with strings of beads at the rate of one per diem, and so forth. He seemed to be fairly satisfied, though it was apparent in his face that the porter question would be a stumbling-block.

Nor was he mistaken, for the porter question remained a stumbling-block, and as far as the inhabitants were concerned, had not been solved when I left the country eighteen months afterwards. At first, however, the natives answered our summonses with praiseworthy alacrity, but their enthusiasm did not wear well!

This chief had evidently wished to make an impression, for among his myrmidons was a trumpeter, who must have had a strange history, as he suddenly sounded a Turkish call. I thought it best to forward these gentlemen on to our own chief, and so, together with a few empty cartridge cases, and other humble presents, I gave him a letter, and bid him farewell. He elected not to bother our Major. I suppose the porter question troubled his mind!

One of our camping-grounds I shall ever remember. It was called “Mosquito Camp,” and therefore requires no explanation. What all those insects lived on when we were not there, I cannot imagine. Next morning I asked my poor retainers how they had slept. They said they had heard of that place before, and that no man ever did sleep there. They simply lay close to a smoking fire, and so one side was always enjoying ease, whilst the other was being bitten.

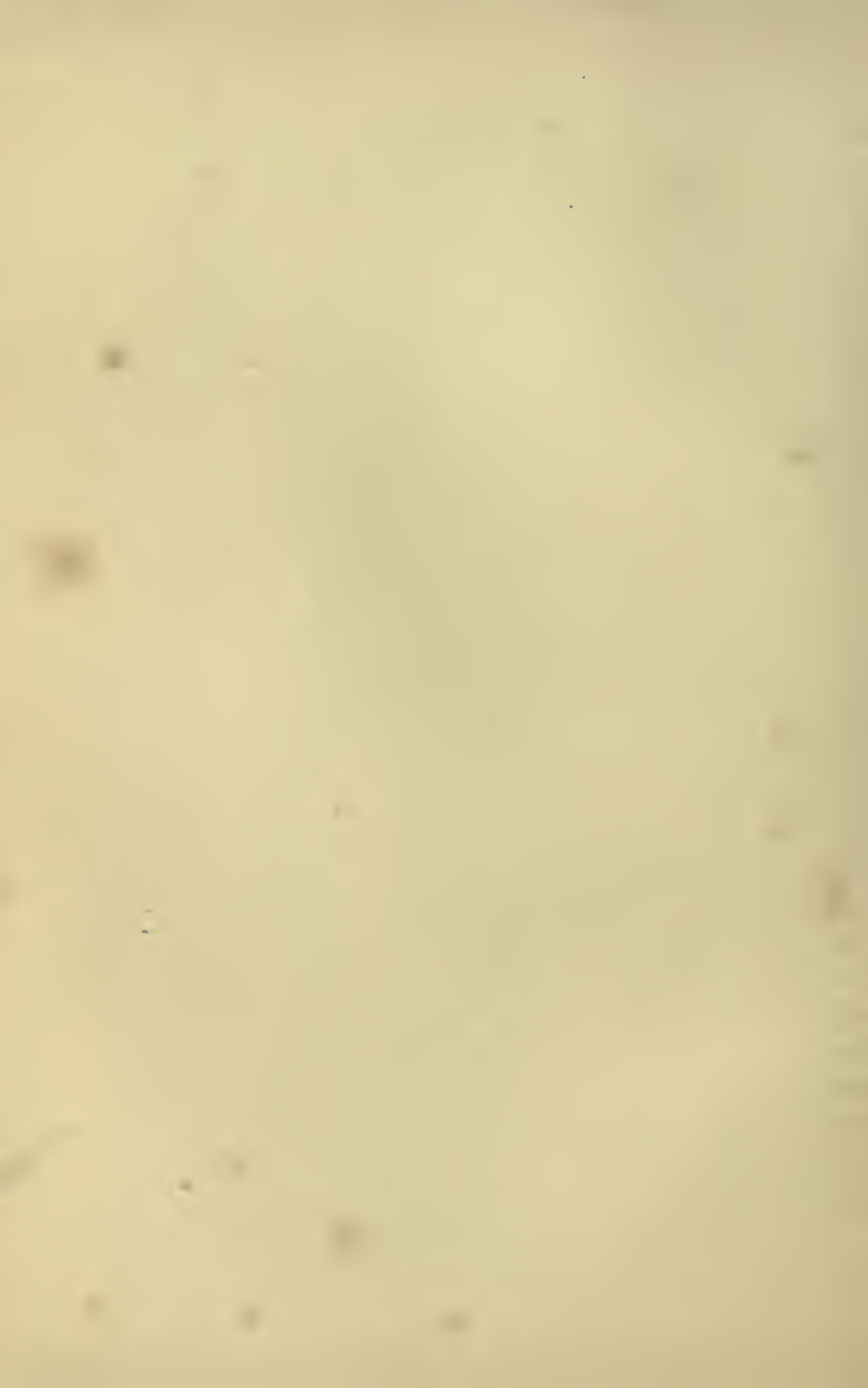
When I got to Wadelai, I was quite a wreck, and glad of the day’s rest I was able to allow myself.

The day after that, with all the women and children belonging to the company at Dufileh, I again embarked upon the steel boat and left Wadelai for the north. After a comparatively uneventful journey we got to Dufileh, and remained there for some time, whilst more men and supplies were pushed on.

At Dufileh, for some time, there was little excitement. A small town was commenced, but no permanent buildings, as, of course, our occupation of the left side of the river was only temporary. Every Friday, the Mohammedan Juma, was a holiday, and no work of any kind was done on that day. The Soudanese always devoted it to dancing, and at about 10 A.M. in the broiling sun, the band assembled and began tuning, or rather sounding their instruments. The band was a fearful infliction, being comprised for the most part of drums and long horns, from which distressful noises were produced. It never had the slightest pretence to any tune or sound worthy of the name of music; but it had the effect of making all the ladies and gentlemen gradually assemble—the ladies in their brightest colours, and feathers, and carrying long sticks in their hands, and the men in white undress. One of the principal dances was simply a medley of both sexes revolving round the band with awful grimaces, or equally awful set expressions on their faces; at the same time bending themselves into every conceivable attitude. It required so little skill in its



DUFILH.



performance as to permit of the local savages joining in, and taking their part. This continued for an indefinite period, during which time the poor band would be labouring with their instruments. Occasionally some musician would be overcome with his exertions, but his place would instantly be taken by some one else. The advantage of such instruments was that any fool could play them. Large jars of beer would be deposited within reach of the performers, who would incessantly stop to dip their heads in—now and again some unlucky member being left to execute a solo, whilst the rest of the band was relieving its thirst. Certainly they had just cause on their side, for blowing through a long horn, while standing in the sun with the thermometer over 100° in the shade, must have been most sultry work.

When the natives joined in, they merely followed the revolving throng, brandishing sticks and hopping from one leg on to another, sometimes shrugging their shoulders violently, or twitching their limbs, and at all times looking stark staring mad. One doddering old man was quite a devotee at the altar of Terpsichore, attending regularly, and tottering round with obvious enjoyment. The native joke was to pour dust over his head, rubbing it into his matted hair. The jest was somewhat grim, and, I thought, wanting in taste. The old man was very near his grave, but was not actually in it.

After about a couple of hours of this diversion, the scene would change, and another dance be started. There were not many varieties, and, perhaps, the most popular, and certainly the most interesting, was the Kamalilla. A rough circle of dancers would be formed, and individuals would detach themselves singly from the circle and execute a *pas seul*. Time would be admirably kept by all clapping their hands and singing. The burden of their song was a kind of continuous epic, in which they recounted their many battles and deeds of bloodshed; and eulogized their former commandants. They paid tributes to most departed officers under whom they had served; and those who had been known to be brave were made into heroes. Especially fond were they of the escape of Kabarega in a state of nature. I always used to think it wonderful how they managed to remember the words, and could never find out who it was that originally composed them.

The singing was not out of tune, and occasionally a party singing seconds for a single note could be heard. The men in their loose clothing were most graceful, and performed prodigies of activity. Some of them were indeed beautiful dancers—all their movements being so light and noiseless. One man, in particular, I can remember, whose superior I have never seen on any boards. The women tread an elephantine measure, and can have no possible pre-

tensions to grace. They keep their feet and knees close together, and do the best they can under the circumstances. Each man seemed to have learnt a particular dance of his own, which he always danced, and no two ever used the same steps. They seemed to originate them themselves, and each found out for himself what style suited him best. One did not get tired of the Kamalilla, and I often watched it for a short time on Fridays.

Dancing continued until the sun went down, when all would retire for their evening meal. Neither rain nor sun deterred them, and they all loved it. The love of dancing is common to all nations. On one occasion a party of Shulis was visiting us, and anxious to show what they could do in the dancing line, they gave a "small and early" in the moonlight for our special amusement. Most of them got themselves up elaborately in beads, and a few of them donned those extraordinary head dresses, peculiar to the Shuli tribe. They consisted of wigs, rather like those worn by lawyers, without the curls, and made of human hair worked up together. They were surmounted by ostrich feathers dyed red, and let into little slots made for the purpose, and gave their wearers a most fantastic appearance—especially in the moonlight. In Baker's day they were fashionable and always to be met with, but now it is by no means easy to obtain them.

The Shulis' dance is not complicated, and only

worth looking at once. They all suddenly grouped themselves into an incredibly small space like a swarm of bees, crouching low and giving forth a succession of grunts, like wild animals. One could see the whites of their eyes dotted about amongst the mass of black, and the sight was enough to give one a turn. Then a sort of leader arose from their midst, in a standing position, and addressed them in confidential tones, seemingly as to the programme to be carried out; but his instructions cannot have been very explicit, for they all suddenly rose up, yelling in a horrible manner, and chaos reigned—of course, chaos may have been the idea; if so, it was achieved.

Part of the dance was for individuals to detach themselves and go outside the circle, presumably for an airing. These would run swiftly and aimlessly in any direction, and once outside, I took care that they did not get back, for the dance threatened to be interminable. All the time they were shrieking out some words, which I was informed, generally concerned their food. As the locusts had not visited them this year, their shrieks were deafening. I was given to understand that they were rather a sentimental race; but I could hardly believe it, unless there is sentiment in one's food or in chaos. Even the Soudanese could not stand it for long, and commenced a little affair of their own in a corner, whereupon the poor savages, realising their inferiority, gave

up their own attempts, and went over to watch the opposition show. I just looked on for a few minutes before retiring to rest, and was unlucky enough to find the women taking the floor. Negresses are somewhat bulky, and by the uncertain light of the moon, they might have been a herd of hippopotami. Their motions were most cumbersome, until a small fox-terrier ran in and worried their shins, which freshened up matters considerably.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INFANCY OF BRAIN EVOLUTION

Youth with unstuffed brain.

Act II. Scene 3, *Romeo and Juliet*.

Which are the children of an idle brain.

Act I. Scene 4, *Romeo and Juliet*.

OUR commanding officer himself went forward on a reconnaissance beyond Bedden, accompanied by the Belgian commandant. They returned with most dismal accounts of the river between Lado and Fashoda, pronouncing it god-forsaken and uninhabitable to the European. The Nile, in that region, is bordered on either side by swamp, is practically uninhabited, and is the abode of countless mosquitoes, which assault man by day as well as by night. However, they made one important discovery, and that was the exact point at which the Nile was permanently blocked by sudd, and for their pains they all got several bad attacks of fever. It was a blow to all our

hopes, as communication could not be opened up for an indefinite period, nor could we ourselves even commence cutting the sudd. From the upper end, such an operation is attended with much danger, as there is always the liability of the mass of vegetation closing in behind you, and locking you in. There was nothing for it but to wait until a passage was made from below. This could not be for many months, as our news could not be conveyed to Egypt for two months. One plucky attempt was afterwards made to cross the sudd, by a young officer and a few men, and he was fortunate enough to meet a party from Fashoda, who were cutting their way up. He actually got through, but at the moment of this timely meeting, he had all but exhausted his small stock of provisions. Many years before, an endeavour was made to cut a way down stream, but the task was found to be beyond human power. When once a passage had been cleared—which is now happily a *fait accompli*—it is comparatively easy to keep it open, provided that it is carefully watched, and no vegetation allowed to accumulate. Baker had cut a clearing nearly thirty years before, and a constant steamer service had plied up and down the river between Lado and Khartoum; the distance being covered in as short a time as fourteen days. But with the fall of Khartoum, this had been discontinued, and the sudd had gradually closed in, and completely

cut off the two places from each other. At the time of our arrival, there were over 200 miles to cut, and doubtless this was increasing year by year. A high Nile in the old days would occasionally clear the river ; but in our time the stream had become too congested to admit of such a thing. Thus there was little more for the expedition to do, and we sat down somewhat sadly, and tried to make the most of the country, which we had taken over for our own purposes.

There was no doubt that it was an unhealthy country. Some one was always ill, and periodical bouts of fever were bound to recur ; but it was amazing how one recovered from it, and rose from a bed of sickness little the worse. A man would be down one day, and out shooting the next ; and it was difficult to take such a disease seriously. Of course, it was foolish to laugh at it, for malaria will gradually wear down the hardest constitutions, and play havoc with the tissues. It behoved each one of us to become his own doctor, for there was but one representative of that profession at this time for all those hundreds of miles. A little later there was another, but one of them had frequently to be flying off for some case of blackwater fever.

In this disease the blood is killed within one's veins, and turns black. The doctors used to inject up to ninety grains of quinine daily as a treatment ; but afterwards they seemed to agree that this was

excessive, and reduced their doses by one half. The disease is very rapid in its action—as may be believed. It is discovered suddenly, and a crisis is reached in forty-eight hours. The patient is sometimes thrown into paroxysms of vomiting, and death may come from exhaustion. It may continue for five days, but that is rare. If there is no champagne at hand the danger is great, for it is by that means the strength is kept up.

Blackwater was hardly understood then at all, and I believe is known very little better now; but there was no doubt that careful nursing was of the utmost importance. Of our party on the Nile, nine got the disease, of whom two died. Of the remainder, one had it three times, and another twice, and four in all were invalided home. These numbers show what a serious drawback it is to the country. When recovering from it, a man looks like a living skeleton, and as bloodless as a bit of parchment. Unluckily it renders him just as liable to get it again, and it may even recur in temperate climes. It will be a blessed day for Africa when a preventative is found, if it ever is, for it is the white man's worst enemy. The Belgians suffered even more than we did, and lost a very heavy proportion of their officers.

Whilst at Dufleh, I spent most of my time purchasing sorghum grain, and forwarding it on to those beyond. The Kuku tribe, which inhabited the left

bank of the Nile, a little lower down than Dufleh, kindly assisted me. They did not affect beads much for decorative purposes, and, in fact, would not look at anything if brass wire was forthcoming, and one ring of this metal would satisfy them for carrying a load for several days.

But, like nearly all natives of the interior, they are miserable porters, and make a great fuss if you put more than 45 lbs. upon each of their heads. Nor is it any use doing so, if you are anxious for the loads to reach their destination. This does not compare favourably with the powers of the Swahili coast porter, who carries at least 65 lbs. with ease, and those people again have nothing like the physical power of the Indian porter in the hills, who does not complain at 100 lbs. being thrust upon him, nor of the Chinaman, who cheerfully walks all day under a burden of 120 lbs. weight. It was no good trying to sneak a few extra pounds on to the Nilotic's load; he was simply incapable of managing it, and sat quietly down under it.

About this time two officers were sent over to the other side of the river to look for a new site for a fort, and whilst so occupied, encountered two elephants. Though they put several bullets into one of them, they lost him for the time being. He was found dead a few miles off, some little time afterwards, and the tusks were secured. This was the first acquaintance any of our expedition had made

with this pachyderm ; but we were all to know him fairly intimately before we left the neighbourhood.

Time passed uneventfully at Dufleh, as we could not wander very far afield until affairs had become settled. Sometimes in the evenings we invited our native officers to tea, and they beguiled away an hour very pleasantly, telling us stories of their strange careers and stirring incidents in their past lives. It was customary on such occasions for their senior officers to march them in, armed with swords and faultlessly attired. These men, spotless and elegant, were always a standing reproach to ourselves, clothed as we were at this time in rags. They would remain standing until you requested them to sit—from our point of view a quaint little mark of respect ; but they would have thought it very wanting in *savoir-faire* had they done otherwise. These thoroughly professional soldiers judge everything from a military point of view : there is no civil element in their characters, for they are always on duty. Once set at their ease their manners were unexceptionable, and the most fastidious of our own ladies could hardly have found fault with them.

A Buszard's cake had found its way by mail from home, and this was given an airing for the benefit of the effendis. Most of them understood it, but one of the more recently promoted ones could not make head or tail of it, and asked if it was meat. It had to be explained to him that it was a sweetmeat with

corn and nuts in it ; which made all his brother officers laugh immoderately. He then asked me if it was Government property, which amused me immensely, as I had been telling him a few days before that all the supplies in the station were not my personal property but belonged to Government. They are apt to think otherwise, as the white man appears to have absolute control of all issues.

On one of these occasions the big local chief was also invited, and to our surprise he behaved admirably, and was never at a loss what to do with his cup and plate. The nonchalant air with which he manœuvred his spoon and stirred his sugar was killing. He despatched everything he could lay hands upon with a very fine air of consequence, as if to the manner born. I think all these fine accomplishments had been drilled into him by one of my lieutenants, who was a past master, and he only went wrong when a tin of biscuits was opened and offered to him. He thought it was a casket containing some rich present with which the repast was being consummated, and was proceeding to accept it with much graciousness and profuse thanks, and to hand it over to one of his satellites. The rescue of those biscuits, in such an atmosphere of high breeding, required considerable tact ; but they were too valuable to be lost off-hand for such a consideration. He seemed a little disappointed at the firm hold I kept upon the tin ; but his tutor adroitly removed the

surrounding paper and indicated that one, or even two of the contents was the usual initial helping. I then offered him a little English tobacco ; but he excused himself at first on the plea of being a non-smoker. When pressed he seemed to think he was throwing away a unique opportunity, and took a pipeful. The result appeared to be verging on disaster and I watched him with anxiety ; but with an effort he weathered the storm and all was well, or fairly well. We asked him to come again and fixed a day, requesting him next time to bring all his minor chieftains, who would, of course, in his presence not expect to be invited to drink tea as well.

We had an excellent reason for issuing this invitation, as a short time before a 7-pounder mountain gun had arrived, and we were anxious to display the terrors of this mighty engine of destruction to as many people as could be collected together. They arrived at the appointed hour, and amidst a hushed excitement, and not without misgivings on our own part, we fired a shell. By some evil chance the first shell fell into the Nile without bursting, and the bewildered onlookers wondered what on earth had become of it. We explained that at first we wished to show how far we could send the enormous bullet, and that it had gone on into the next country ! Next time we staked our reputations on the shot and promised that when in mid-air the bullet would burst asunder and fly in all directions. Happily, the fuse

did not give us away this time, and the shell burst beautifully with plenty of smoke and a resounding boom which echoed down the old Nile. Never can such a sound have been heard there before. Then we related how the explosion of the shell let loose innumerable devils who would decimate a village in the wink of an eye. The chief at once professed undying loyalty and friendship. We told him that it was just as well, and that as long as he remained faithful to us the monster would never be turned against him or his.

I think we made a very fair impression upon him and his myrmidons ; as they went away each imitating in his own way the voice of the dread being that had come into their midst. We heard them in all directions, "Bang-sh-sh-s s s sh. Boom!" and others approvingly saying, "Aye, that was it ; that was it."

This little implement certainly for a time assisted the vexed question of porters. The fact that the gun was there spoke of much toil and tribulation in the conveyance thereof. Sometimes slung upon men's shoulders, and sometimes dragged along the ground, it must have fallen into swamps and down precipices and had hair-breadth escapes ; but there it was, whole, and not looking much the worse, beyond a few scratches and insignificant dents. It was a mercy that we were never called upon to make use of it in earnest, for I would not have answered for

the ammunition. Old when originally issued, it had passed through storm and sunshine, and the boxes which contained it were anything but water-tight and much less air-tight. Still, as we had proved, some of the rounds were serviceable, and the moral effect, much less capricious, was immense. Mounted on a bastion it is probably still slumbering its time away, and I trust that the savages yet remember the day when it spoke, and hand down from father to son the awful things it might do. Things which they do not understand—and most things come under this category—have to their weak imaginations unknown and hidden terrors.

Sometimes they try to rise above their ignorance ; but without much success. They never know what the white man may be up to next, and it is this uncertainty that gives to the latter fictitious resources. Because he has a rifle and uses it skilfully they think it is the rifle which is the miracle, and forget the man who made it and the man who uses it. So the simpleton gives all he possesses in the world to have a rifle, and is gloriously imposed upon by the trader. The latter comes with some fearful-looking gas-pipe and expatiates upon its power and merits, and receives for the futile weapon several cows and many sheep, or may be several tusks of ivory.

Certainly amongst themselves a rifle has merits though it be as old as the hills ; but when pitted against the European it has no chance whatever.

Did the savage but know how much more dangerous he is crouching in the grass with his spear, he would be less easily overcome. He cannot realise that a rifle in an unskilled hand is worse than useless, and that the rifle can do nothing for itself.

I once watched an ally in a small punitive expedition, armed with a long rifle and twenty-five cartridges with ludicrously inadequate charges. He was quite happy and filled with confidence. I saw him fire, taking care to keep at a safe distance myself. The weapon went "poop," and the bullet may have gone fifty yards. The poor fellow was satisfied, and I suppose he thought every bullet had its billet. If he but knew how the white man dreads the lurking spearman, he would discard the firearm and have nothing more to do with it.

Their ignorance is so colossal, as to be almost beyond remedy, at any rate during our generation. I cannot see that they have made much advance upon Adam: in clothing none, for even Adam could not have had less; in housing none, for they build their huts rudely of the grass that grows thickly wherever you look around you. In food, 6000 years cannot be said to have made epicures of them, for they subsist almost exclusively upon the sorghum grain which requires only to be thrown into the ground and roughly covered up, to fructify. Certainly they smelt iron ore and fashion spears; but both the smelting and the fashioning are the

most primitive operations, and came to them from the coast. The ore is found in patches on the surface, collected, and put into small furnaces. The draught is obtained by bellows of goat-skins fastened over wooden vessels with funnels. The skins are loosely fastened on, and to the centre of them is attached a wooden handle, which when agitated up and down produces the rush of air. There are a few other rather ingenious contrivances which perhaps Adam had not thought of, but which raise them very little out of the purest savagedom. For instance, like all black men they are very fond of salt, but this mineral is very scarce in those parts, being a luxury for the rich man; and as they are very small meat-eaters, they frequently suffer for lack of its valuable properties, for meat contains salt and their cereal form of sustenance does not. Their ordinary method for providing a substitute is simply to burn rushes, the ashes of which contain potash which they suck without any refining process; but they still have one other resource. They collect goat's dung and burn it in a kiln, which they keep more or less hermetically sealed. During the process potash crystallises on the surface, and is greedily eaten. I often wonder how they arrived at this knowledge: it can hardly have been of themselves, for they would never have evolved anything from their inner consciousness. It, too, probably, filtered through from wiser lands.

The lack of salt and also vegetable food is felt much by the natives, who have no trade by which they could obtain it. Many of my Soudanese, and I myself even, were at one time visited by a horrible ulceration of the gums, which made it most painful to eat, drink, or smoke. I attributed it to this cause, and could only treat it by rinsing out the mouth with permanganate of potash. I afterwards obtained large quantities of salt from the vicinity of the Albert Lake, where it is distilled from brackish water by evaporation. It was of a dark brown colour and exceedingly gritty and coarse, but answered its purpose of promoting health well enough.

Another universal craving, which seizes the European more than the native, is for sweet food. Having no jam at all, we had to fall back upon the wild honey, and this we consumed in amazing quantities. I can see a certain friend now in my mind's eye sitting down to a plate of honey, and drinking it like soup. Not one plate, but two and even three—for the system thirsted so for this substance that no evil results followed, and only good was derived from what would appear at the first blush to be sheer gluttony.

Another little contrivance, that must be put to the credit of the Nilotic barbarians, occurs to me. Far be it from me to deny them any little gleams of intelligence that may peep through the dense

blanket of ignorance. This is their method of capturing white-ants. These voracious pests are a curse in a country where so much wood has to be used for building purposes, and they will devour anything—one's mackintosh not even being safe from their jaws. They have the reputation of sparing the living tree; but to my certain knowledge this is not always the case, and I have seen the living tree—if not too green and succulent—suffering death from their depredations. The ordinary method of defeating them is water in bowls, into which the article to be respected is placed; or by resting it upon round stones; but one grows weary of trying to keep them at bay. They make one's very house untrustworthy in less than two years, in spite of the supports all being sunk in wood ashes. And then they erect great monuments in all directions, as if to commemorate their vast labours. Man has no chance with them.

One can solemnly dig deep into a mound and carry off the queen ant, a horrible-looking slimy grub, almost as big as one's little finger. The other ants leave at once; but presumably go somewhere else and recommence their never-ceasing work of destruction. It is very curious how susceptible they all are to sound, for if one makes the slightest commotion all these insects within reach of the vibration respond by a curious rattling noise. I should think it was disconcerting to them, and that if it was kept

up continuously the ants would have to go ; but all remedies against these nuisances are more trouble than the nuisances themselves.

It is not, however, with an idea of extermination that the native collects them ; it is for gastronomical purposes exclusively, though I personally looked upon them as too insipid to make their capture worth the labour. The ant is caught when in the winged or matrimonial state, and the manner of his catching is as follows :—

Hollow cylinders of wood are placed in the principal holes of the ant-heap, and the whole heap is housed in a framework of withes and grass, leaving the cylinders as the only possible means of exit. Then a clattering sound is made just above the holes by rapidly knocking two pieces of wood together. For some reason, best known to the termites themselves, this sound is as potent as the lute of Orpheus, and drawn by it they come running towards it as fast as they can. As they emerge from the cylinders they are easily secured, and thence conveyed to the frying-pan. A tragic honeymoon ! It is worth tasting them as an experience to compare one's palate with that of the savages, and I must say that what is considered by the latter a delicacy is to the cultivated sense flavourless.

In spite of these reasoning capacities, childish as they appear when measured by the standard of civilisation, it is a hopeless task to endeavour to

teach these people any knowledge other than the humblest intellects can receive. They are not sufficiently advanced to appreciate such civilised virtues as honour and patriotism. Unluckily, when brought into contact with the white man, they first learn his vices, which are more easily comprehended.

Nature herself seems to be against them. She brings their boys into the world bright and impressionable, allows them to develop mentally for a time, and then suddenly arrests the expansion of their brains, by stopping the growth of their skulls. In white people the top of the head is making room for growing brains long after the age when that of the negro has been finally sealed.

This cannot be eliminated for many generations, and is the immediate cause of the white man's superiority. Possibly, civilisation will bring the necessity for thinking, which, by the process of evolution, will prevent the premature closing of the negro's skull.

My old native captain came to me one day with a small scent-bottle, the stopper of which he had been trying to remove for about twelve months. I of course heated the neck of the bottle, and the stopper came out at once. The old man turned almost fiercely upon me, and asked why I should know so much and he so little. I did not like to tell him that his brain weighed about eight ounces less than mine. Comparisons are so odious.

CHAPTER IX

MY FIRST INTERVIEW WITH THE ELEPHANT

For her own person
It beggared all description.
Act II. Scene 2, *Antony and Cleopatra*.

My salad days
When I was green in judgment.
Act I. Scene 5, *Antony and Cleopatra*.

And men sit down to that nourishment
Which is called supper.
Act I. Scene 2, *Love's Labour Lost*.

ONE cloudless morning we packed up all our goods and chattels and passed from one side of the river to the other, the goats crossing in boats and the cows and donkeys swimming, and after a short walk of two hours reached a place called Afuddu, which is situated on a beautiful tributary of the Nile named the Khor Unyama. Samuel Baker had said that this would be the great centre of Africa, and presumably he based his prophecy upon the fact that it lies at

the bend of the river, just above the Dufleth Falls. These Falls, of course, mark the terminus of navigation from the Albert Lake, and Baker may have looked upon it as a future emporium of trade. But we found it positively prehistoric, and certainly at present it has not vouchsafed any evidence of future greatness. Our first work was to clear the dense jungle, and the abode of the wild creatures suddenly awoke to the sound of whirling axes and merry laughter. For six weeks the laying low of the forest continued, and at the end of that time space enough had been cleared for the site of a fort, and wood enough had been collected for all building purposes. This spot was fixed upon for another station, in place of Dufleth, which is for a time Belgian territory.

At first the antelopes, attracted by curiosity and not knowing what to make of such an apparition in their native haunts, were tempted to come and look on at the strange scene. Occasionally one would hear shouts and yells from the hewers, and some bush-buck, or reed-buck, or small gazelle would come dashing through the busy throng, not knowing where it was going, and scared out of its senses. One poor creature in its terror became half paralysed and, being unable to move for a few moments, fell a prey to the axe. Never before had the repose of Nature been so rudely disturbed, and it is no small wonder that the poor beasts could not understand such a commotion.

The Dervishes had many years before encamped by the side of the stream ; but they left the tranquillity of the wilderness as they had found it.

One night a herd of elephants, unconscious of our descent upon their walks, ambled through our newly acquired domain and actually passed within twenty yards of our tents. So quickly did they move that I was unaware of their presence, and only found it out from their unconcealable tracks and the information of the sentry. Every night the hyena came yowling and prowling round the camp on the off-chance of finding some offal. I am afraid he was disappointed, as offal is just as much in request by the human element as it is by himself. What is left over from a slaughtered animal is hardly worth mentioning.

Sometimes, unable to sleep from the heat, I silently crept around, rifle in hand, to try and bag one of these cunning creatures ; but with cat-like sight they always found it an easy matter to elude me. Though he has been known to enter a camp impelled by hunger, and to seize some object in his teeth, as a rule his cowardice keeps him from poking his nose into the slightest danger. His note is hideous and unearthly in the quiet night, and fatal to a light sleeper.

He was often joined by the common jackal, whose quaint, snappy little bark is not so offensive as the long drawn out yowl of his companion. One night

I crawled out determined to end one of their lives ; and as I moved around I missed the sentry. The good fellow, possibly dreaming such an enemy as the hyena unworthy his vigils, must have been enjoying himself in the arms of Morpheus. It is a rare occurrence with these soldiers ; but I had meant to make an example of him, had he not outwitted me so cleverly. He had chosen such a sequestered couch that I was unable to find him in the darkness, and was obliged to call to him. Presently he must have awakened, for I saw his indistinct form coming towards me, crouching low. In a confidential whisper he imparted to me that he knew I was stalking, having seen me, and that he was watching the hyena, and could not answer me as he was afraid of frightening the creature away. He was too good for me, and I forgave him his nap.

Tributaries, such as the Khor Unyama, have one great advantage ; they provide delicious clear crystal water. Running as they do, over sandy beds, their tasteless fluid can be drunk without misgiving. In a drought their sandy beds become dry ; but water can generally be found by digging. The water of the Nile, notwithstanding its transparency, has always a peculiar earthy flavour, and was looked upon with suspicion by all of us. It was by no means certain that it was unwholesome ; but we shunned it and partook of any other in preference.

The Khor Unyama abounded in crocodiles which,

half covered by sand and concealed by rushes, would suddenly dash upon some poor animal that had come down to drink. Several natives left their friends mysteriously during my stay there. The death of my little follower still rankled in my heart, and it was my especial delight to creep along the banks and suddenly surprise a saurian, snoozing in the sand. Sometimes I would lose them, as they would vanish into deep waters ; but a certain native whom I employed as a shikari would follow them, spear in hand. I can imagine nothing more reckless ; but so long as I lay there, ready to fire at the slightest sign, he appeared to be quite at his ease, and betrayed no symptoms of fear. I am sorry to say we never bagged one in this manner ; but the natives assured me that this was not by any means an unknown feat. This man had the reputation of having speared and killed several crocodiles ; but I could hardly credit it. Be that as it may, he astonished me with his audacity. Of course, he did not venture farther in when the water was over his knees ; but even then the risk must have been considerable, and nothing would have persuaded me to tempt providence in such a manner.

The jungle near our new house was most pleasant, lit up as it was by trees in blossom, the azalea and lilac amongst others. These trees grow there to a height of perhaps fifteen feet, and were at this time a mass of blossoms. It was the end of the dry season—if

one can determine the seasons in that climate—and may possibly have corresponded to our spring. Anyhow, the month was February, the long grass was all being burnt, and the young grass was discovered sprouting up when the flames had passed along. This universal conflagration takes place once a year, and is to the inhabitant the greatest blessing.

For many months afterwards the country is opened up, and one is no longer confined by the tall grass that covers the whole surface of the land. In its place are the young green sprouts refreshing the eye with their brightness. There is no longer the monotonous, dull brown colour that pervades everything, and, indeed, the whole face of Nature is changed. Sometimes the natives burn their grass in fantastic designs, and Mount Dufieh, fired in tiers, had the appearance at night of being illuminated like some great building. The giant flames, sometimes thirty feet in height, come rolling along, and volumes of smoke fill the air. Numberless kites, secretary birds, and owls hover over the flames, swooping down upon the unfortunate mice, rats, and snakes as they try to escape an awful death. Then at the last a great hunt is organised by the natives, and the poor animals are gradually driven into a last remaining patch of grass, which is set alight, after a cordon of hunters has been made round it. As the beasts rush out they are ruthlessly speared.

One of these massacres took place soon after our arrival, and the bag included two elephants, some leopards, and any number of antelope. The practice tends towards the extermination of game, and has very rightly been put a stop to. The coming of the white man had quite a sufficiently thinning effect without such wholesale butchery.

These fires have a most cleansing effect, and there was a distinct diminution of sickness. For several months we had very little fever, and under the circumstances we enjoyed ourselves as life in the wilds only can be enjoyed.

The jungle there was not dense, and could be easily walked. Bushes and beautiful mimosa trees were dotted about in all directions, sometimes singly, sometimes in clusters. After the morning's parade and ordinary work was over, there was so much felling and carrying of timber to be done that the presence of the white man was superfluous during the afternoon. So he shouldered his rifle and wandered forth in pursuit of sport. There was no need of long hours of tramping to reach any particular piece of ground, for shooting was to be had at the doorstep, and all of it was equally good. There was always the delight of infinite variety, and every bush was an excitement in itself, for who was to say what might not be lurking behind it! Sometimes it was the great ugly hartebeest, known there as "tel-i-tel." With his enormously long head and

horns let into sockets, rising straight up from the forehead, he is not a beauty. High withers, heavy shoulders, and sloping quarters make him a most ungainly picture ; but it is marvellous how he covers the ground, and his powers of endurance are equally good. He lives in herds, and is very common. One could shoot as many as one liked without any more difficulty than careful stalking entails : he is warier than the Cobus Kob, and does not let one get a close shot easily, and so a little ordinary science is necessary. He retires in Indian file.

Like all antelope, he is puzzled in a forest. Provided that the wind is coming from his direction, he seems not to notice the human being with that instantaneous certainty of perception with which he is endowed in the open. Whether it is that he confuses a man's legs with the trees, or that one can hide oneself amongst the latter with greater facility, I cannot say ; but it remains a fact that in forest it is easy to make certain of getting within fifty yards. I can remember a shot that I got at one of these creatures as he faced me. He seemed to be looking straight in my direction, and yet he allowed me to take a slow deliberate aim and drop him before he was aware of my existence.

Or perhaps the lofty giraffe might be discovered bending his graceful neck to bring his head on to the flat top of a mimosa tree, of which he is peculiarly fond. Unless one wishes to provide some museum

with a specimen, there can be no object in shooting at a giraffe, and he was usually respected. When startled, off he would set with a long stride and rocking-horse motion, and though apparently moving leisurely, he is going at a great speed, which costs him little effort. Or he may be at a trot, when he flings the stones or débris about broadcast, right and left, making a loud clattering. He seems to be there only for the sake of being watched and admired, for his flesh is not to be compared with that of almost any antelope, and one could never wish to kill him for that reason.

Any one who desires his skin has a formidable undertaking in front of him. I recollect one which I was looking after, and which was intended for a museum: it took twenty-eight men to carry when wet, with the bones, and eight men after it had been dried. In the curing of it, great skill and care are required to ensure there being no folds nor crevices in the skin. If there be, they cannot be treated after the skin has hardened, as it becomes as tough as rock. In the case of this one, though I had bolstered out all the joints, and endeavoured to keep all the corners smoothed out, it gradually decomposed, and had to be buried. Of course, the process is much simpler if the skin can be attended to at once; but this one had to be carried for several days before it was treated.

The giraffe understands the art of mimicry to

perfection. Not only can he blend his colours harmoniously, but he stands stock still, resembling exactly from a distance either a dead stump of a tree, or a high, white ant-heap. He is unhappily scarce; but, being now strictly preserved, may continue for some generations to excite the interest and admiration of the traveller.

Or may be some little antelope, such as oribi or steinbuck or duiker, would look at one and swiftly skip out of sight. Or one might disturb some bush-buck amongst his beloved small bushes, who would scamper off barking like a dog. He is a beautiful creature with his white spots and rich coat: the thick-skinned neck being covered with short, silky hair which gets thicker towards his quarters. When at bay he knows how to use his horns, lashing out fiercely at any antagonist, and woe betide any dog that may run at him incautiously, for he can inflict an ugly wound. Or, perhaps, it is the gentle reedbuck that attracts one's attention. It may be a single buck, or a mixed herd, or a few does wandering about together, according to the season. On sighting a human being, this animal emits a shrill whistle of warning before he moves away, and at first I could hardly believe it was an antelope producing such a sound. His coat is a light fawn, and his tail bushy, the under portion being white. He is excellent eating.

The bulky eland made this district his habitat,

and when shot, provided a feast for many people. He usually scaled about 1000 lbs., and was so incommoded by fat, that he could be run down on foot when wounded. But this immense antelope was a rarity, and few herds were to be met with, and those were exceedingly shy.

The surface of the ground was covered with thousands and thousands of ant-bear holes, and yet these mysterious nocturnal quadrupeds were hardly ever to be seen. During the whole time I spent in Africa I saw only one, and he looked as if he was out by some mistake.

During our shooting excursions, we made it a practice to get into touch with the small chiefs. They would bring us "Khabar" of big game—though they were no sportsmen themselves, and never slew pachyderms in fair fight; but only trapped them by the most primitive methods. Their pits for elephant and hippopotamus were very similar, being simply holes dug in the usual paths of these animals, with strong upright stakes at the bottom. Those for the hippo were made fairly cleverly, the tops being laid over with sods covered with long grass, resting upon light brushwood. Considerable care was exercised in hiding the orifice, and in making the whole appear natural; but the hippo is a wary beast, and was seldom caught thus. Upon the elephant, on the other hand, they did not deign to bestow so much attention, and the receptacles were

left open in the hopes the monster might blunder into it. Nor was this chance a bad one, for the elephant cannot see clearly ten yards ahead of it, and might easily—during a midnight march—topple in. By daylight the elephant is cautious, and aided by his trunk, which has a most delicate sense of touch, he seldom makes a mistake, even with concealed traps, and these Nilotics are not much more successful with him than they are with the hippo. Though I heard of one or two tribes who employed the spear dependent from the branch of a tree, the great majority did not use this device, nor had they the courage and perseverance of their neighbours, the Lango.

Those people hunted the elephant far more seriously, and laid low many of the noble creatures during each year. They approached them with great boldness, and implanted innumerable poisoned arrows and spears into the beast, until he looked like an enormous walking pin-cushion. Then they followed him for days and days, and even for a fortnight. Each time he stopped for rest they stuffed more pins into him, until partially poisoned, and partially exhausted, he dropped, and was soon made an end of. Of course, such a method was dangerous, and an elephant would sometimes kill several of his tormentors before he succumbed. The deftest stroke was one into the knee with a spear, for an elephant when wounded thus, is at once incapacitated. He

cannot get away on three legs like any other animal, and unless his companions help him he is doomed. However, his friends are often ready to give a helping hand, and our commanding officer once saw two of them place themselves each side of a wounded one, and hustle him away. The knee stab is naturally not much resorted to for it requires a man to be in front of his target—a most perilous position. The natives told me it was done at times, and one petty chief was known as “Korāh-fil” or elephant’s leg, on account of an exploit in which he so crippled an elephant in the knee that it was at his mercy. When this individual joined the great majority, his brother took his name, and none of his fellow-countrymen looked upon it as a fraud. Such is the origin of many a name in our own land, and certainly such a deed deserved to be commemorated.

During our wanderings, we visited many of the chiefs, and one of the greater lights thought it incumbent on him to return our call in state. Of course, he had paid his homage originally, but this was intended more as a personal compliment! He did us the unusual honour of bringing with him, not only his chair-bearer, his spear-bearer, and sundry other ruffians; but also two of his consorts. Whether or not he borrowed the idea from the white man I cannot say, but certainly two dusky ladies arrived, both looking very coy and shy. I expressed my pleasure at seeing them, and asked how many more he might

have. He said there were altogether about fifteen ; but that these two were very fine ones ; and he pointed to them as one might to two undeniable sheep. They were certainly very beautiful ! Their hair was thickly plastered with some sort of oleaginous red paint, which occasionally dripped on to their backs ! They had two long icicle-shaped bits of glass depending from their lower lips, and their arms were massively wired. Each ankle was encased in about ten solid iron rings, any one of which would have sufficed to tether an elephant to ; and they must have found locomotion most fatiguing. Possibly the idea was to ensure their not being able to run away ! But they seemed to be quite happy in their fetters, and had the comforting notion that these vastly enhanced their beauty. Large bright blue beads, that looked quite pretty against their black satin skins, and bright orange and red cloths, completed their astounding creations. I must not forget their ears, which were intricately interwoven with copper, and from them hung two pendant half-anna pieces, which had somehow found their way up there. Such were the fine ladies of Afuddu, and their lord and master was evidently highly pleased with them, for gazing fondly at them, he turned to me and asked : " Semmi ? " Which might be interpreted " Are they not fetching ? "

In spite of the dry and healthy season, I found myself down with several sharp bouts of fever. I

attribute it to long hours in the sun, or to the turning up of so much virgin soil, for there was no other reason. Whilst lying ill one night, I heard terrific sounds of revelry, and thinking it a trifle unseemly under the circumstances, I asked the cause. The brother of one of my men, who had just been drowned, was giving a *soirée* to his memory! The noise that this entailed was far from lugubrious, and came very near being a jubilation. The bereaved one killed goats, and his friends consumed them. At a wake of this sort he is not himself supposed to partake; but I fancy that when good meat is flying round, with plenty of beer to wash it down with, manners and customs are a bit lax.

There was one drawback to pitching camp in a forest, and that was the snakes. For the first few days, one heard every few hours a great clamour, and all the men rushing up with sticks and stones to make away with one of these undesirable reptiles. Sometimes they took to the trees, and sometimes to the ground, but wherever it was they were relentlessly pursued. I was lying on my bed one afternoon, when I heard something flop on to the ground quite close to me, and looking down I caught the eye of a snake, who put out his tongue and danced the forked end at me. I did ten yards with astounding rapidity and raised the hue and cry, whereupon at least fifty men rushed to my assistance. The snake betook himself to the roots of a tree; but I let it be

understood that that snake had to die! For a good hour we dug and searched; until the poor creature got mixed up in the earth, and did not know he was exposing half his body. Instantly several shovels came down and made minced-meat of him.

I suppose we must have killed a dozen in two or three days, and we seemed to have struck a colony of them. For the most part they were black mambas, which give one about half an hour to bid farewell to this world! An occasional puff-adder would be seen gliding along, and was never given any quarter. He is slow, but deadly, and has the reputation—amongst those who do not know him—of striking backwards; but this is a fallacy and arises from the fact that the snake bends his head backwards to bring his fangs forward, for these are, as it were, hinged, a peculiarity common to all vipers. He secretes his poison in a gland at the base of the fang, which presses upon it and squeezes the poison down a canal into the wound. The puff-adder has a beautiful patchwork-like skin, which is well worth preserving. I never saw a python in that part of the Nile; but there were many harmless snakes, notably, the glittering emerald-green tree snake, and the ordinary brown grass-snake.

One night when I was down with a high temperature, I suddenly heard the usual snake scare going on, and several men came rushing to say that a man had been bitten. My one brother officer and I immediately went to see what could be done. Sure enough

there was a man with two deep holes in his leg, which was swelling enormously. Though we had hypodermic syringes, we were not quite sure if strychnine was the right counter-poison to inject, and if it were, what quantity would kill a man. So without using it we took the ordinary precautions, *i.e.*, bandaging tightly above the wound, cauterising and rubbing whisky into it. All this gave the sufferer intense pain, so I poured whisky down his throat in copious draughts, and he was soon oblivious of his predicament. My companion said it was our only bottle of whisky, and implored me to go steady with it; and so I desisted for a time. Then it struck us that possibly the poor man's life hung in the balance, and that whisky might decide the matter in his favour. Nothing but such a contingency would have induced us to part with a drop of the precious fluid! After a bit, we left the man breathing stertorously and apparently not going to die at once, so we returned to our beds feeling ennobled by our self-sacrificing action. Next morning we found the man with his leg bound up, looking not much the worse, except for the customary headache. I asked casually if the snake had been killed and kept, and finding it was so, I went and examined it. Imagine our feelings when I say it proved to be a harmless one! The patient had had a glorious time, and was willing to undergo any number of such accidents. Our bitterest regret was that we had poured the spirit into a palate that

could not appreciate it : his own horrible potato-distilled arak would have met his requirements equally well. My friend and I both agreed that even in a case of life and death, for the future our motto should be *Festina lente*.

On another occasion I met a somewhat similar emergency much more adroitly. A certain body-servant had given mortal offence, and in my wrath, not waiting to go through the ceremony of a kibokoing, I thoughtlessly aimed a kick at him. He tried to avoid the blow, but managed to receive it either in liver or the spleen, I cannot remember which. He went down at once, and became unconscious ; his breathing was awful to listen to, and his pulse was not worth feeling for. I had not wished even to hurt the luckless individual, and had no desire to have his blood on my head ; so I roused myself to unusual exertions on his behalf. He was rapidly shuffling off his mortal coil, when a brilliant idea flashed across my mind. I got my hypodermic syringe and injected doses of whisky in numerous parts of him. At first his jaws clenched, and I had the awful conviction that I had finished him in my efforts to save him. But this fearful symptom passed off, his pulse grew stronger, and he began to recover. In two days he was himself again, and swaggering about in an old alpaca coat I gave him as some sort of reparation for the damage I had done. It served as a warning that

the native is much too delicate to touch, except about the head ; but unluckily one is far too fragile oneself to try conclusions with that part of him.

At this time, *i.e.*, about thirteen months after landing in Africa, a few of my original loads filtered through and arrived in the big dug-out. Of course, my most hoped for possessions—small-bore ammunition, and a bath—were not amongst them. Still I had not much to complain of, as such luxuries as clothes, jam, and champagne, were actually within arm's length. I regret to say I fell upon the last two luxuries incontinently, and with my friend dispatched a pot of jam at the first attempt ! It may sound greedy to those who have jam ever at hand ; but a long course of goat, sorghum, and wild honey, give such luxuries the value of all things unattainable. My comrade had one large load which we opened with bated breath—for it might have contained the choicest gifts—but it disclosed two helmets, both too small for him. His language at this discovery, made the welkin ring, and echoed in the mountains ! Nor was I filled with joy at the arrival of my trusty sword, for which there is not much use in those parts. Perhaps, the most serious deficiency was ammunition, for I was running out of expanding bullets, though I had a supply of solid ones for pachyderms. However, I borrowed my orderly's Martini-Henry, and eked out matters until some more loads were sent up from the coast. At



TWO DOMESTICS.

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first, with this weapon I could hit nothing ; but after a series of trial shots I managed to come to some sort of an understanding.

The loads had to be carried about five miles from a place called Nuzrani's, on the Nile, to the fort, and here we had our first little hitch with porters. I told Nuzrani to have the loads borne by his men, but his men did not answer his summons with any enthusiasm, and one ridiculous creature raised a sort of *émeute*. I had to go to the village, where I found the miscreant somewhat abashed. I had him laid out and given five-and-twenty lashes, which instantly altered the complexion of affairs.

It was already apparent, that though the natives professed much pleasure in our company, they would have to be forced to carry our loads. We had disturbed the sleep which had permeated the whole country for generations, and it must be irksome to turn suddenly from laziness to activity. However, the question was not yet acute, and beings were generally forthcoming on the arrival of a few armed Soudanese soldiers. Most of the chiefs agreed on this one point—they differed on almost all others—which made it a simple matter to play them off upon each other. It required but little goading to broil up a right royal row, as they were like so many terriers ; but our mission was civilisation and the furtherance of peace. On this matter of carriers they were in unanimous accord, and

responded only by pressure. Even the more powerful magnates could hardly induce their men to come to our assistance, and pleaded all manner of excuses but the right one, *i.e.*, laziness.

One morning I rose with the small birds at 3.30 A.M., and bidding Bazruta bring his rifle with plenty of ammunition, and also collect some half-dozen men to bring home meat, I set out with my double .303 to enjoy a long morning's sport. I sought no particular quarry, for I knew there was always the chance of meeting a variety—especially at such an hour, when almost all beasts would be drinking. Nor did I care what direction I took—north, south, east, or west, they were all the same to me.

There was no breeze of any sort and I drank in the delicious cool as I wandered on. The calm feeling which precedes a sweltering day was in the air, and I made the most of the hours before the sun acquired his strength, stepping out merrily, as free as air and without a care in the world. I was happy in the truest sense of the word, and looking forward to whatever excitement the day might bring forth. I was well, and that was the secret of my frame of mind. What a difference that makes—does not the world seem a goodly place when one is in health? How insignificant does wealth seem when compared with health! It comes home to a man in the jungle where wealth is of no use. When

in health one does not drag one footstep after another, but walks briskly. The mind is similarly affected, and one looks about keenly and drinks in with the eyes all the many beauties of Nature. In sickness a man's eyes are on the ground, and he looks for nothing but the journey's end.

On this particular morning I felt as though the day could not be long enough. My spirits rose and I felt as if I could sing; hour after hour I walked on, but saw nothing to raise my rifle for. A few giraffe were moving away from my neighbourhood, and showed up over the horizon, and a herd of wart-hog were scampering off after refreshing themselves at the river. I passed a few herds of Cobus Kob, known to the Soudanese by the beautiful name of "Arielle," and a few hartebeest; but I always reserved such shooting for the return journey. There was no point in encumbering men early in the day, and these creatures were to be found at all times. I usually shot two or three near home, not for mere wanton butchery, but as meat for my people. It saved them killing goats, and they were most grateful for the same. They thrive on a meat diet if moderate, and I took care it was not overdone, by apportioning the joints myself. The natives made beasts of themselves when they got the chance, but the Soudanese were too provident to over-eat themselves at a sitting, and dried what they could not consume. I walked on for many miles, the sun

becoming hotter and hotter, and my temper a little peevish because nothing of any importance crossed my path. I suppose I must have walked for eight hours and my spirits were ebbing, when Bazruta suddenly stopped dead and said quietly, "hist," at the same time pointing slightly to the right of our direction. I saw three elephants within fifty paces of me!

The largest of the three was facing me, a gigantic young bull. He stood nearly a foot taller than his two companions, which were cows, and his back and head were amongst the branches of the mimosa tree, under which they were snoozing. They seemed to be half asleep, meditating, and were slowly waving their trunks to and fro with a sort of weaving motion. The cows were broadside on to me, and afforded an easy target; but my mind was instantly made up to try conclusions with the bull. So it was necessary to work round, as the frontal forehead shot is useless with the African elephant: he has a convex forehead and about two feet of cellular tissue to penetrate before the brain can be reached. The odds are always against your achieving this, and it is far too dangerous to attempt. They have been brought down by a shot, either through or past the trunk and by the mouth to the brain; or through the chest to the heart. But such shots are not worth attempting if the ordinary side shots can be got. The



ELEPHANTS IN SLUMBER.

vulnerable points are two, viz., the heart and the brain. The heart is located by continuing the fore-leg upwards to the point where it reaches the ear ; or by the ear itself when at rest at a point on its edge about half way down. The brain lies between the concha of the ear and the eye, and rather nearer the former than the latter. A bullet could penetrate there from almost any rifle, so short is the distance between the skin and the brain, but it requires a perfect shot coming squarely from the sportsman, who must deliver it from a standing height. Those whose nerves are always steady, even at such thrilling moments, and whose shooting is exact, may possibly prefer the brain shot ; but what experience I have had has led me to look upon the heart shot as the easier and safer. On the other hand, a bullet true in the brain will drop an elephant stone-dead in his tracks, whereas he may have lots of life in him still with a bullet in his heart. One officer was charged by a bull, out of whose heart he afterwards cut out an eight-bore bullet—though this was not the immediate cause of death. Their vitality is marvellous, and one can almost fill them with bullets, in places that are not vital, but, as a rule, they will drop with one straight in the heart. It is comparatively easy to make sure of drilling the hole correctly—for elephant shooting is usually done at very short ranges. Woe betide the rash man who tries a long shot and fails, if the elephant can only

get wind of him ! Finding the brain requires beautiful accuracy, and should only be attempted by old and experienced sportsmen. In the event of missing the brain, the bang in the head has the effect of infuriating the beast, and he becomes the most dangerous of all the brute creation, the Indian elephant being tame by comparison. His African brother's rage is awful to behold, and his great speed and faultless nose give a very meagre chance of escape to any human being who has incurred his wrath. Standing higher at the wither, he has a longer reach, and being less bulky, he is speedier. Moreover, the Indian species with his concave forehead, gives the frontal shot—a vital consideration in the event of a charge.

There is yet another shot, *i.e.*, the knee shot, which is seldom offered, on account of the long grass, but when successful, incapacitates the animal just as the spear may do, which I have mentioned before. But this is rather a mean shot, and hardly worthy of the sportsman's notice, except in case of emergency, when the opportunity for it may possibly not occur.

The ideal weapons for elephant shooting are the .303 or one of the later small-bore rifles, whichever is preferred, supplemented by a four or eight-bore ; for a big man I would always recommend the four-bore.

With the .303 the sportsman perforates the brain

or heart, and makes certain that the beast will eventually be his, and with the four-bore he awaits a possible charge. With such a weapon he is sure of stunning his enemy, and almost always knocks him down; when he can quickly reload and get another shot in before the animal has time to recover himself. This he may do with wonderful facility, unless the sportsman is ready and makes a safe end of him.

With all these thoughts in my mind, and nothing but a .303 at hand, I worked my way towards the trio. My selected one seemed still buried in a brown study, and was a veritable hill of flesh. He continued slowly moving his trunk, and this incessant unrest is a peculiar characteristic of the elephant, who seldom stands still; indeed, if he does so, it is a sign of sickness. As I crouched behind a tree and gazed up at him, I thought how easily he could uproot it and trample me to death. Visions of six dead men, which one elephant had recently mangled to death, began to rise up before me. I found myself trembling from head to foot—whether from excitement or fear, or both, I knew not. Probably it was fear! When I was within ten paces of the monster, I lay down and took a steady aim at the vital spot in his heart, marked in a diagram in my mind's eye. For a moment I wondered if I dared to fire: I was still safe and could have walked away unharmed. For very shame I could not do that. My brave Bazruta

was by my side, weapon in hand, and I steadied myself for one of the supreme moments of life.

I think there was some cause for my reflections, for was I not doing an insanely rash thing? To try and hustle out of this world that stupendous thing with one small bullet not half as big as my little finger. I did not at the time appreciate how preposterous the idea was, or I should doubtless have moved on without worrying these lords of the soil. I have since learnt by bitter experience how colossal my ignorance was. That he would be mine eventually was, at such a range, almost a certainty; but that I should be his in the meantime was also more than likely. The only excuse I can urge for myself was that I had not got a big rifle, and that the elephants were there. "Fools rush in," and I did not know the danger I was in. Moreover, nature, at such thrilling moments, imparts a sort of calm, an easiness to the nerves. The strain which but a few moments before had been racking me, seemed to subside, and I felt comparatively comfortable. Luckily providence watches over fools, or they would not last long; and I pulled the trigger! The bullet went in like a needle into a pat of butter, and the great beast winced. I half got up in an attitude easy for instant flight. To my relief they all three at once moved diametrically away from me, and I took another breath. They seemed in no great hurry, and with considerable majesty slowly

left the vicinity of danger. All at once the wounded one lurched slightly and then fell with a crash that shook the ground. His fall was too much for his two friends, who abandoned all dignity and fled incontinently. At this, I was a man again, and from behind a tree I fired four more bullets into the creature's heart; but it was unnecessary, for he was dying. Red foam came pouring out of his trunk until it stood in a mass a foot high. Now and again he would cough up masses of congealed blood, and from the streams that came pouring forth it would seem as if his aorta had been ripped through.

There I stood and looked at him, and there he lay as dead as a door-nail! A man may be forgiven if he dwells upon the grassing of his first elephant; but words would soon be beggared in an attempt to describe my unbounded joy. Bazruta was equally elated, and danced upon the carcase, descending now and again to come and shake me by the hand. Africa seemed at that moment to be a paradise, and I had forgotten all its little drawbacks.

The news was soon spread broadcast, and long before the vultures had a chance, the human element prevailed. In hundreds, from all directions, they came: sometimes singly, sometimes in small groups, and at other times in villages *en bloc*. The whole countryside were my guests, and abandoned them-

selves to gluttony and excess. With difficulty I kept them off, whilst the tusks were being cut out, together with the feet, ears, and tail, as trophies.

The tusks should be most carefully extracted, for if the native is allowed to hack off the surrounding flesh with an axe, he will almost inevitably hack the ivory, and the best method is to bury the tusk in its casing for some days, when the flesh is readily wiped off.

Almost every part of the elephant can be afterwards utilised for beautiful objects. The legs should be cut off close to the knee, cut vertically down the back to the heel, skinned, and the skin should then be sewn up and filled with wood ashes. The foot contains masses of white laminæ, a certain amount of which should be retained, for it can be polished until it becomes a beautiful transparent substance like amber. Not knowing this, I allowed it to be eaten. The feet are handsome mounted as umbrella stands, waste-paper baskets, etc., etc. ; but great care is required in their preservation, or damp and bacon beetles will soon destroy them. When thoroughly dry, the ashes should be emptied out, and the inside covered with arsenical soap. I had none of this substance, and was lucky to get any of my feet home at all. I generally kept the toe-nails, which polish beautifully and make such useful articles as ash-trays and the like.

The ears were enormous and measured at the

time of death, six feet in length. I kept them as long as possible, but eventually got tired of them and threw them away. I remember asking my orderly to cut some sandals out of them before casting them aside, at which he smiled. I asked him the reason of his superciliousness, and he said he would practically demonstrate the matter. With an axe, neither of us could even nick off a piece, so adamantine had it become, resembling in substance, compressed paper. And yet this stuff, when still wet and soft, was eaten as a delicacy! Each one to his own taste, and certainly I met some quaint tastes in my travels. The inside of the foot contained red meat, which was set apart for myself, being considered the most toothsome portion of all. I afterwards essayed it and seemed to have done so days before it was ready, for it was as tough as a boot. In flavour it resembled ordinary beef-steak, but I should think it ought to have been buried for at least ninety-six hours to make it tender. The shank bones were broken up and the grease extracted by boiling, for cooking purposes. I also tried the heart, which they assured me was good enough for the European palate; but I would rather have been without it, and only sacrificed myself from sheer curiosity. The bristles of the tail are well worth keeping, for they can be converted into rings or bangles. The tusks I had converted into *£ s. d.*: but they were a disappointment. Young bulls, in

spite of their enormous size, generally have small tusks of beautiful white ivory, but the magnificent 100 lb. tusks are only to be found on the old bulls. I do not suppose in this instance that the beast was more than five-and-twenty years of age; but his enormous proportions can be gauged when I state that his forefeet measured sixty inches in circumference, and that a fairly accurate estimate of his height may be arrived at by doubling this number. I do not think the average duration of life of an elephant has been determined, but that it can exceed one hundred years is known.

I sat and watched the scene, revolting as it was. In an hour's time, the skeleton was fairly clean; but there were still boys cutting off some remaining shreds that adhered to the ribs. Those who had come early made up parcels of meat and left with them on their heads. The Soudanese, of course, had the pick; but the native is not particular as to the quality of what he gets: he is satisfied with quantity. Quite a number brought their fire-sticks, and little bundles of firewood, with the evident intention of making a night of it.

These fire-sticks are only fairly common, as the Nilotics generally carry fire with them whenever they make a journey. They are two in number, the end of one fitting into a hole in the end of the other. These ends, one inside the other, are placed over some tinder or very dry powdered grass, one



NATIVES CUTTING UP AN ELEPHANT.

stick being held by the feet, and the other being vigorously twiddled between the palm of the hands ; a spark is thus engendered and the grass ignited. The sticks require to be very dry and hard, and in spite of their constantly producing sparks, they last for a considerable time. I tried to use them and failed ; but it is a knack which one could doubtless soon acquire.

As the evening closed in, little fires were to be seen scattered all round, and the fumes from cooking meat became intolerable. Many savages preferred to eat their portions raw, or else they had not the patience to wait through the process of cooking.

At last there was nothing more to wait for, and all that remained of that once noble animal was his mutilated bones.

I revisited the spot next morning : the poor lion had been there to see what was to be got out of it, and had pulled some of the bones to a little distance off, and then left them — disgusted at the greediness of the human being. A dozen marabous or so were standing solemnly there with long faces, and thought of what they had missed, and of all the things that might have been ! At a respectful distance from the tracks of the lion and the leopard, were those of the hyena and jackal, and other lesser lights — all forestalled and disappointed !

This horrible excess, which my hospitality had

brought about, was looked upon on all sides as most opportune and as the direct intervention of providence, for it occurred at the feast which follows the Ramathan fast, and enabled many Mohammedans to make up in feasting the devotion they lacked in fasting. The devil truly can quote Scripture for his purpose.

CHAPTER X

SARTOR RESARTUS

There be some sports are painful, and their labour
Delight in them sets off.

Act III. Scene 1, *The Tempest*.

Man, only, mars kind nature's plan,
And turns the fierce pursuit on man.

Scott, *Rokeby*.

My next adventure nearly took me into the next world. It fell to my lot to journey to Lamogi, a place situated near Baker's old fort of Fatiko, and some forty odd miles from Afuddu. At Lamogi, I was to find about one hundred loads of trade goods, which it was my business to see safely to Afuddu. Not anticipating any excitement during my first march, I thought I would make it as long as possible, so I fixed on a spot which I knew of about twenty miles distant as my halting-place for the night. I had accomplished about sixteen of these miles, when an event happened, which I am not likely to forget

for the remainder of my natural days. I was sauntering along somewhat unconcernedly, and getting bored, as one is apt to after the fifteenth mile, when my eyes chanced to rest upon what at first seemed to me to be a conglomeration of rocks, or a small village. I took out my glasses, wondering whose village it might be, and saw to my astonishment that what I had taken to be huts was actually moving. At the same time, Bazruta stopped dead, and uttered his customary exclamation, "hist," which he did when anything unusual came into his vision. With his quick eye he saw at once what it was, and whispered "fil." It then dawned upon me that ahead of me was standing a closely packed herd of elephants.

I stopped the caravan and made it lie down, and, accompanied by my orderly and one other retainer, I made a bee-line for the herd. My recent success had given me confidence, and I approached without a trace of the nervousness that had seized me during my first adventure. The breeze came straight from the direction of the elephants—which were having their usual midday siesta—and everything seemed propitious. The ground was rocky, and covered with high grass, there being only a few short fig trees scattered here and there: the elephants had for some reason chosen the open ground to sleep in, unprotected from the direct rays of the sun. This is rather unusual, for

their skins are extraordinarily sensitive, and they much prefer the shade of a tree if it is to be found. When I drew near I waited still for a few moments to thoroughly inspect the beasts. There were between forty and fifty of them, and they were all touching each other—indeed, so closely packed were they that a man could not have made his way through them. With my glasses I searched through all their tusks to find the largest of them, and ascertained that the finest pair was right in the centre. I tried to place myself so that I could get a shot at some vital spot, but wherever I tried, the great beast seemed to be covered, as if by design. I was soon within ten yards of them, and they still seemed unaware of our proximity. All at once the breeze slightly shifted, and our scent must have awakened them, for they seemed to detect the presence of some danger, and became uneasy. For about a second they moved about, and then without any warning went off as if by a word of command, simultaneously and without losing their relative positions. They passed within a few yards of me, and I could almost have stroked one of them. As they moved away, the big one exposed his quarters to me, and fearing that I should lose them from my supineness, I determined to risk a shot. Anything more reckless or stupid can hardly be imagined by a hunter of any experience! I knew that the elephant is vulnerable in the spine, and thinking I might hit him there, I

bent low and fired upwards at his tail at an angle of about 45° . Such a deed was simple madness, for I had not a big rifle to fall back upon, and it emanated from my crass ignorance. Looking back upon it now, I can hardly conceive what I expected to happen! I know now that my chance of dropping the elephant was remote, and that the chance of his turning upon me was very much the reverse!

The bullet went home, and must have inflicted a most painful wound, for the beast went on, using his hind legs wide apart, whisking his tail violently, with the blood pouring out as if a tap had been turned on. He did not seem disposed to anger at first, but only anxious to remain in the midst of the herd. The latter was obviously much disturbed by the crack of the rifle and the smack of the bullet as it struck. A few cows and young ones detached themselves and wandered off to the right, stepping up high and elevating their trunks in an absurd manner. The others ambled on straight, and getting amongst a few fig trees, they stopped for a short time to feed, ripping some of the branches down almost to the ground. I followed on! My orderly implored me to desist, and urged that he had elephant hunted in Emin's day, and that he knew these were battāl, or bad, from their very appearance. But my conceit must have been as hopeless as my ignorance, for I told him I had not expected fear in him. Seeing

that I was bent upon continuing the chase, he had not the heart to leave me, and I suppose meant to make the best of a bad job. He also saw that another unfortunate retainer, who was armed with a Martini-Henry, kept with us. This rifle might certainly have been of the last importance.

After about another mile we came up with the herd again. I noticed that they had reformed themselves as before, the paterfamilias in the middle, and the smaller ones round him with their heads rather inclined outwards. This time I was not going to waste my time any more upon the big one, and resting my .303 upon the branch of a bush, I aimed at the brain of the nearest one—an average tusker. I fired, and distinctly heard the thud of the bullet as it entered his head. I must have been a trifle low, or the animal must have slightly shifted his head at the critical moment, for he did not fall. On the other hand he turned suddenly in my direction, opened his mouth and trumpeted. For a beast of such vast size the voice is ridiculous, and is similar to the sound of a penny trumpet: but for all its smallness, I can conceive nothing more terrifying. It made the blood run cold in my veins, and I devoutly wished I had never fired that shot. I was only ten paces off, and saw distinctly the angry gleam in his eye as he charged. The further disturbance of my second shot had infuriated the rest of the herd, and headed by the other wounded one, who was now

roused to an awful passion, they all trumpeted and joined in the hunt.

Yes! The hunt had changed. My two poor companions and I were the quarry, and we were being hunted! The second retainer was terror-stricken. He shouted out for us to separate so that only one might be killed; but Bazruta pointed his rifle at him, and said he was to remain with him, between the commandant and the elephants, and that the first to be killed must be one of them. I must say I have often felt sorry for that second man: he never wanted to be there in the first place, and when he was there he was not allowed to escape in his own way! Bazruta behaved with the most magnificent devotion, and kept his presence of mind admirably throughout a trying twenty minutes. There was nothing for it but to run, and run we did. I have never in my life run like it before or since—but then I have never been in such a fright! With a start of ten yards, what chance had three bipeds on their legs, with animals that can keep pace with a mounted man? Moreover, the going was atrocious, and we kept stumbling at every step over rocks and boulders, and unevennesses of the ground. However, there were two things in our favour, or I should not now be relating this story! One was the fact that we soon got into a hollow, where there was no breeze, and scarcely any scent, and, secondly, the natural short-sightedness of our pursuers.



A REVERSED STATE OF AFFAIRS.

Bending low down so that we were almost invisible in the long grass, we suddenly doubled to the right. This had the effect of confusing and delaying the creatures. They must have taken some little time casting about, for we undoubtedly gained about fifty yards. On we went, blinded with sweat and struggling for dear life. I felt that this unequal race could only end one way, and went through all the agonies of the poor hunted fox—and I inwardly vowed that I would never hunt him again. Every minute seemed to bring the huge brutes nearer, and I awaited the tap on the shoulder, which would end matters. Gradually it dawned upon me that I was becoming exhausted, and could not last much longer. It would not have availed to fling ourselves to the ground—the last refuge of a man when charged by a single elephant—for how could we expect a whole herd to pass us by? But the love of life is very powerful, and strengthens the sinews! We dashed on; but our tormentors were coming up to us again and my heart sank. Now did I fully realise my folly in firing at all, and my madness in not abandoning the chase when my orderly had warned me!

At this desperate juncture we suddenly came upon a nullah. Bazruta was just behind, calm and collected, scorning to leave me, which, with his activity, he might easily have done, and called to me to jump down. I cared not if I was leaping into a bottomless

pit—anything to escape from the present pressing danger—I jumped!

As it chanced, it was not more than ten feet down, and though we were cut and bruised, we picked ourselves up and ran along the bottom with what seemed a new lease of life. To my great joy, the rent in the ground was narrow, and the consciousness of the fact that the elephant cannot jump, and that he does not care to descend into any narrow place, was most refreshing. After covering another hundred and fifty yards, Bazruta climbed up again and peeped over the grass. To my intense relief he said the elephants had lost the scent, and were snuffing about at the edge of the nullah. I asked where the escort was, for amongst them was safety, and I was told they were far off. But some instinct told me my faithful orderly was wrong, and I seemed to guess the direction. We now moved at a walk to try and recover ourselves, having a fairly good start. But they came on again, and the brief respite to my nerves was gone. My efforts were becoming frantic, my hat blew off—which Bazruta returned for and recovered. I asked afterwards why he had done such a thing, and he imperturbably said that he knew the white man gets sunstroke without his hat, and that I should then have fallen a victim to the elephants. On we went, and at last my instinct proved to be true, for we came quite suddenly upon the caravan and escort who had moved on,

instead of remaining where we had left them as the orderly thought. I fell in the Somalis, who formed the escort, at once, and gave the words: "Ready! Present!"

Whether it was the gleam of the rifles or the presence of a big caravan, I cannot say, but the two wounded elephants, who were now leading the herd, suddenly swerved off. This created a panic amongst the rest, and they all turned tail and fled; closely packed as before, with the two wounded ones behind. I watched them disappearing with as much joy as earlier I had watched them getting closer. I had been through both sides of a hunt, and never want to again. The two injured ones, as I watched, kept losing ground, and were evidently sorely hurt. At last, over an undulation of the ground, they passed out of our sight, which made me feel quite five years younger.

As the reaction set in I felt completely exhausted, and was not invigorated by the remembrance that I had another five miles to walk before reaching camp. I lay on the ground, trembling from my exertions, and the porters came and poured water over me. I let it soak through my clothes and hair—it was delicious!

I could not help thanking Bazruta for the part he had played and shaking him by the hand. I must confess that his courage had evoked my sincerest admiration, and his devotion had touched me

deeply. I do not think he seemed to look upon his share as anything much. It was the duty of every Soudanese soldier to protect his commandant, and he would have returned to his company with a sorry visage, if he had allowed me to be killed, whilst he himself was unharmed. But I was glad to have had the experience, and grateful to Heaven for being none the worse for it. Having killed an elephant with one shot, shooting seemed so easy ; but we are often painfully made aware of facts ! One thing, however, I did regret, and that was that I did not recover any of the tusks of the two beasts I had hit. News came to me afterwards that the big one had died in an adjacent country ; but I was never able to ascertain the whereabouts, and some natives must surely have discovered them, purloined the ivory and buried it. They would never have given it up, unless I had found the place of burial.

CHAPTER XI

MEN AND MONKEYS

Our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft might win
By fearing to attempt.

Act I. Scene 5, *Measure for Measure*.

After a gilded butterfly.

Act I. Scene 3, *Coriolanus*.

Collect them all.

Act IV. Scene 1, *Henry V*.

Thou jesting monkey.

Act III. Scene 2, *Tempest*.

I REACHED Lamogi without further mishap, and stayed there with a brother subaltern for two days, when I returned to Afuddu with a long caravan of beads, brass wire, trade cloth, and other legal tender. A certain sub-chief named Ao invited me to come through his dominions, as he had been visited by a terrible elephant which had not only demolished quantities of his crops, but also various vassals who

had endeavoured to drive him off. I suppose he looked upon this as a unique opportunity to offer me his hospitality, and though I had not yet forgotten my last meeting with the pachyderm, I seized the occasion and went.

As greeted me effusively, and at once conducted me away to be introduced to the elephant. There he was, about a mile and a half away, quietly obliterating the crops with an air of conviction that he was too great to be harmed by anything on earth. Slowly flapping his ears he was moving away from our vicinity, occasionally stopping to eat some foliage from the trees, or some fruit off the ground. He appeared to be fond of the latter form of food, as some of the trees were considerably battered about. The elephant does not bother to pick fruit singly off a tree; but will butt the trunk with such force that all the ripe fruit is shaken off. He then picks it off the ground with his trunk, and pops it into his mouth. His favourite species is the wild plum, though he will eat many others. I watched him in the hope that I should see him perform the operation of butting, but he declined to oblige me. He sauntered about as if the whole place was his, which to all intents and purposes it was. The elephant requires an enormous quantity of food to support life, and 600 lbs. might be considered an ordinary daily diet. Imagine what havoc a herd of these creatures plays with the poor natives'

crops. The largest herd reported during my stay in the Protectorate numbered over 300, and this must have devastated a considerable tract of land every day. I told Bazruta to load and hand me the rifle, and that the elephant was to be slain. He at once responded cheerfully with his invariable "Taib hādar, effendi," which corresponds to our "very good, sir." Whatever had happened to my nerves, his were as unshaken as ever.

With a nonchalant air I advanced; but I soon felt my heart in my boots. The recollection that I had naught but a small-bore rifle, and the knowledge that this beast was alone in his glory, and therefore a rogue, painted him in most formidable colours to my imagination. Visions of being hurtled through the air, or stuck on the end of a tusk, or of being knelt upon and crushed, began to rise in front of me. It was evident to me that I had not got over the little affair of three days before. And then this pachyderm looked so exceedingly self-possessed; he carried himself with such an air of proprietorship, that I quailed in front of him. Fortunately for me he seemed to be leaving, and was moving diametrically away from me at about four miles an hour. Though I am ashamed to own it, I felt better for this, and was by no means sorry when he passed out of my sight. I turned to Bazruta expressing my disappointment at not being able to follow up the chase; but as we had twenty miles more to go,

and as the elephant was leading us out of our way, we must just let him alone. I happened to see a herd of eland ahead of me, which soon distracted our attention.

I have often regretted that elephant since ; but at the time I could not face him on any consideration, and it was several weeks before I felt myself again. My nerve was for the time being gone, and I contented myself with shooting small game, and in collecting butterflies and beetles.

Entomology was a never-failing source of delight, and occupied my spare time in a profitable manner. I am only sorry that I did not devote more of my attention to coleoptera, instead of being attracted by the gaudier beauty of the lepidoptera ; for in the former there is a greater field for discovery. Since the days of Emin Pasha the insect fauna of the Nile can have had practically no research.

All butterflies were fish for my net, and I caught them indiscriminately, for my untutored eye could not determine the various species. Whilst wandering round the estate, watching the building and agriculture, I always carried a net and was surprised how absorbing the new interest was.

The craze for collecting things is a very common one : some love postage stamps, others coins, etc., etc. ; but I think there is nothing so beautiful as the butterfly. There is always the chance of capturing the undiscovered, which continuously gives a

mild excitement to the pursuit, and I never grudged the labour entailed. I would recommend any man who wishes to travel in the wilds to be sure to furnish himself with the necessary equipment. There is so little required that it is no encumbrance at all. A net of the best pattern made in London—for I do not believe in home-made paraphernalia—and a few old magazines, are the means by which one's name may be immortalised, if such is the desire. Hitherto unknown specimens have been described by experts; but the name of the captor has been given to the insect. I am personally averse to this plan of denomination, for such a name as "Teracolus Snooki," or "Charaxes Robinsoni," conveys too little in connection with the butterfly, and too much about the name of some individual which might just as well be left in oblivion. To my humble mind it would seem to carry more description if the habitat were always appended: the "Satyridæ Elgoni" would be a group most interesting to compare with the "Satyridæ Ruwenzori." But I am not qualified to give an opinion on such a subject, and there may be good reasons for preserving the names of various travellers.

To return to the collecting of insects, which is delightfully simple. The creature is netted, and killed by pinching the thorax between the fingers. The unpractised will at first do it wrongly as often as not, and a reflex action will open the wings

outwards, and this would bring about the destruction of the delicate feathering on the wings, which is the chief beauty. But the art is soon acquired, and the butterfly killed correctly, after which it is taken out of the net and put into a small paper box made from a sheet out of a magazine. The best kind of paper is the thickish glazed kind, such as is used by the *Pall Mall Magazine*, for it minimises friction. The paper boxes with their insects inside are then packed in a biscuit tin sufficiently tightly to prevent any play, and are sprinkled inside with some such disinfectant as "Insect Death": they are then ready to send home. Care should be taken to inscribe the latitude and name of the place where found, and the time of year. When they arrive home the wings are easily relaxed by placing the insects on wet blotting paper, and they can then be reset.

Beetles are a little more troublesome, as they should be eviscerated and packed in pyramid-shaped boxes, or laid in layers of sawdust. They should be killed by dipping the head into boiling water, and it is humane to see that the water is at boiling point.

Thus easily can you make for yourself a collection of lovely objects, which in after years you can gaze at frequently without tiring.

I became so enthusiastic an entomologist that I rarely went into the open air without my net, and in all my shooting trips I always had it within reach

of my hand. Where game was abundant I have turned from it to pursue some little butterfly which might have enticed me by its brightness. I can recollect standing for hours in a swamp in the middle of a long march, under the midday sun, netting butterflies as they passed over.

In the evening and at night thousands of moths, notably the *Hesperidæ* and *Noctuidæ*, would hover round my light and fall victims to the delicately manipulated handle of a spoon or fork. Instead of their being a nuisance to me during my lonely meal, which was itself a bore, they caused me to look forward to it with interest. My great regret is that I collected them in an amateur, dilettante fashion, without the seriousness and thoroughness of a professional.

Another source of amusement was pets, and one could try and tame fresh ones as often as they were brought in. I purchased a red monkey from some natives. I believe this monkey to have been the red colobus; but at the time I was unaware of the main characteristic of that species, and cannot now remember if the animal was thumbless or not. In all other respects he resembled the red colob. As a friend and companion he failed, and his chief weakness was clothes which he tore to pieces without compunction. Though his initial cost was only a pair of blue pyjamas, he cost me several more pairs before I was done with him.

I gave him a "chop box" as an official residence, and to this I tethered him with a thick rope, which limited his sphere of influence to about five feet. All went well for a time, and he grew to be quite fond of me, especially about feeding time; but on an evil day a bicycle arrived for the Colonel to ride about the native paths on. This, curious to relate, had the same effect upon the natives as it had on him, for they all appeared at first to be much alarmed at seeing the Colonel making headway in such a remarkable manner, a symptom which might engage the interest of Darwinists. The monkey, in his terror, bit my finger, left my shoulder where he was peacefully sitting, and ran up a tree before any one could lay hands on him. He refused to come down from his natural haunt, and I tried to bring him down by stones. Bazruta solved the difficulty by doing sentry-go under the tree, and sleeping there when weary. The monkey did not dare to descend so long as a man remained to bar his escape, until time and hunger forced him to capitulate.

Another day the dogs set on him and took a lot of his fur away with them. Bazruta explained to me most carefully that dogs do not want monkeys, and I should think from what I saw that monkeys do not want dogs. After this he became wild again, and so aggravated me that I threw him back into his own jungle once more.

My porters soon afterwards caught another

monkey, a blue one, and presented him to me in the forest then and there. This was a guenon. Thinking that he might have a sweeter disposition than his predecessor I accepted him and handed him over, with his string, to a porter to bring along. Almost immediately afterwards I heard a piercing scream from the porter, and saw the monkey vanishing up a tree. It seemed that the monkey had awaited his opportunity, and fixed his teeth into the calf of the luckless porter, which brought about the premeditated result of causing him to drop the string. The monkey seized the moment during the confusion and disappeared altogether amongst the thick foliage of the trees. Some people say that monkeys are nice pets, and I have no wish to quarrel on the subject; but I reserve my own opinion. I have never made a friend of a monkey since, however near be the kinship he may claim with "genus homo."

I occasionally had a young antelope, but was not successful with them; though others were.

The native pariah abounds in all villages, and in spite of his unprepossessing appearance, is always amiable. I never met a bad-tempered native dog in Africa, and he is always hospitable to strangers.

English dogs live well enough if they are not called upon to march too much on sandy paths, the heat at a dog's height being terrific. The burning

sand scorches their feet, and causes them much agony.

Some dogs belonging to our Colonel once indulged in a three days' hunt on their own account, and were unable to reach home, as the skin had been burnt from their feet. They were found half a mile from camp, lying helpless in the road.

Of all dogs, the lurcher would be to my mind the most useful for such a country.

A short time after my visit to a brother subaltern at Lamogi, he paid me a return visit at Afuddu, and the Colonel kindly granted us a week's shooting leave. As one European is sufficient to take care of a station, and he intended himself to remain at Afuddu for a fortnight, he could afford to dispense with our services. It is not advisable to leave a station even for a short time under the auspices of a Soudanese, however reliable. The power in his hands is too great, and he finds it hard to resist various little temptations. A certain Yusbasha was once unavoidably left in charge of a station for sometime, and it was afterwards found that he had assumed the state of a pasha, levying tolls and taxes and committing atrocities with the thoroughness of a potentate in the Dark Continent. He was at last discovered, after doing irreparable harm, and visited with suitable punishment.

So my friend and I started with a sufficient escort, and about forty porters, some of whom were

Lendus. These Lendus belonged by rights to the left bank of the Nile, but had been brought into Uganda by the Soudanese, more or less as slaves. They had gradually formed a little colony, and now served as porters and workmen under the British Government, without evincing any desire to return to their own country. I had about sixty of them with me at this time at Afuddu, and found them most useful in the building of the station. Of course, they were generally employed as porters, bringing loads from the boats, and on other journeys, which helped to simplify the porter question; but they were insufficient in numbers to do all that work, and the natives had still to be called upon to lend their aid.

These Lendus formed a separate community of their own, making their own little locations, and living there with their wives. They received twelve rupees a month as wages, and seemed happy enough. Physically they were inferior to the Soudanese we employed as soldiers, whom they resembled in some characteristics, though a few of them had been taken into the ranks; and mentally they were savages. Sir Harry Johnston places them anthropologically about midway between the Nilotic and the pigmy prognathous type. Their women wore their hair in the same fashion as the Soudanese women, *i.e.*, plaited into numerous tags, the ends of which were covered with mutton fat. They cicatrised their faces

mercilessly, and their bodies also. Several tribes on the Nile were addicted to this practice, and every tribe had its own tribal marks. Sometimes a little triangle of hair was cut from the back of the head, low down, and three little cicatrises burnt there. In other tribes it was on the sides of the face, and in others on the foreheads. In some cases weals were raised by rubbing into the fresh cuts some vegetable irritant, which gave a hideous and disgusting result. But many tribes just burnt little leaf-shaped marks which were by no means unbecoming, as they healed up and shone like satin which showed up against the velvet skin with a somewhat pleasing effect. It was a common thing to hear some wretched child howling whilst it was being branded with the mark of its own particular tribe, and I congratulated myself that Europeans have other means of distinguishing themselves. This black skin of the blood negro is his only beauty, and it is perhaps the clearest and smoothest texture in the world. They seem to realise it, as they spoke rather contemptuously of the Swahilis from the coast as the "red-skins." I agree with them in that respect, for the reddish-yellowish skin of the Hamites and coast people cannot compare with the deep blue-black epidermis of the negro.

CHAPTER XII

A HIPPOPOTAMUS

Oft expectation fails and most oft there
Where most it promises.

Act II. Scene I, *All's Well that ends Well*.

Take that to end thy agony.

Part III., Act V., Scene 5, *King Henry VI*.

Until thy foot be snared.

Part II., Act II., Scene 4, *King Henry VI*.

PLEASE pardon me, reader, for wandering aimlessly about my subject, and remember that this is but a book of wanderings, and meant to give impressions just as they occurred, *i.e.*, changing every minute.

We determined to explore the "Khor Assua," a tributary of the Nile, running from a south-easterly direction and augmenting the great river at a point near the Falls of Dufleh. We soon struck the river and ascended along its banks, which appeared to be totally uninhabited, and are almost unexplored. It

was at this time very low, and one could cross dry at many points over the enormous boulders which lay in the bed. In flood, the river must be wide and rapid, as at most points it measures 100 yards across, and in some places a great deal more. The sandy ground on either side was literally covered with foot-prints. Elephant walks, laid flat—for elephants like their own scent and follow their own spoor—made excellent paths for us to find our way. Giraffes, lions, leopards, hippopotami, rhinoceroses, and antelopes all seemed to come and drink from this stream. We shot a few water-buck to strengthen our porters, but were disappointed in our search for big game. In these parts is found that comparatively rare water-buck, the “cobus defassa,” and we were able to add one or two to our collections.

About the third day, we came upon a deep pool and sat down upon the rocks to watch the hippos disporting themselves; and my friend who wanted a few tushes, looked at each one as he came up, to find out which was the pater or materfamilias. Whilst so employed some one raised a cry of “Fil,” which sent a thrill through both of us. We all hid ourselves at once and awaited the coming of the elephant. To our disgust a fat hippo, who had been for a stroll, was returning home, slowly working his jaws. He was enormous, and so my friend M. determined to have him: and to get one on terra-firma, without the delay of waiting for him to

come to the surface of water, and then be towed to land, was an unusual chance. He instantly gave the beast a .500 express bullet in the head, which must have passed through the mouth, for he suddenly opened wide his jaws as if for a gigantic yawn, and showed a most formidable array of curved and straight tushes. Even as his mouth was open, another bullet was popped in, which made him shut it up with a smack. He could not quite make this out, and thought that his happy home was the best place for him. The bank was there slightly precipitous, having a fall of perhaps twelve feet, and the beast advanced towards it, apparently with the intention of taking a mighty header. I could not help noticing that already the sky above was dotted with marabou storks, watching the proceedings and anticipating a heavy meal. They seemed to thoroughly realise what was happening. As the hippo came on, he was brought up short by another bullet in the shoulder which rolled him over. We jumped up to give him his *coup-de-grace*, when he suddenly found his legs again, and making a lurch, got to the edge of the bank, and rolled in anyhow, with a resounding splash. We ran round and got on to the ledge overlooking his point of disappearance, and awaited his coming for breath. He soon came up and got a smack in the head at once. Down he went and up again to get another blow. His brain is very small, and as he gave barely half a second

above the surface each time, it was most difficult to find. After the fourth or fifth time, his breath was so short that he could only remain under water for a few seconds at a time, and struggled hard for fresh air. The ghastly agony depicted upon his face was horrid to look upon, and the expression was ten times more hideous, if possible, than when normal. His battle was for air, and his natural cunning in coming up in different places had forsaken him. The fishes were already playing in and out of his wounds, drinking the blood as it came welling out, and a horrible crocodile was trying to get his teeth through the hide on his quarters. Each time he descended, he had another lump of lead in his head. It was a most gruesome sight. At last the fifteenth bullet found his brain, and he stiffened out at once and was still. According to his custom he went to the bottom, and we had to sit and wait until he condescended to rise again: the next time from too much air. He was considerate enough not to keep us waiting long, and we at once set about trying to get him to shore. For some reason he remained obstinately floating in the middle of the pool, and nothing we did seemed to have any effect upon him. We threw my axe-head tied to a string to the further side of him and gently pulled; but this was no good: we made the water ripple by throwing stones; but his great carcase took no notice of it: his companions were



A WOUNDED HIPPOPOTAMUS FALLING INTO THE RIVER.

as anxious to get rid of him as we were to get hold of him, and tried to nose him to shore ; but their efforts were half-hearted, and possibly they mistrusted us too much to co-operate with us. At last in desperation, M. said he was going in himself. I implored him not to, reminding him that he had had blackwater fever ; but even as I was talking, the reckless fellow plunged in, and swam towards the body. I made the porters throw stones in and shout, whilst I stood ready with my rifle to keep off the crocodile. My friend reached the dead animal in safety, clambered on to the upturned stomach by one of the legs, and bestriding the vast cushion, was towed to land triumphantly ! It was a relief to me to get him to shore. This officer did get blackwater fever soon afterwards, though whether this wetting was the direct cause or not I cannot say. When he cut the tusks out, he was quite dismayed to find that one of the curved ones was eaten away with caries and therefore worthless ; but the other was a very fine one. The hide was scored down by the teeth of the crocodile, but he had not been able to get any hold. So voracious are these reptiles that they cannot even wait for death. The vulture is not a pleasant creature ; but he has the decency to allow the breath to leave a body.

From a shooting point of view, this little trip was not a success, as in such an absolutely wild spot, we had hoped for better things. Amongst

other things we should not have been surprised at coming upon a herd of buffalo—of whose existence in the vicinity, tales had reached us, indeed one of our expeditions afterwards shot several. But this was not to be, and we returned to Afuddu a little crest-fallen at our poor bag. As we drew near that place, I saw a number of small game-snares set by the natives, quite the most primitive devices I had ever seen. The commonest of them appeared to be a log of wood tied to a cord with a running noose at the end. The victim was intended to put his foot into the noose, which was cleverly hidden in the grass, draw it tight and find himself attached to 15 or 20 lbs of wood. In his first fright he would gallop away, banging the log against his legs, soon laming himself and rendering himself at the mercy of his vigilant enemy, who would find the tracking easy and would come up with him and spear him to death. Another snare—also common—consists of a circle of enormous mimosa thorns, fastened tightly with cord, with their points towards the centre. Again the poor beast unknowingly puts his foot into this trap, and finds his fetlock joint pierced with thorns. He cannot get rid of the tenacious device, and naturally gallops off at top speed, soon to be stopped by lameness and loss of blood, the latter giving the spoor. Another even simpler method is an ordinary slip knot on the end of a rope tied to a tree. The native lies close at

hand in concealment, and when he sees an animal caught, he rushes in and puts an end to its struggles, which might soon effect freedom. All these contrivances are primitive, but unfailing when once the beast is noosed. Of course, the chance of an antelope putting his foot into the loop and then dragging it instead of raising it out, is small ; but the native is a patient being and can afford to wait. He has no future engagements !

They are also fond of driving game into nets, resembling closely ordinary fishing nets, and sometimes erect wings of brushwood to keep the beasts from slipping out at a flank. The netting is concealed in grass, and the poor creatures, when once they put their legs or horns through the meshes, soon tie themselves up so tightly, that they are unable to move.

The art of tracking is not highly cultivated in the Nile district. Of course, the natural instinct is present—as it is in all races that inhabit the wilderness—still, there it is elementary. The country with its grass covering and rough stubble, did not lend itself much to the art. The few Somalis I had were far ahead of the Nilotics in this respect, and I fancy it was from them that Bazruta had acquired a great deal of his knowledge. The Somali had been bred in sandy tracks, where footprints are like the pages of a book—legible and intelligible. Sometimes he would make wonderful deductions, for he goes to work like a professional. He would care-

fully examine the impression, and perhaps find therein the minutest piece of grass, which would give him a clue as to the freshness of the track. He not only knew the track which each particular beast made, but his knowledge of their ways would enable him to make a shrewd guess as to where they were leading—at a spot where, perhaps, the impressions may have died out. He could tell you almost the hour at which droppings had been left, provided that the sun had not completely dried them up, and further, he would follow up a trail at an ordinary walking pace, so quick is his eye at detecting any pressure on the ground.

During the rains, of course, any fool can follow up a trail; but in the dry season, it is difficult to trace the path—even of the rhinoceros. The elephant, who seldom is solitary, on the other hand, lays everything so flat, and follows other elephants' tracks so persistently, that he is easily located as far as direction goes. Unluckily he thinks nothing of a journey of fifty miles during a single night, of swimming rivers, of negotiating swamps, of surmounting any natural obstacle, so that a meeting with him is fortuitous. To find him, you must look for him in his favourite haunts, near certain foliage and fruit trees. He has his special bathing places, and prefers these to have sand-banks hard by, so that he can throw sand over his skin to dry it, and perhaps relieve any irritation that may be present.

The Somali is so trained that he has not to think of these things. He takes a likely line and leaves an unlikely one as easily as the beast himself takes the best way to safety; but it is not an easy matter to extract from the man his whys and wherefores. He acts and reasons almost unconsciously, and sometimes would find it hard to explain why he had come to some conclusion.

CHAPTER XIII

AN EXPEDITION

And minister correction to thy fault.

Act II. Scene 3, *Richard II.*

The meed of punishment.

Act I. Scene 1, *Love's Labour Lost.*

THE command of Lamogi having fallen vacant, I was sent there, and though there was not much shooting in the immediate vicinity, its climate was much more salubrious than that of Afuddu, which lies about 1200 feet lower. The nights were cooler, and the mosquitoes less pressing in their attentions. Several of the local chiefs had been giving considerable trouble, and had to be visited with fines, one of them even bringing about a little blood letting, the Langos especially distinguishing themselves by their arrogance. They gave out that they did not want the English, and brought down much wrath upon their own heads by harbouring the last remnant of the mutineers, in defiance of our orders. I paid

them a visit myself, and had a slight scrimmage with them ; but this did not seem to have the desired effect of bringing them to their senses.

I was joined by a local body of allies, who smelt loot and had no other intentions. They follow in one's wake, and when the danger, if any, is over, they commit atrocities and fall upon everything of the slightest value. When I found out their little ways, I dispensed with such allies altogether, as they require too much looking after.

This particular lot were led by a most fantastic old gentleman, who afforded me some quiet fun. We met by arrangement at a certain place, and he advanced towards me with a few men, *Sua tela tonantes*, the majority of his followers having been halted some way back. When he saw me, he ran as fast as he could for fifty yards, and back again, all the time brandishing his spear excitedly, eventually hurling it with fury. Then he addressed in a loud voice the sun, the moon, the stars, and anybody who would listen to him, calling down wholesale destruction upon the enemy. He waited a while for breath, and then was recommencing his oration, when he picked up a thorn in his foot, which took so long to extract, that all interest in him evaporated.

These savages always require working up to fighting pitch, and they love a display. A war dance is only to excite courage where there may be a deficiency of that quality ; and possibly if the enemy

is within hearing, to make his heart quail. In anticipation, they slay countless foes; but this effervescence dies out in the presence of an enemy. They do not always live up to anticipations, and frequently bolt at the first inkling of danger, immediately after a demonstration of fearlessness. They can lull themselves into an ecstatic sense of invincibility; but the first shot awakens them to the other side of the question, with all its arguments.

Even the Soudanese give way to premeditations of ferocious deeds; which, with such weaker foes as usually cross their paths, they are oftener able to carry out.

Their favourite game is "cattle raiding." To play this, marks in the sand on either side represent cattle. Between these, cowry shells are flung up, and according as they fall, upwards or downwards, so are the marks wiped off one side and added to the other. They slay their imaginary foes in the process, until one side has lost all, and the clamour shows their enjoyment of the pastime.

I engaged some friendly savages in a little bow and arrow practice to see how much had to be feared from such weapons. I found their skill so poor in this respect that unless one got mixed up in a flight of arrows, there was only a remote chance of being hit. I presume a bow carries a moral effect; but these bowmen seldom hit anything at a range of over fifteen yards. I am speaking of Nilotic tribes, who are

possibly inferior in the art to other African nations.

The chief, at whose village we had all rendezvoused, killed the fatted calf, or rather ox, in our honour, for he had grudges against the Lango, and hoped to inspire us with hatred against them. I had caught a chill and was lying down with fever in the evening, when I was brought the tongue, kidneys, marrow-bones, and about fifteen pounds of beef as my share of the feast. In vain I told them I was not hungry, and could not manage it. They said it would make me strong, and would not hear of its being taken away, and I was reduced to surreptitiously enticing loafing mongrels into my tent, and letting them get rid of it. These men could not understand any one refusing good meat, even if he was *in extremis*.

That night, a violent storm came upon us, wrenching up my tent and sweeping it from over my head, leaving me to pass many miserable hours in darkness and saturation.

After I had been back in Lamogi for a fortnight, it became evident that fines were useless for punishing the Lango, and that some of the Shuli tribe were in sympathy with them, as a Soudanese woman was speared whilst drawing water within 500 yards of the fort. I set out at once with about sixty Soudanese, and was joined by another officer who had arrived with some Swahili troops, about fifty of which he brought, and himself took command of the whole. It

was high time that a lesson should be read ; and these misguided people had taken advantage of our kindness in not killing them.

Two or three marches brought us to the confines of the Lango country, and our Intelligence Department, which consisted of several ragged sympathisers, brought us news of the whereabouts of the mutineers. These, of course, would be the bulwark round which the Lango would rally, and it was our intention to try and effect a surprise.

That we were expected was gleaned from the rotten eggs which strewed our path. These are supposed to have some mysterious influence upon the god of battles ; but did not seem to affect our own men, who examined them in the hopes of finding a good one. Needless to add, they were disappointed.

Suddenly we left the beaten path, and disappeared into the dense jungle, with the object of making a wide circuitous movement and falling upon the enemy from an unexpected quarter. Such a scheme sounds simple ; but it is not difficult to outwit uncivilised tribes, though we now had to reckon with the cunning mutineer.

In the pathless elephant grass we were lost to outsiders, and had every chance of success, until we accidentally met some wandering elephant hunters. The Lango, as I mentioned before, are great Nimrods, and these men were at their favourite occupa-

tion. There were only three of them, and when they suddenly met the apparition of a large armed body of strangers, they turned and fled. Our advanced guard pursued and caught two ; but to our mortification, the third one escaped.

There was no question of surprise now, and so we turned and headed direct for the stronghold of the mutineers, which we heard was fortified by an abattis.

It was an exhausting march, pushing through the tangled grass, and I had a temperature of 103° . Now and again I could not go on ; but my men soon cut down branches and made a rough sedan chair to carry me in. I hated this means of progress, as the motion made me very sick, so I got out and struggled on. We camped in thick jungle for the night, having come to a swamp, with a little muddy water in the bottom — a most unhealthy looking spot. The country was exceedingly badly watered, and the natives relied mostly on wells.

The gigantic grass seemed interminable, but we afterwards found that the inhabited portion was a narrow strip, cleared and cultivated, and dotted with a succession of small villages.

That night, when all the world seemed gloomy, the soldiers were as merry as ever, and round their fires they chattered and laughed as though they had no cares. There was hardly any food, as we had come very short of transport for rapid movement, and

brought only a few sacks of sorghum with us, relying mainly on what we should find. Thus the men were carrying enormous weights about their persons. Each man his rifle, and about ninety rounds of Martini-Henry ammunition, his great-coat, and as much food as he liked to carry, some of them bringing strips of dried meat and a few pounds of grain. Even under this load they were happy and contented, and thought of nothing but the coming contest. At night, they probably dreamt of glory, loot, and many wives.

Next day I was a trifle better, and we pushed on by compass bearing. Here and there we were able to follow elephant tracks, and this was the utmost relief to the men, whose feet and ankles were being cut by the sharp-edged grass. We could shoot no game for them, as there was none, because nothing but elephant would go near such dense jungle. Of these there must have been great numbers, judging from their tracks, and sometimes they can only have been just ahead of us, for I could myself distinctly smell the peculiar scent they leave in their wake.

Just at dusk we came upon a small village, and apparently without having been detected, for we could hear the natives talking and cooking their food. As a precaution we opened out, and then took the place, and slept there for the night. There was plenty of food and water, and we had a good rest.

Here we found out the exact position of the enemy's stronghold, and marched to a small river which flowed close by, and guarded one flank for the night, making us feel fairly secure from attack.

A few deserters from the other side visited us, and we made them the medium of negotiations with the mutineers. It was our desire to come to some agreement with the latter, apart from the Langos, and we offered them their lives if they would give themselves up, promising that after a comparatively short period of imprisonment they would be allowed to return to their own brothers and friends, and be happy ever afterwards.

As they were lords of all they surveyed, they may possibly have weighed the comparative forms of happiness, and thought that their present lot was not without its advantages. But, after all, there is no place like home, and the black man has this idea more rooted in his nature than the white man.

There appeared to be every chance of an agreement being brought off, and my Yusbasha, whose own brother was amongst the mutineers, assured me that all was well, and that they were anxious to return to their brethren and no longer be hunted and harassed as they had been for a year past.

It was strange that these two brothers should meet in amicable palaver, and engage in mortal combat soon after. Their opinions differed, and I must

say, that each in his own way, had the courage of his convictions.

When we were becoming really sanguine of bringing in the mutineers, which was of greater moment than the punishment of any tribe, the rascally Langos upset our apple cart. They came in such numbers, and with such specious arguments, that the wavering mutineers changed their minds, and resumed hostilities. The savages, who must have been over 1000 strong, persuaded them that, in combination, they might avoid surrender, and even aspire to victory. A ridiculous ceremony, in which an oracle was invoked, finally turned the balance.

This oracle took the form of an ordinary stick planted very lightly in the ground, with a small flag flying from its end. A wretched chicken was killed to work the fates, and the next gust of wind solemnly awaited. If it blew down the stick the white men were to die ; but if it remained standing so should ourselves triumph.

As luck would have it, we were to die ; but I cannot say I felt disconcerted when I received the intelligence. So certain were our foes of the success of their arms, that they openly gave out that they would come and massacre us during the night. Needless to say they did not come. As a precaution we spent the few remaining hours of daylight in erecting a thorn zareba, and I presume the thorns deterred the naked ones, as they usually do. In addition to

this, a party of our men slipped out and took as much food as we required from a village that lay within half a mile of our position.

In the meantime, my brother officer and myself held a council of war, and decided to attack before dawn. So, through a damp, unwholesome night we marched, in order to arrive before the enemy's fort in sufficient time. Though we should not be expected, we could not hope for a surprise; as they were certain, with trained soldiers in their midst, to post piquets and sentries. In the ordinary course, savages never make such arrangements for their safety: one man thinks he has as much right to sleep as another.

We had to pass through one or two swamps on our road, and I shall never forget the mephitic stench they emitted just before dawn: a damp mist hung over them, and they looked as if they contained all the elements of fever and death.

Sure enough, we put up some piquets, who were very wild and gave the alarm, when we had still some miles to cover. The alarm is sounded by horns, and it was amazing how quickly it was taken up, until the welkin rang and the hills took up the signal. These instruments are not really horns, but slips of wood bound round with papyrus, the whole shaped like our coach-horns. The blow-hole is at the side, and the hollow sound produced is most penetrating. One village took it up from another, and the whole country awoke in readiness for the invader.

When we got within range of the fort, we extended and charged. It was impossible at this point to hold in the Soudanese, who were like greyhounds straining at the leash. The commandants, having an insufficient start, were left by every one except the old men, and even they were by no means easy to keep up with. I can see now, one long-legged Nubian who outsped all, and led by nearly fifty yards: I shouted to him to keep back but he was like a hound in full cry. The mutineers let us get to within about 100 yards, when they fired a volley, which whistled nearer than I expected, and then bolted. Some of our men fired as they ran, and to my surprise there were one or two corpses in the fort when we got there. We continued the chase, and pursued from hill-top to hill-top. The enemy fired always as we drew near, and managed to hit one or two of our men; they had the speed of us, and finding we could get no nearer to them, we sat down and had breakfast.

This had all fallen out as we had foreseen; but we now began the punitive part of our expedition. The Lango country lay in front of us, in a narrow strip, and through this we marched, burning everything as we came to it. It sounds a pitiless course to take, but it was a reprisal for many outrages.

As we walked on, the savages swarmed round us, and it was most necessary to keep closed up tight, as we were obliged to take the path in single

file. Had we allowed the enemy to get in anywhere, it might have been awkward; but by using care there was no danger. For miles the front and rear-guard were engaged simultaneously; but the savages were never quite brave enough to charge home. They found that when they got close they suffered too much, and, as usual, had no leaders to organise a strong attack.

At the end of a long day we had levelled a great proportion of their huts to the ground, for the inhabited portion of their country is but small; and as a good many of the enemy must also have been killed, the punishment was considered sufficient, and the remainder must have been glad to see the last of us.

The Soudanese, throughout the day, were in their element. Now and again a single man would detach himself from the line, and engage several barbarians single-handed, invariably returning with a spear and shield, and a broad smile on his face. At the end of the day we found we had three men wounded, which shows what little danger there is in such a warfare, so long as there is no carelessness. Calamities in those parts are almost always attributable to a lack of watchfulness. We had about 110 men, and the enemy had about 80 mutineers, armed similarly to ourselves; about 120 Bunyoro riflemen, who had joined the mutineers but did not show up much during the fight; and roughly about 1000 Langos. These

last people had the reputation of being warlike ; but we found them much the same as other tribes.

One thing about their villages made one smile, and this was the baby-houses. There was generally a row of them, raised about six feet off the ground. They are about the size of a bee-hive, with a small hole for an entrance, through which the unfortunate baby is thrust : the exit is then closed, and the baby ceases to annoy. There are truly some funny people in this world ; but, I suppose, all mothers get sick of their babies at times ; and this was a most effective method of getting rid of them. The babies seemed to realise that in these hutches there was peace, for they did not cry inside them. I suppose they discovered also that tears would be idle.

After this contretemps the Langos discovered the undesirability of such guests as mutineers, and bid them farewell ; but a few that misunderstood the adieu, were ruthlessly murdered. Such are the conditions of things, however, that the others were afterwards received back, and only quite recently a more pretentious expedition visited them, which by capturing most of the mutineers and killing many Lango, has completely subdued all truculence.

CHAPTER XIV

VARIOUS EXPERIENCES

And of our labours thou shalt reap.

Part III., Act I. Scene 4, *Henry VI.*

Patiently receive my medicine.

Act II. Scene 7, *As You Like It.*

Work on, my medicine, work !

Act IV. Scene 1, *Othello.*

ON my return to Lamogi, I was met by the news that the subaltern who had relieved me at Afuddu was dead. He was at the time on a small expedition to visit a chief far away, and was overtaken by black-water fever and died. It was a great blow to me, as he had been a close friend of mine, and showed by what a slender thread one's existence hung in those parts. He had left his station apparently as strong as ever, and in a few short days had passed away. My old black captain could not understand that he should have died of sickness pure and simple.

He asked me if the commandant had no medicines, and on my saying yes, he wondered why he had not cured himself. He had seen the white man cure himself of so many ills, and seemed surprised that one of these had got the upper hand.

In addition to the loss of a friend, this event had other serious consequences for me. Having been nearly twenty months in the country, I had been granted leave of absence home, according to the agreement, and was just about to take my departure; in fact, I had handed over my command and done two marches towards home, when I was met by an ominous blue letter which cancelled my leave. The missive was marked "very urgent," and bore a request that the bearer should be rewarded for extra speed. I personally felt more like murdering than rewarding him!

The country was so short of white officers that I could not be spared, and the terms of the original agreement with the Foreign Office were, that leave would only be granted if the exigencies of the Service permitted it. It was the fortune of war, and complaints would have been of no use; but it kept me another eight months in the country, and though I had much sickness to go through, I cannot say I altogether regretted it, for I was soon to have four months more of magnificent sport, which compensates for most things.

Amongst other excursions, I made one to Samuel

Baker's old fort of Fatiko, which we found so overgrown that some of the older soldiers who had been there with Baker could not recognise it. Paths had vanished, and all was grass, amongst which grew aloes, burgamot mint, tree ferns, wild fennel, and borassus palms. The stone buildings were all in good condition, though, of course, the roofs had fallen in. Fatiko was a natural rock-fortress of volcanic origin, and almost impregnable: it lay at an altitude of about 3500 feet, or 1500 feet higher than the Nile at its nearest point.

When I got back to Lamogi I found the natives in a state of ferment. The porter question had at last come to a head, and they stoutly refused to carry any more loads. In spite of the fact that nearly all these loads contained the pay of the troops, which would be spent in the country, these deluded people seemed to have made up their minds once and for all. At first we applied force; and when we desired porters we surrounded a village at 4 A.M., catching the men as they ran out. They were then marched away under escort, and loads placed upon their heads. This was most unsatisfactory, and things got from bad to worse; for they took to fire and murder, and it became necessary to walk about armed, as they would lie in wait in the grass for the unwary. Amongst other barbarities, they waited for two Soudanese soldiers who were bearing letters, and asked them to sup in a village. When the two men

were sitting over a fire, the entire village fell upon them and speared them to death.

After this, they none of them dared to remain in their villages, and so took to the hills. A report was sent in to the effect that Nilotic porters were not available; with a request that Swahilis might be sent up.

Meantime the cowardly wretches had to be dealt with. The hill they mostly flocked to lay close to Lamogi, and was an extraordinary place. It was an immense granite rock, shaped like an inverted pudding-bowl, and rather flat on the top, which was a delightful spot. It was covered with short grass and tall leafy trees, and, nestling amongst the immense boulders and caverns, was a village. It had been fortified by a stockade, and one fine day we appeared in front of this with all our soldiers. They parleyed with us from the inside, taking good care to show nothing but the tops of their heads, and we offered them conditions, amongst which was the immediate surrender of the murderers and their chief, together with the rifles and mails which were in the hands of the victims at the time of their death. Thinking that if they refused we should at once storm the place, they procrastinated, as black men always do, and asked for a few days to consider all the pros and cons.

We knew that there could not be enough food to support the hundreds of beings huddled into the village, and that the water supply was not within the

stockade, and so consented. Hunger would be a screw, and would do more to bring them to their senses than any parleying, and possibly than any bloodshed: we therefore gave them a few days' grace and departed.

I am sorry to say I never got the opportunity of seeing the interior of their caves, which are said to have some mystery attached to them; but, I suppose, the chief mystery was that the white man had never seen them—nor, for the matter of that, had any of our Soudanese. Probably the natives felt that if they were discovered, they would no longer be of any use for hiding purposes.

As we left, they seemed to look upon their part of the negotiations as a victory, and derisive yells greeted the turning of our backs. But he laughs best who laughs last. The pudding-bowl was shaped at its sides into terraces of rock, and along these we could see black figures flitting and wildly gesticulating. They hurled execrations at us and made gestures of contempt, but though this enraged the natural spleen of the fierce Soudanese, it did not disconcert the white man, who had remembered, what the childish savages had overlooked, the fact that the ripe crops were still standing, and lay at the foot of the mountain.

We passed round the base of the hill and found it a wonderful natural fortress. Except on the side of our ascent, the slopes were precipitous and im-

pregnable. The base was surrounded by a mass of matted jungle, amongst which I saw a number of wild giant banana trees, and in this we discovered the main source of the water supply; though we also learnt that there was a spring on the mountain side.

The defenders thought they had nothing more to do than to descend at night and cut their crops whilst we were asleep, and I cannot imagine what their feelings must have been when they found a piquet at the edge of the plantations, who wished them good-evening with a volley.

In a few days our women had gathered in all the crops there were, and had left nothing standing.

The villagers then lived for a while on what they had; but this could not be for long. After a time they were forced to yield, and the white man triumphed as usual. But I must confess that in a measure these people carried their point, for they demonstrated the inadvisability of endeavouring to utilise them as porters.

One exasperating thing happened during this period of coolness, viz., the whole of our Soudanese lines were burnt to the ground. It was due to the carelessness of some woman with fire, and I should think her life was an unhappy one for the next month, which was occupied in the rebuilding.

I departed from the former method of allowing each family to erect walls or partitions of grass round



A NATURAL FORTRESS.

[To face page 248.]

their little compounds for privacy, and I laid out the new village with broad open streets. These Bisi-katies, as they are called, keep out the wholesome wind, and, when a fire does commence, render it almost impossible to save anything. This idea of enclosures was borrowed from the Baganda, and was anything but hygienic.

On the outbreak of fire the Soudanese are not quick at seeing the right thing to do to save any particular portion. I found my dear old captain flinging dirt into the flames to keep off the Robayat whatever that might be. He afterwards told me that his own private dwelling had escaped ; but he did not go so far as to assign the earth-throwing as a reason ! I was sorry at the occurrence for the sakes of the men ; but personally considered it most thoughtful of providence to ordain such a cleansing calamity. The only aggravating thing was the thought of our enemies on the hill watching with jeers and glee the work of destruction.

At the first alarm the men and women put all ammunition and Government property out into the square, and then saved their private effects. Very little harm was done, except to the white ants, and they must have had a fearful end. Afterwards we instituted a regular fire drill, and brought it to a science. Certain men and women carried out the property ; others pulled down the houses nearest the fire to prevent it spreading, whilst others again

rushed down and brought up large vessels of water. This drill was practised almost every week.

In the course of time professional Swahili porters arrived, and the labour episode joined the limbo of the past. I was myself more than satisfied at the issue of events, as it restored relations with our own natives—as they were—to an amicable footing. The mustering of forced labour had always savoured rather of brutality, and the sight of some weakling staggering under a 65 lbs. load had always a touch of pathos in it. That we had given local labour in this respect an exhaustive trial was beyond debate, and we had found it wanting.

Curiously enough, the Bari tribe who lived alongside the Madis and Shulis still yielded portorage. Either they were stronger or less lazy ; but I expect by now that most of the work is done by Swahilis. I think that in time these natives might be trained into porters ; but the process must be gradual. Loads of 65 lbs. weight would have to be repacked and made 20 lbs. less. Even then it would take generations to breed the physique peculiar to the porter. Meanwhile, they were sufficiently punished by having to come and work in our plantations, and sow their own corn. Possibly by now carts have been introduced ; but this is a most uncomfortable method of travelling. Of all means, porters are the least trouble, as they negotiate any country, are easily fed, and require no transport for themselves. Rivers,

mountains, swamps, sandy tracks, or rocky defiles are all the same to them : they always reach camp somehow. It is considered the greatest luxury, in parts where carts are possible, to travel with porters. They pass through many adventures, and most old porters have at some time or another been charged by a rhinoceros or attacked by some wild animal. I refer, of course, to professional porters.

About this time hundreds of pairs of boots were sent up for the soldiery, and I served them out in the same manner as the clothes, viz., biggest feet on the right, smallest on the left, and medium in the middle. It was most comical to see the good fellows with their new toys.

In spite of the fact that they made them, who were usually so light on their feet, slow and clumsy, they loved putting on their boots, wearing them at all times, and enduring all things for their sakes. Corns and bunions arose in their midst for the first time ; but they disregarded them, and apparently wore their boots from motives of vanity, for on a march they usually slung them round their necks. I asked why they did this, and they said their feet did not know boots yet ; but that later on they would do so. I afterwards realised how much longer the boots would last with such tender care, and issued an order that no man should cross a river or wade through a swamp with them on. It was a distinction to possess a pair of boots, the attribute of a gentleman,

and *noblesse oblige* ! But they had their uses, for over rocks, or amongst thorns and sharp grass, they saved the feet from bad cuts. Being worn without socks they were not becoming, and hid from view the beauty of the Soudanese ankles ! With all their advantages and drawbacks, the Nubians enjoyed their possession. They even danced in them, which at once annihilated all gracefulness ; and reluctantly they yielded to my request to dispense with them at such times. When their feet were encased in them they had very little control over their equilibriums, and all rapidity of movement was gone.

On one occasion a rather important prisoner escaped, and I asked the sentry why he had not pursued him. His defence was that he had his boots on at the time, and he looked upon this as unassailable ! Certainly the odds were with the prisoner. But enough of boots !

One of my most interesting morning occupations was the hospital, until the arrival afterwards of a doctor. Every morning I received patients for about an hour, and practised my art upon them. The difficulty generally was to discover what was the matter with them. Some came with imaginary complaints, and were accordingly treated with imaginary cures : others came with no apparent reason but to eat my slender stock of medicines. Even though they had nothing to cure, they thought medicine would make them stronger, and

to these I gave lumps of quinine, of which I had a good supply. They broke the lumps into small pieces and sucked them; but rarely came for any more!

Then there were the genuine cases. The horrible "Yaws" was most common, in which the patient is covered with sores, which break out in all the folds of the skin. I dressed them with permanganate of potash laid on with a long stick and cotton wool, advocating, at the same time, cleanliness, and effected some cures in about six months. Then, all manner of lung troubles, such as pneumonia, pleurisy, and bronchitis, were brought before me, for which I had one invariable remedy. This was Colman's mustard spread on sheets of the *Daily Graphic*, clapped one on the chest, and another on the back. The pictures made these persons quite interesting cases. They believed implicitly in anything that burned, and Colman became invaluable. Faith curing was reduced to a science, and with this treatment they generally got well.

The extraction of teeth was another of my accomplishments, and as it had to be done with ordinary tweezers, it was not always merciful. I can recall one old woman whose tooth defied my utmost fury, until I raised her bodily off the ground by the same tooth, and shook her off! She screamed, and then joined in the general laughter.

Ladies arrived with multifarious ailments, and I

gave them those medicines I could best spare. They all seemed to get well! Men with strange withered arms, palsies, and unknown diseases, stepped up and never found me at a loss. Though my reputation was gaining ground I was not sorry when a doctor arrived, for some of the complaints were not appetising to one who was not hardened and callous, and I handed over these duties without a pang.

Soon after the doctor's arrival, a very strange case came under our observation. A certain indolent Swahili porter, out of whom no work could be forced, incurred the penalty of being put into the chain-gang. He refused to work even there, saying he was ill. I had him examined by the doctor, who declared him fit, with nothing the matter with him. On his return to the chain, he still resolutely refused to work, and had to be dragged about by his fellow-prisoners. I told him if he did not work for his living, he would be flogged for it, and he replied that sooner than work he would die. A few hours after this, he lay down and died, and a post-mortem was held upon him which found him perfectly sound. I asked the doctor what the man had died of, and he could give no better reason than "lack of vitality," or, in vulgar parlance, "pure cussedness." The savage is easily snuffed out, and this ability to die at pleasure is by no means unheard of. They have the frailest vitality, and will occasionally die of

the slightest touch of pneumonia, where a European would recover to a certainty. On the other hand, they sometimes recover from great gaping wounds without suffering much, provided that no vital part be effected.

At this time that portion of the Nile was visited by a terrible epidemic of small-pox, which is always more or less endemic. These epidemics seem to sweep through the land at intervals, carrying death and destruction with them, and the desolation they leave in their track is awful to behold. They seem to burn themselves out, and leave a district comparatively cleansed ; but as they principally attack children, and leave the old men and women, who might well be spared, they sometimes cripple a tribe, so that it falls from power and prosperity to insignificance.

Weakness in such a primitive land is the worst calamity that can befall any community, for it is at once swooped upon by its neighbours, and its state changes from independence to vassaldom. Think what the wiping out of a whole generation means amongst races that are not prolific of children, and where might is right.

One poor chief came to me with a pathetic tale, and asked me for help. What could I do with such an enemy ? With tears in his eyes he asked what he would do in his old age with no young men to work and fight for him. Instead of an honoured old

age, he had unimportance to look forward to. I told him that his neighbour, an enemy of his, was in a like case, and this seemed to give him some comfort. I could only tell them both that we should always protect them.

CHAPTER XV

THE ARMED RHINOCEROS

I'll hunt thee for thy hide.

Act V. Scene 6, *Troilus and Cressida*.

All things that are,

Are with more spirit chased than enjoyed.

Act II. Scene 6, *Merchant of Venice*.

They are as sick that surfeit with too much,

As they that starve with nothing.

Act I. Scene 2, *Merchant of Venice*.

THE officer commanding at Wadelai was at this time struck down with blackwater fever, and invalided home, so that I found myself ordered to that place. The only intimation we got was a small piece of paper upon which was scrawled the pathetic words, "I am down with blackwater." The doctor was at the time attending another case of the same fell disease at Afuddu, and could not get to Wadelai until the crisis was over. By pluck and determination my friend pulled through, though he had no

other nursing than such as a Swahili boy gives. He kept his senses enough to tell the boy to feed him with milk and to administer quinine ; but it was nothing short of marvellous that he recovered.

On my way to Wadelai I came across some very old chiefs, who had known Gordon and even Baker, and interested me with their reminiscences. One aged old gentleman named Wad-el-Aguz showed me some bells and small treasures that Baker had given him. He still looked upon the explorer as a species of demi-god, and described him as a thick man with short legs and immense strength. He said that if Baker took up a man and shook him, that man withered and died, and I can quite believe it ; for they are a fragile looking race. He further asked me to tell " El Sitt " or " The Great Lady," *i.e.*, Lady Baker, that " Wad-el-Aguz still was," of which fact he was justly proud. They all revered the name of Lady Baker, though few of such a comparatively short-lived community could remember her. Directly the old man saw me he looked at my hat, which happened that day to be a double terai, and said " That hat is the brother of Gordon's hat." Amongst other things he said about Gordon was that he had been with him when he had killed an elephant ; but I am not sure the old man was not wool-gathering at the moment, and mixing up Baker and Gordon.

I soon settled down for my few remaining months in Wadelai, and began to make the acquaintance of

the chiefs. Sheik Ali was the biggest swell, and after he had come in to see me and assure me of his unwavering loyalty, I sought him in his own hearth. I chose an unfortunate day, as one of his subjects had just departed this life, and was being honoured with extraordinary funeral rites. To commence with, they buried him in the middle of the village, and must have been fond of him in the life, to keep him so close to them in death. Hundreds of mourners circled and swarmed round the grave, chanting a lugubrious lay. Howls and groans rent the air, as though the agony of grief was insupportable. I met many of these howlers, howling even in the wilderness, as they came towards the scene, and commencing miles away. Many of them must have had but the slightest acquaintance with the extinct one; but death seemed to have turned it into a great love, and I can hardly believe he deserved such lamentations. It was one of the few signs of feeling I ever observed in those apathetic people, and whether it was real or assumed I am not prepared to say. The wailing was accompanied by such music as emanates from wooden drums and other similar noise-giving instruments. Having observed the proceedings for a few minutes I was not sorry to leave such a grievous atmosphere.

My days were fairly busily employed in building, brick-making, agriculture, accounts, drill and musketry, and my evenings in shooting. As I was

administering the district in a civil capacity, all petty squabbles and feuds were brought to me for adjustment. I held my court upon a camp stool, the heavens were the roof to my *palais de justice*, and the execution of sentences was, as a rule, immediate.

Some cases were not without their humorous side. On one occasion the point in question was the intrinsic value of a lady. A poor civilised creature like myself had no precedent to go upon, and who on this earth is going to assign any particular value to any particular woman? Should I put a low price upon her, I must disappoint one man, please another, and hurt the feelings of the poor lady herself, should she have any. On the other hand, if I put a high price upon her, the faces of the two men might be changed, and the lady become insufferable. I took refuge in a golden mean, half-way between the sublime and the ridiculous, and avoided dangerous extremes.

Sometimes these barterings took place just before the advent of an offspring, and then the hopeless problem of whose property was the new arrival, had to be brought in front of me for decision. One man inevitably went sadly away, whilst the other rejoiced, for there are always two sides to every picture. To act as Solomon did would have been idle; Solomon had the enormous advantage of dealing with people who had feelings other than physical.

On one occasion a solemn conclave was awaiting a momentous verdict, and a crocodile, recently shot

by the officer commanding (who happened to be there) was lying close by. Amongst the other curios which had been removed from his interior economy was a brass ring, which was being vapidly gazed upon by the bystanders. Suddenly one of the disputants caught sight of it, and asked to see it in his hand. He examined it for an instant, and then said reflectively, "Ah, that accounts for the whereabouts of my son during the last three months." I presume these three months had assuaged his grief, for not a tear fell to the memory of his luckless heir.

At other times porters attended my session, who might have incurred the law. These beings had sometimes to carry loads from place to place, with only an escort of two or three Soudanese soldiers. Like children they would dally by the roadside and waste a day, or pilfer from the loads, or do any of those little deeds which they dared, when the white man's eye was off them. The present opportunity was too much for them, but they learnt in time to peep into the future. As many as four and twenty of them have been laid out on arrival and given four and twenty apiece, this summary justice smoothing out the little wrinkles.

In that region evil doing will out in a miraculous manner. I had a rare thing amongst my soldiers, a thief. A pile of brass wire for which there was no room in the store, had to be left in the open, and the sentry guarding it chanced to be

this individual. His proclivities got the better of him, and he managed to pass a whole load of the precious metal to one of his wives. Next morning it was missing, and I harangued the army, and reproached them with keeping such a miscreant in their midst without declaring him. The thief did not give me credit for many wits. I knew he could not get rid of this commodity in Wadelai itself, and must foist it upon the villages down the river ; so I waited for intelligence of its appearance. The men had that touch of honour common to all classes, of not peaching, I therefore brought pressure to bear by saying that each man would help to defray the loss by contributing one rupee.

The wire soon began to leak out, and natives were brought to Wadelai in boats to identify the vendor. This simple expedient did not seem to occur to the robber, who suddenly found many fingers pointed at him. He confessed, and got nine months hard labour and costs, which would take him an additional year to work off. Such a lucky stroke must have nipped any tendencies of the sort in the bud ; but a Soudanese thief was an exception, and this incident was in any case unlikely to recur.

Wadelai was an Elysium for the hunter, and I usually devoted from Friday to Monday to the pleasures of the chase. One could shoot antelope 800 yards from the fort, and the Nile banks were teeming with duck, teal, snipe, guinea-fowl, and

bustard. Within three hours' walk was a patch where the rhinoceros was a sure find, and lions were audible frequently by day and night; grunting gruffly or roaring in unison. I generally knew whereabouts they were, and heard them sometimes from a distance of ten miles. Leopards also had the audacity to come and steal goats that were grazing in oblivion close to the fort.

It is not my intention to weary the reader with many shooting trips; but I cannot refrain from calling to mind two or three days of unalloyed bliss. For every successful day one enjoys, several weary blank ones must be endured, blank only as far as intense excitement is concerned; for one could always pick up such sport as antelope, wart-hog, hippos, and crocodiles afford. It was my custom to send my tent to some distant water in the morning under escort, and to follow in the evening myself, after my ordinary daily duties had been discharged. With the escort would go some knowledgeable person to make inquiries from the natives of the exact whereabouts of any game. Should they have found out nothing on my arrival, I would set forth at 4 A.M. next morning to search the woods myself.

The unrestrained delight of such an occupation is far beyond my poor powers of description: indeed, I think that words cannot convey the sensation, for to know what it is like, it must be experienced. At home man sets forth in the morning, ready for enjoy-

ment, but knows what is about to come, and is robbed of half his pleasure. Does he enjoy a meal so much if he knows beforehand what he is going to eat? Surprise is a sauce surpassed only by hunger. There, in the wilds, the unseen and unknown are always in front of one; the day never palls, for who can say what lies before him?

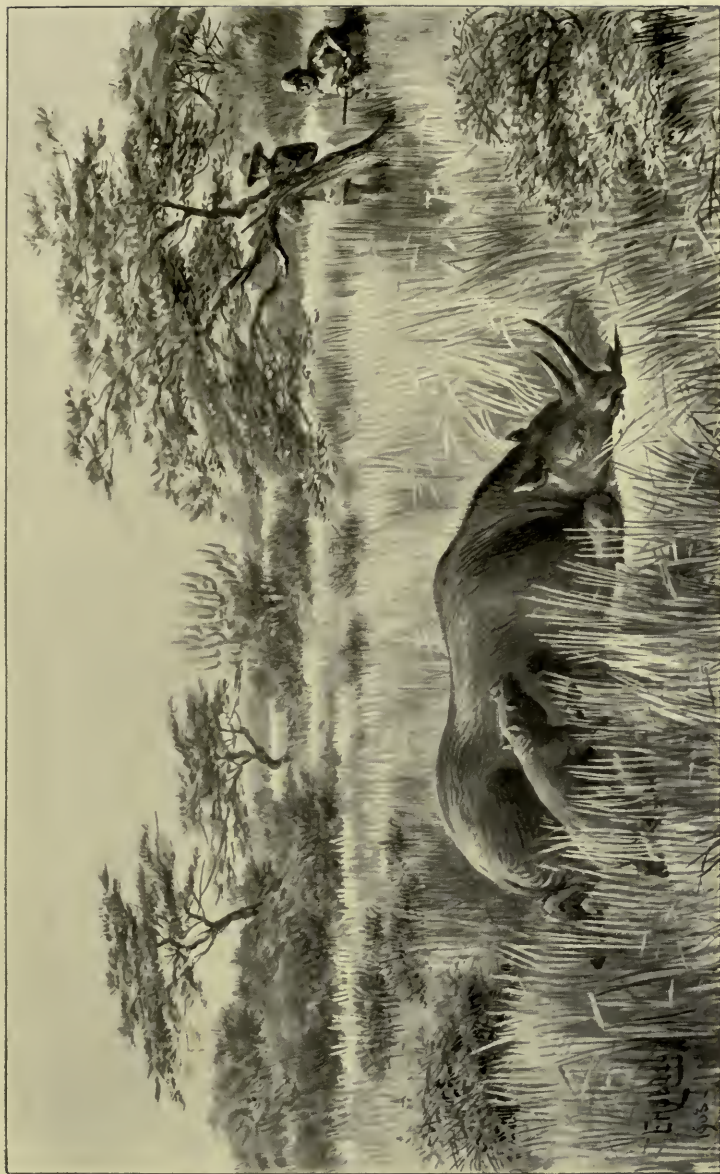
If nothing worthy of pursuit crossed my path, then I would sit down under a shady tree, and send forth barbarians in all directions in quest of a trail, or, if my humour was such, I would walk on and on myself, hoping at every step to see the much wished-for footprint. As we walked on, every eye was fixed now on the ground, and now on the landscape. I cared not which way my footsteps took me. North, south, east, and west, were all the same to me, it mattered not; my thoughts and wishes were free and unconfined, and the unexpected was what I most craved. When hungry I would eat, when thirsty drink, when tired lie down, or when sleepy slumber. What more could the heart of man desire! The irksome demands of civilisation were not there; troubles of the mind were absent; poverty had no pangs, nor wealth either; and if health was not all it might be, such a life tended to ward off sickness. Nature with her infinite variety was around on all sides, sufficient danger to titillate the nerves, and stimulate the capacity for enjoyment. Different men have different tastes; but I cannot understand any man of flesh

and blood not thrilling with such joys as the jungle yields, and men who detract from its merits, cannot have experienced it.

With such thoughts in my mind I sat one day beneath a tree drinking my tea, and glad of its recuperative properties, for I had been walking for six hours in the sun, and was feeling pleasantly tired. Several natives were searching the vicinity for fresh tracks, and whilst they were so employed I wiled away the time with a book. Should their errand have been bootless, I had intended to keep quiet and rest all hands until the coolness of the evening would enable us to proceed without fatigue. I was contentedly smoking my pipe of peace, when a messenger was seen to be returning at full speed. My nerves tingled, and I could hardly restrain myself from running out to meet him. He never checked, for he knew his intelligence would please the white man, and earn for him the reward of a string of beads or so. Sure enough, he had seen the "Anas" or rhinoceros in a thicket, chewing thorns. He gave me to understand that it was a female with her young one beside her, and so I forthwith turned him round and gave him injunctions to lead me to the spot, at the same time to lead me in such a manner that my presence would not be betrayed. He did exactly as he was told, and soon disclosed the well-known mass of flesh that constitutes the rhinoceros. She was chewing pensively, and had no idea of the

sudden change that was about to take place. I was screened by a bush, and the distance between us was about 200 yards, which is a long shot in ordinary circumstances. However, the space between us was open, and I did not feel inclined to trust the wind and shift, so made up my mind that I would shoot where I was. I lay down, rested my double .303 on a small lump of earth, and waited for a good chance. She was moving about, and soon presented a whole broadside. I drew a bead on the point of her shoulder and fired. A shrill snort, such a noise as an engine gives forth when letting off steam, told me I had struck the beast. I never stirred a muscle, and watched. She seemed much agitated, and at first came directly towards me, whether by chance or design I could not tell; but I should think the former. I took another steady aim, and waited again. In a few moments she raised her head, as though feeling for the scent. I at once fired at her chest and struck her again. At this she lost her head or made a mistake, for in a great rage she dashed off towards my left. I let her get out of sight before I budged, and then I followed her tracks leisurely, having a mind to let the two bullets do their work. I had the conviction that my aim had been correct, but I knew so well then that a .303 is a flimsy weapon to meet a charge with.

The tracks led me on for a mile or so, and then became confused, when suddenly I heard terrific



RHINOCEROS COW LYING DEAD, IN KNEELING POSITION, AND CALF.

snorting, and a great commotion close ahead in the thick scrub. My orderly told me she wanted battle badly, but I thought she was hard hit, and had got into the scrub to try and baffle pursuit. I advanced foot by foot with extreme caution, when she suddenly broke covert, and charged down upon us as straight as a die. We ran to either side for all we were worth, and she passed between us, in the blundering blind way peculiar to the rhinoceros. I just caught sight of her, and could see that she was in a bad way, and that unless I behaved like a fool, she was mine without mishap. I crept on after her, and could see the great drops of blood on the ground she passed over. We had to fly once more for our lives, for she returned to the charge; but I could see her roll over about fifty yards off. She was squealing, and my orderly informed me that she did not want battle half so much. Even then I did not trust her, for I knew her fury both on account of her wound and also her calf; and lucky I did not, for she managed to regain her legs. The scrub was so thick that we could not see in most directions more than a few yards; but I found a tree from behind which I sent a bullet clean through her heart at a very short range. She fell, and I knew she would not get up again. I walked up; but as I got to within a few paces, I saw the grass being violently disturbed, and thinking it was the old lady in her death throes, I, in mercy, gave her another

barrel. This was greeted by a succession of piercing screams, and the poor little calf came dashing out and disappeared into the jungle. It had been dancing round its deceased mother, and wondering why she did not get up and depart. I was much vexed at my mistake, especially as the natives afterwards ran the little thing down, and then ate it. It was to me a touching incident ; but the pathos of it did not seem to occur to my orderly, who laughed immoderately.

I found the old one in a kneeling position, stone dead. Her last hour had certainly been an exhilarating one for me, and she had died game, as the rhinoceros always does.

I look upon them almost as the quaintest of all big game. They will charge through a caravan, and do little or no damage, contenting themselves with just dispersing it in all directions, and passing on puffing and snorting. Their charge is rather like the bull's, straight and blind ; but they must not be taken too much on trust, for they can dodge and turn in pursuit like a hound ; and if they ever get to terms, the wound they inflict is very terrible. Their speed far surpasses that of any man, and in such going as they sometimes choose, than any mounted man ; but they have not the sagacity of elephants, who will go round small hills and then resume their original direction, to deceive their pursuers.

I sat down, pouring with perspiration, ready to



RHINOCEROS CHARGING.

watch and superintend the cutting up of the beast, and the separating of the trophies. The two horns were small. She was not of the square-lipped graminivorous white species, and though she was by no means a young specimen, her anterior horn measured only about eighteen inches. The former is said to exist on the banks of the Nile; but the black one is by far the commoner, and unlike his East African brother, the Nilotic rhino carries a comparatively small horn. I speak of the Nile district proper of the Uganda Protectorate, but some of the Nyam-Nyams amongst my men told me the rhinos of their country grew horns as long as a man's arm.

The feet, teeth, and portions of the skin are all worth keeping, the last polishing into that beautiful transparent substance that resembles clouded amber.

The spot this animal chose for death was in a low lying piece of ground shut in by bushes, so that no breath of air could find a way in. The heat was stifling, and I was glad when all the surgical operations were over. Though it appeared to be as deserted a place as could be found on the globe, where no human being or habitation was visible; nevertheless, during the course of half an hour or so, dozens of human vultures, far outstripping their feathered relations, had arrived with their fire-sticks, and squatting on the ground in a circle, were awaiting our departure. The interior of a rhinoceros is not a savoury portion, but such is the depravity of

these savages' taste, that their mouths were literally watering with anticipation. I have seen some quaint black races; but this universal craving for flesh always seemed remarkable to me. I suppose they, on their hand, wondered at the Europeans' desire for sugar. Even my own immediate followers indulged incontinently in such orgies, and made themselves ill. It became such a nuisance to me that I afterwards made it an understood thing, that any man who made himself ill was flogged. I think all will agree with me that this 'penalty was most hygienic. At home pounds of Gregory's powder or Epsom's salts would have been squandered, with only a fraction of the same success.

CHAPTER XVI

LAST DAYS ON THE NILE

Tongues of men are full of deceits.

Act V. Scene 2, *Henry V.*

Go see this rumourer whipped.

Act IV. Scene 6, *Coriolanus.*

i. Farewell, at once ; for once, for all, for ever.

ii. Well, we may meet again.

Act II. Scene 2, *Richard II.*

I BEGAN to realise that those nations which make paradise a hunting-ground, and the abode of many beautiful ladies, know what they are about. By holding out such inducements, religion must claim a powerful influence. At Wadelai, the beautiful ladies were not present ; but the other half of paradise with its earthly limitations, was always close at hand, and I spent many a happy day in the society of pachyderms, the fair ones being absent. It appears to me that paradise could hardly have the same attractions for these ladies, for they cannot possibly wish to chase

rhinoceroses, and the proximity of more of their own sex must be to them insipid. However, the solution of such a problem is not within the province of this work : I deal essentially with terrestrial matters.

Even in its blank days, this life at Wadelai approached the joys of paradise, for do not blank days enhance productive ones? The delights of anticipation would be modified by unchanging success, and by always getting the object of our desires, we should soon cease to set any value upon it. The mingling of disappointment sets off accomplishment of one's aims, and whets the capacity for enjoyment. The pleasures of the chase would otherwise pall : and so let no man curse an empty day !

With such consolation in my heart, the fierce sun, the raging fever, and pangs of thirst and exhaustion lost half their terrors. At the same time there was not such scarcity of big game as to engender the feeling of hopelessness in the breast. The fleeting rhino often gives but a glimpse of himself, but he thereby gains attraction.

One week-end I was occupied in my favourite pastime of trying to catch this glimpse near an outlying village. I had become happy in finding some delicate little footprints about three feet in circumference, and was following them as though they led direct to the Elysian fields. Puzzled at last, I halted and made as intelligent an examination as I was capable of ; and whilst so engaged, the object of

my deliberations, who had doubtless been watching us, suddenly dashed out of a thicket, and bristling like a gigantic pig, disappeared over the horizon. I, of course, refrained from firing at him, but contented myself with following his tracks. His only idea seemed to be to make as many of these as he possibly could in a short time. Once more I viewed him for an instant: he was standing quietly looking round for us, and the instant he sighted us, he resumed his way in an unnecessary hurry.

Tired and subdued, I walked to a village to sleep the night, and acquire "Khabar." The chief waited on me with all his villagers, and I closely questioned them. Some of them obviously told the truth, and others obviously the contrary. I remembered the latter with the object of afterwards inculcating a little of the greatest of all Christian virtues in the customary manner, and my opportunity soon came.

One of the seeming truth-tellers was thrust forward to relieve himself of an exciting account of a vision of elephants which had been vouchsafed him. He had—so he said—been paddling about in his dug-out near the opposite bank of the river (the Nile) the evening before, when a dinner-party of elephants arrived and commenced a repast of fruits. He knew the very tree that had yielded them their evening meal, and so emphatic was the gentleman's pantomime, that I gave a sort of unwilling credence to him. The chief assured me that this gentleman

never made mistakes, and I accordingly repaired to rest, to dream of grassing a whole herd of magnificent tuskers ! The only little flaw that appeared, was the individual's desire for a prepaid reward. I was much too old to be caught like that, and at once gave him into the care of my orderly, with strict injunctions as to his safe custody. He made one or two attempts to rid us of his company during the night, but was deterred by the business end of a bayonet. However, I knew the savage well enough not to wholly disregard him, and long before the sun was up, we commenced the laborious process of crossing the water in rickety dug-outs. In and out of the sudd we found our way, and eventually landed safely upon the left bank.

Our guide became uneasy as we climbed the first hill, and volunteered an idea that the elephants would not be there. At last he was dragged to the wondrous tree, which he had made into a banqueting-hall. Finding some tracks, he saw a last loop-hole of escape and pointed to them as a corroboration of his story. I gazed at them, and satisfied myself at once that they were at least a fortnight old. Turning my eyes upon the cowering wretch, he saw in them the fact that he had been found out, and that further disguise was useless. It was superfluous to speak, for the guilty one confessed himself *in toto*, and cried for mercy.

I am aware that the quality of mercy is not

strained, but I was also not unmindful of future commandants, and I knew that if I passed by this attempt at duping, it would be practised again. There are times when mercy is a wrong—in other words, my orderly and lord high executioner laid him out, cut a supple sapling and gave him a dozen forthwith. In those parts the law's delay is hardly worth mentioning, and in place of a long-drawn-out trial, during which the victim might have grown to look upon himself as a martyr, he arose in twenty seconds a changed man. From abject prostration, he jumped into amazing activity, and assisted from behind by his stinging corrections, he passed into the unknown with the best of intentions.

At first I conjectured that his idea was to place as much ground as possible between himself and the scene of his recent sorrows; but those who understood his nature, assured me that he would return. Far and wide he scoured the plain, until I began to think of other things, when he suddenly reappeared, still at his utmost speed. On he came, and at last was able to pour out his glad tidings of a rhino's locality with a truthfulness that was beyond question. Sure enough he led me on to a small rise, from which I clearly defined three of these beasts lunching. Unluckily, my guide's eagerness revealed our presence, and before I could get a shot, they all three started off in such a manner that I cast aside all thought of pursuit.

I got back weary to camp in darkness, with the proud consciousness that, not only had I done no animal a harm, but that I had been a benefactor to the human race. I afterwards questioned the temporarily reformed character as to the reason for such a course as his, and he said that he had been a bad man, and had been led away by visions of beads ; but that he now saw the folly of trying to outwit the white man : and further added some lies to give colour to his sentiments. We all returned to Wadelai a little out of temper ; but I soon brought smiles on all faces by shooting a cobus, for general consumption.

That was a blank day ; but only served to make me more eager for the next meeting with my friends. The little outing was followed by the usual week of quiet country life.

And so my time gradually grew to a close, and I received an intimation that my relief had left the capital, and was on his way to take my place. Though I should leave my hunting and my surroundings with much regret, I had begun to realise that it was time for me to take my departure. Constant fever showed me that I was reaching the end of my tether, and that if I tarried longer, I might have to pay for it permanently : but as it was, I felt that there was no further harm done to my constitution than could be undone by a few years in temperate climes. It was a recognised thing that

three consecutive years in that climate were usually fatal to the white man, and I had already entered upon my third year. One or two exceptional men withstood the ravages of sickness, but a great majority gradually gave way. Still, when once men leave that atmosphere, they pick up marvellously, and soon regain their former robustness; but they must ever remember that the white man was not born to such hardships, and that as his constitution loses tone, so must he repair it, or one day he will find it irreparable.

One cool early morn I set forth for my last excursion, to say farewell to my friends—the denizens of the forest. I cannot refrain from narrating my proceedings on that day, as I can never forget it, and have often since wished for another such day: one cannot get them elsewhere:

A certain refractory chief, named Fokwatch, had been irritating the paramount power, viz., ourselves, and it was considered that a short visit to his property might alter the complexion of things, and change his views on certain little questions. He had been misguided enough to intrigue with another distant chief, who did not want the English, for no other apparent reason than that he felt like a naughty schoolboy, and also to fill in his idle times. I took with me an imposing bodyguard, and determined to mix a little sport with my politics.

Mr Fokwatch's preserves were the best in my

district, and I knew him well enough to be sure that he would try and propitiate me with reliable "Khabar," when he saw me and an array of Soudanese. In this case pleasure was to come first and business afterwards. I arrived at Fokwatch's residence, which consisted of two or three disreputable looking grass huts, at about 10 A.M., and could see by his anxious glances that his conscience was disturbing him. However, he received me affectionately, and professed much solicitude on the score of my health, and also the usual undying love he had ever cherished for me personally and the English generally. I looked keenly at him whilst he unctuously rolled out his platitudes, which made him feel uncomfortable; and then told him to find me a rhinoceros, without perjuring himself any further for the present. Much relieved at this diversion, and possibly thinking his glibness had gulled me, he vanished, to carry out my wishes with undeniable sincerity. No black man enjoys the white man's steady eye—it is disconcerting, especially when all is not as it should be within the black man's breast!

I very soon got on to the track of a cow and calf, and followed up for more than an hour. I was standing with my orderly searching the tracks, which had become confused, when we heard the crisp crackling of small twigs near in front. I looked up quickly, and in the brushwood directly opposite to me, at a distance of about twelve yards, was an enormous cow

rhinoceros and calf. She was engaged in snuffing about for thorns, and obviously thought she was alone with her offspring. Suddenly she seemed to become conscious of something unusual, and looked up. I was hidden by brushwood, and she did not see me ; but for one instant, gave me a most tempting shot in the chest. I raised my rifle, but my valour waned ; and the best part of it, viz., the discretion, remained. I was armed, as usual, only with my .303. and could have made certain of piercing her heart with one of its little projectiles. Two years' experience were momentarily thrown away, and my finger was on the trigger. Luckily it then occurred to me that this great animal, armed with its terrible weapon in front, would make nothing of a dozen yards, even with its heart pierced by lead. I must admit that life seemed enjoyable, and that I shrank from the chance of throwing it away. Those who have engaged in these dangers will, I think, give me credit for wisdom ; but those who have not, and who have stout hearts and firm nerves, may write me down as white-livered. As certain as I should fire, so certainly should I be charged, and what chance had I with such a beast in brushwood ? Had I had in my hands a heavy rifle, such as an eight bore, there would not have been a debate in my mind ; but as it was, I thought I would live to fight another day. All this had to be argued out in a moment, and in the latter part of that moment there flashed through my mind a certain hunt in which

I had played the part of the hunted. Any lingering trace of rashness was cleared away, and I stepped aside politely, to let the lady pass. She heard the movement, and her passing was remarkably rapid! The hidden peril quickened her footsteps, and I never saw her again.

The customary self-recrimination followed, and I sat down and swore, to ease my choler. Still, sitting here years afterwards, I beg to consider myself to have been right, for had I done otherwise, this arm-chair I am now filling might have been vacant, as far as I am concerned. Rhinoceroses were not so rare that I should have to fire at such a disadvantage.

Angry and disheartened, I trudged along, feeling so exasperated with myself, that I would have essayed anything. I had not long to wait, for in a few minutes I heard the snort of a disturbed rhino, and caught sight of him as he fled. He had evidently been indulging in a midday siesta, as I saw the mark his body had impressed during repose. He led me through an intricate mass of wait-a-bit thorn bushes, regardless of my wardrobe and the surface of my skin. In the stifling heat I tracked him, and peeping over a piece of rising ground from amongst some tufts of grass, I saw him under a tree. He was looking about as if uncertain which way to go, and as he stood broadside on, with his head turned towards me, he afforded me a grand shot. I had no time to wait; but aiming behind

the point of his shoulders at his heart, I fired. The range was little more than forty yards, but all breathless as I was I should not have been surprised if I had bungled. He gave an angry snort, which showed he was hit, and my orderly said that he was hit in the right spot and that he was ours. I resumed the pursuit, and the blood rendered tracking easy, telling me there was no occasion for great hurry.

On my right was a beautiful herd of hartebeest, which had been grazing, now all with their heads up wondering what was happening. I stopped for a moment to look at them, and they turned tail and went off. Just then a magnificent lion jumped up, gave two or three quick gruff grunts, and vanished into some high grass. I got a good view of him and clearly saw he had a grand mane, and that his skin seemed clear of mange. So many lions are covered with this disease, that this was a rare specimen, and I turned to go after him. The last I saw of him was the tuft of his tail as the grass covered him up, and I then turned to the orderly to see what his views were. He was for capturing the rhino, without trying any wild-goose chases, and reiterated several times that if we persevered, the rhino was ours, whereas the lion was gone. It certainly was an *embarras de richesses*, and to my after regret, I chose the certainty. A well-conditioned lion, such as this was, was finer quarry than a rhino—even though he had gone. He had evidently been lying in wait for

the hartebeest, and I had spoilt his dinner. Though I heard lions frequently, I rarely came upon them, and not without a pang I said good-bye to him. The orderly assured me I should not find him now, and so I put him out of mind, and turned my attention once more upon the wounded animal. The excitement of the chase so intoxicated me that I felt how happy I could be with either ; at the same time it was unfortunate that the choice of two such beasts should have been thrust upon me without the refusal of either, and one of them might well have filled a blank day.

In another hour the increased quantity of blood in the tracks betokened the fact that our rhino was at hand, and it behoved us to advance cautiously. In another minute I saw him lying by a tree, lashing his tail and obviously hard hit ; but his last quarter of an hour on earth was to be a lively one for us. I fired at him, which caused him to jump up, and got two more shots into him as he advanced slowly, and one more with a Martini, at about fifteen yards, whilst he was charging, which I thought I could fairly safely wait for, because he was lurching badly. However, he did not fall, so I was forced into precipitate flight, and it must have been grand to see him scatter me and my followers in all directions ; but the poor beast could only make little desperate charges, whenever he saw anybody within reach.

My orderly had become disorderly, and was firing

his Martini on his own account. Knowing this to be dangerous for any one in the vicinity, I took the weapon from him, and got one into the rhino's neck, which toppled him over. He was kicking the ground and squealing piteously like a pig, as I ran up to finish him off; but he made a last expiring effort and got quite close to me. One more bullet terminated his career, and I must say his gameness excited our admiration.

He was cut up on the spot, and I sat and studied his anatomy. I felt no weariness in spite of ten hours' walking — so exhilarating had been the last half-hour. I tried to recover some of the bullets to see the various effects, but I could find none of them: they were lost in the masses of flesh and bone. In the evening some of the blacks at their meal, picked one or two out of their teeth and brought them to me. The Martini bullets had slightly mushroomed at the ends.

I returned to my friend Fokwatch, and pointed out to him the iniquity of his ways, and the inevitable doom he would bring upon himself if he continued in them. I implored him to share my views on certain questions, and to dismiss his, which were jaundiced. I left him professing unswerving obedience to my every wish; but I did not forget to give backbone to my arguments by borrowing a quantity of his goats!

This was my last hunt, and I spent most of my

few remaining days in watching the summit of a hill over which a certain caravan had to pass. Somewhere in its length would be the officer to take my place. Several weary days after I had expected him, he arrived ; and I handed over all Her Majesty's possessions in my charge, and rapidly recounted the most vital parts of the history of the Upper Nile, so that he might not start his jurisdiction in ignorance. In those parts it is a case of *Le Roi est mort ! Vive le Roi !* and, doubtless the chiefs hastened to pay their court to the new Governor. The good ones possibly hoped that their various virtues had been extolled, and the bad ones that the new ruler might be taken in easier than the old one.

But they little knew that there existed in every station a book wherein the commandant, like a recording angel, set forth in black and white the chronicles of the times. Each chief has his character, and deeds, or misdeeds, enumerated, and was taken over for better or for worse, as the case might be, by his new ruler.

When it came to saying a long farewell to my Soudanese troops, I must confess the tears came to my eyes. After what I have said about them in this book, the reader can perhaps sympathise with me. They begged me to return to them, and I had not the heart to say I should never see them again. I explained to them that the great Queen was

waging another mighty war, and that I had to go and take my part in it. They would go themselves, they said, and fight; but I asked what would become then of all our new possessions if the Soudanese were not there to protect them! They came one after another and kissed my hand, and eventually I got away, feeling a lump in my throat. A number of them escorted me to Fajao, where I crossed the Nile and saw the last of them. My recollections of them are most affectionate, for mixed with blood-thirstiness and some of the evils of the savage, are the most lovable traits.

Having got my nose directed towards home, I soon forgot the gloom which my farewells had cast over me, and covered about twenty miles daily. A few days took me through Unyoro, which I was glad to see was recovering from the ravages of war. Inhabitants were returning and cultivation was spreading.

A few more days carried me through Uganda, and I was granted permission to march round the lake with porters, in place of the less costly method of crossing the water in canoes. My march, however, had its drawbacks, and in one part was most gruesome. The confines of Usoga and Kavirondo were at this time undergoing a famine, and ghastly sights met my gaze at every turn. The people within reach of Uganda proper were able to procure a certain number of bananas from that country, but

those in remoter parts were reduced to subsisting on wild berries. The rains had failed and there was no banana crop. Many of these banana-eaters make no provision for a fruitless year, as grain-eaters do, and so starvation may stare them in the face at any time.

Dead bodies were lying in all directions unburied ; and the stench was sickening ! My porters and a few time-expired Swahili soldiers who journeyed with me to be discharged at the Coast, refused to pass near them. With difficulty I induced them to lift a body from the path and put it to one side. I found these in every attitude, as death had found them. In one place were several skeletons bleached by the sun ; in another I saw a corpse leaning against a tree in a sitting position, with a spear still resting against the shoulder, and a wrist folded over it. The living, overwhelmed with their calamity, had a scared look in their faces, as they wandered about looking for berries and grubbing for roots. It was a piteous spectacle, and being powerless to render any assistance, I was glad to leave such an awful scene. There is no freemasonry amongst these African races : one tribe cannot ask another tribe for hospitality under the circumstances. They would buy for a time, until all their possessions were gone ; but could not plant themselves on another tribe, for no tribe could possibly support another, except perhaps the Baganda : and if they did crave such a boon, it would endanger their independence—which has to

their minds greater terrors. But they seemed incapable of effort in their distress, and sat down and died as though it were useless to cope with kismet. The heavens had denied them the gentle rain, and had therefore denied them life!

This awful disaster must have decimated the race, and now the same unfortunate people are being visited by the sleeping sickness. I wandered on and found even the poor domestic animals had suffered from the universal famine, or some disease, and their bodies strewed the plain. Over this grim scene thousands of brilliant butterflies were hovering, settling now and again to gorge themselves upon the hideous food. My passion for entomology drew me on, and I caught many beauties upon the rotting flesh. My gorge rose, as I pursued my ends, and I felt it was an indignity towards the dead: but such an opportunity was unique, and one which would never occur to me again. I have no desire for such an experience again, however profitable might be the result!

Passing through the Nandi forest and over the beautiful Mau plateau and across the plains beyond the Eldoma Ravine, I reached the famous Uganda railway, now happily completed. But my adventures had by no means ended yet; for this great work made several attempts upon my life. First of all the train ran away, broke its brakes, and rushed round awful curves at a totally unauthorised speed.

Some of these curves were labelled "five miles an hour," and we afterwards discovered our average speed has been thirty-five miles an hour! I was in the guard's van, which seemed to require only one wheel to keep its equilibrium. The engine-driver blew the whistle loudly and continuously to signify his inability to do anything further, and every one in the train looked upon the journey as the last they were likely to take! Providence, however, had kept all traffic out of our way and allowed us to reach an ascent, where, with the aid of some of the small carriage brakes, we brought ourselves to a standstill.

The rains had so softened the black cotton soil upon which the rails were laid, that the sleepers had taken every conceivable angle; but by unanimous consent we kept the pace under three miles an hour, and even at that we derailed twice. On one occasion this happened on the brink of a precipice; but there was no chance of any lives being lost, for every soul of us jumped off at the smallest provocation.

One night a terrific storm washed away all the bridges, and it was announced that all traffic would cease for two months. This did not disquiet me, for I had already determined to get out and walk. Putting all my loads upon the time-expired mens' heads, I was glad of the luxury of terra-firma. Now and again we got a lift from some ballast train that had become belated between the bridges, and from

a truck I got an occasional shot at the countless herds of wild beasts that graze in security close to the line. Seated on an arm-chair on the open truck, I thoroughly enjoyed the cool air, the scenery, and all the beauties of nature. When we came to the ruin of a bridge, we had to get down and find a way of crossing. Some of the smaller rivers were fordable ; but such rivers as the Stony Athi were rushing torrents : they hurled enormous girders a hundred yards down stream, and were to us most formidable obstacles. In most cases, though the arches had been swept away, the rails remained suspended with the sleepers still pinned to them, and along these sleepers we took our perilous way. Here and there one was missing and I found myself obliged to clutch the rail and swing myself over the gap ! The porters with their loads seemed undisturbed, and stepped unerringly on to the rail and then the sleeper ; but my heart was in my mouth as I watched my ivory, trophies and specimens being borne across these chasms. One by one we crossed, not daring to put more than a man's weight on at a time ; and even that caused the precarious bridge to bend and give at every step. But I lost nothing, and eventually reached Mombasa, the three hundred and fifty miles of railway having occupied me seven days, which was, however, quicker than walking.

How luxurious everything seemed at the Coast ; but I fell in with civilisation again as if I had hardly

been away from it. Long-promised cock-tails vanished quite as easily as of yore, and I was soon arrayed in respectable raiment. Indeed, this was very necessary, for my own mother would not have known me as I walked into the town. Odd boots without heels covered my feet: my unmentionables were things of shreds and patches—some of the latter being portions of my tent—my coat was worn to ribbons and had been in a grass fire; a scrubby unkempt beard and a dirty face completed my disguise. It was so refreshing to get into clean white clothes again, and loll in an arm-chair and wait for a boat to take me South.

After about a fortnight a ship arrived, and I soon saw Mombasa fade from my view!

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSION

Home keeping youth hath ever homely wits.

Act I. Scene 1, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

Act II. Scene 1, *As You Like It*.

IF these pages have perchance been read by any man who has an idea of looking into another side of life, he may not be above listening to a few words of advice, offered humbly by one who has taken his look. He will find aspects widely different from anything he has beheld before, and experiences calculated to enlarge the mind. Home keeping youth hath ever homely wits, and it is well to learn that the portion of this globe that one has been accustomed to is but a very small part of the whole. He will find out that the blessings of civilisation are not unmixed, and that there are many advantages

in a simple primitive mode of existence. Far from the madding crowd he will get peace, and he can, if he will, carry with him many of the luxuries to which he has grown accustomed. Books are easily to be obtained, and have in the wilds a most absorbing interest. There is time on the hands, and such works as expand knowledge and require time to digest, for which one has not sufficient leisure in a busy world, can be more thoroughly appreciated. Such a life tends not only to cultivate the intellect, but it also forms the character. A man learns to know himself, his strength, and his weakness; for there he cannot get away from himself. His passions are unbridled, and his power is less restricted than at home. The one he will learn to control, and the other to use with discretion. His faults are brought home to him more surely, and he sees his mistakes more clearly than in civilisation.

Upon his own exertions does his life depend: he has got to shift for himself. There is no convention to bind him; no precedent to lead him: what originality there may be in his nature has full play. He will find his limits, and can mould his actions accordingly, not that this is not so in all places; but when one is alone these things have an added force.

When a man has once made up his mind that he intends to give this life a trial, let him take it seriously. He should not treat it merely as a change, for it has greater things in it. It is waste of blood and brain

to wander aimlessly through hundreds of miles of country, gazing casually at the changing scenes, and taking them in superficially.

Such a course will only bring disappointment. He will return with the memory of many sicknesses, and will know naught of the delights he passed by. Let him look deeply, or as deeply as he is capable of, into all things, and he will engender that enthusiasm without which there is no real enjoyment in anything. The means are at his disposal.

First, let us take geology, which to us at home who live much in towns and spend our country hours in bustling pursuits, has a dry flavour. Let this man who is about to travel, take a few lessons, and buy for himself a text-book on the subject, and read it; and he will find that as he walks along he can read the greatest of all works. The sweltering march suddenly loses all its dreariness.

This geology is but one chapter of the book: there are many others, and if he tires of one, he may turn to another. Fauna and flora have infinite attractions. From anthropology to entomology there is a vast field, and he may devote himself to any particular branch for which he has a penchant; or aspire to more than one.

Whatever it is, let him before starting possess himself with the best books on the subject. It may be astronomy; it may be zoology; or it may be botany: he has unique opportunities for all or any

of them. But, above all, let him first acquire some small amount of practical knowledge. It will not take long to learn how to recognise ordinary formations ; to distinguish between various races ; to skin birds ; to collect insects ; or to preserve skins of animals.

A little knowledge of architecture, brick-making, carpentry, and such kindred arts will also go a' long way. If he can manage to acquire this knowledge before he leaves home, he will not start, as I did, in a hurry ; nor return, as I did, regretting many things.

I do not recommend any man to confine himself to the deeper subjects, for relaxation is as necessary to the mind as it is to the body. Nowadays, with such postal services as obtain all over the world, newspapers and novels are always at command ; but men soon find that these take a minor place in their attentions. When they find that there is still an enormous field for discovery of both fauna and flora, they will not waste much of their time in novel-reading.

Should the man whom I may be addressing myself to be a soldier, there is ample scope for his professional talents. At present the whole land seems quiet ; but so long as the native is such as I have attempted to describe him, he will be foolish, and so afford the soldier his opportunity. I have not ever heard of a soldier who has been into the interior

without a scuffle of some sort falling to his lot. It was a local joke that quite a gloom was cast over a certain section of the army when King Kabarega was captured, for that potentate had ever been a most prolific source of distinction to officers. But whether there be peace or war, soldiering with such men as the Soudanese is always a —— Reader, I will spare you more on that subject.

Perhaps I paint with too glowing colours, and it would be as well to utter a word or two of warning. Let no man imagine that he is going into the interior of Africa without the company of sickness. At any rate, if he remains there for two years, he will find out that it is inevitable; but it is not so much to be dreaded as one would think, and certainly there is one compensating advantage. A man at home is supposed to become his own doctor at forty; but two or three years in the jungle are sufficient for his purpose. He soon knows what is good for him, and — which is better — what is bad for him.

There are three sovereign medicines, of which a good stock should be taken, and which I found met most of my requirements for three years. Pills, opium, and quinine are these three, and one should also be provided with a hypodermic syringe, and the most up-to-date work on tropical diseases.

The last was to me most entertaining reading, and its pages beguiled many an hour. Some of the

remedies I practised upon the natives with interesting results, a few of which have been recorded.

Every man should be thoroughly overhauled before leaving England, and should be made acquainted with his weak point, for as sure as fate it will be found out. The Equatorial climate searches through the constitution to find that weak point, and I never knew it fail to find it. But with modern knowledge and modern appliances, present-day travellers do not suffer as did their old-day predecessors.

Then there is the great joy of sport, without which many would consider the country impossible. If a man has no sporting instincts in his soul, he had better not enter those regions. The excitement to the blood is the great restorer of health; but as nine Englishmen out of ten delight in the chase, my remark may be superfluous.

A few suggestions as to a battery may not here be out of place.

To my mind, a man requires no more than a double .303, a magazine Mauser single-bore, an eight- or four-bore, a twelve-bore shot-gun, and a small £5 collector's gun.

Regarding the .303, I do not wish to restrict any man to this particular weapon, as I am aware that more powerful weapons of very little more calibre have, since my day, been invented. I only stipulate that it should be a small-bore, in contra-

distinction to a .500 express or a .577, and further that it should be double-barrelled.

With reference to the eight- or four-bore, I see no reason to modify the opinion I have expressed in these pages, which I formed at the time I was hunting, and which I still retain.

In the four-bore it may be urged that the recoil is liable to send the sportsman flying: but it must be remembered that the former can be adjusted to the latter's powers of resistance. The bullet of the four-bore is larger than that of the eight-bore; but the rifle itself is heavier, and the recoil varies in proportion to the relative weights of the two. Supposing that the rifle is a hundred times as heavy as the bullet, the former strikes the shoulder at roughly a hundredth part of the velocity of the latter. So by reducing the velocity of the bullet, which can be effected by reducing the charge, the recoil is also diminished. The greater area of damage done by the larger rifle is the advantage gained, and the drawback is the greater weight to be carried; but this is somewhat nullified by the fact that the weapon is only handled by the sportsman shortly before the supreme moment, and that the consideration is one of life and death. Of course the shock to the animal is the important point, and this is greater with a heavier bullet, provided the striking velocity is the same, which the above argument shows is possible. A big rifle does not kick any more than a small one

with an equal striking velocity, and the doubt of rendering a big animal *hors-de-combat* is eliminated with the former.

If a man will take the country as he finds it, not expecting too much and not complaining too much, the hardships soon fade from the recollection, and he will in after years look upon many of the days spent in that far-off land as the happiest in his life. He must make up his mind to pluck his own pleasure. Nature is the great provider, and the deeper one dips, the greater depths are found ; but her greatest beauties are not thrust upon the gaze, as in a play ; they must be sought.

These pleasures are cheap too, and a man is well paid for his services. His clothes cost him little ; food is cheap ; labour is not costly ; rents, taxes, and bills are almost unknown. Though it is above all things a poor man's country, still rich men grow to like it as much as their less-favoured brothers. I knew some well-off men who found it most difficult to tear themselves away, even when their health had broken down.

In conclusion, I can only say that I am glad I undertook the experience, and have only myself to blame that I did not get more enjoyment out of the country than I did.

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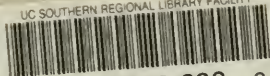
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