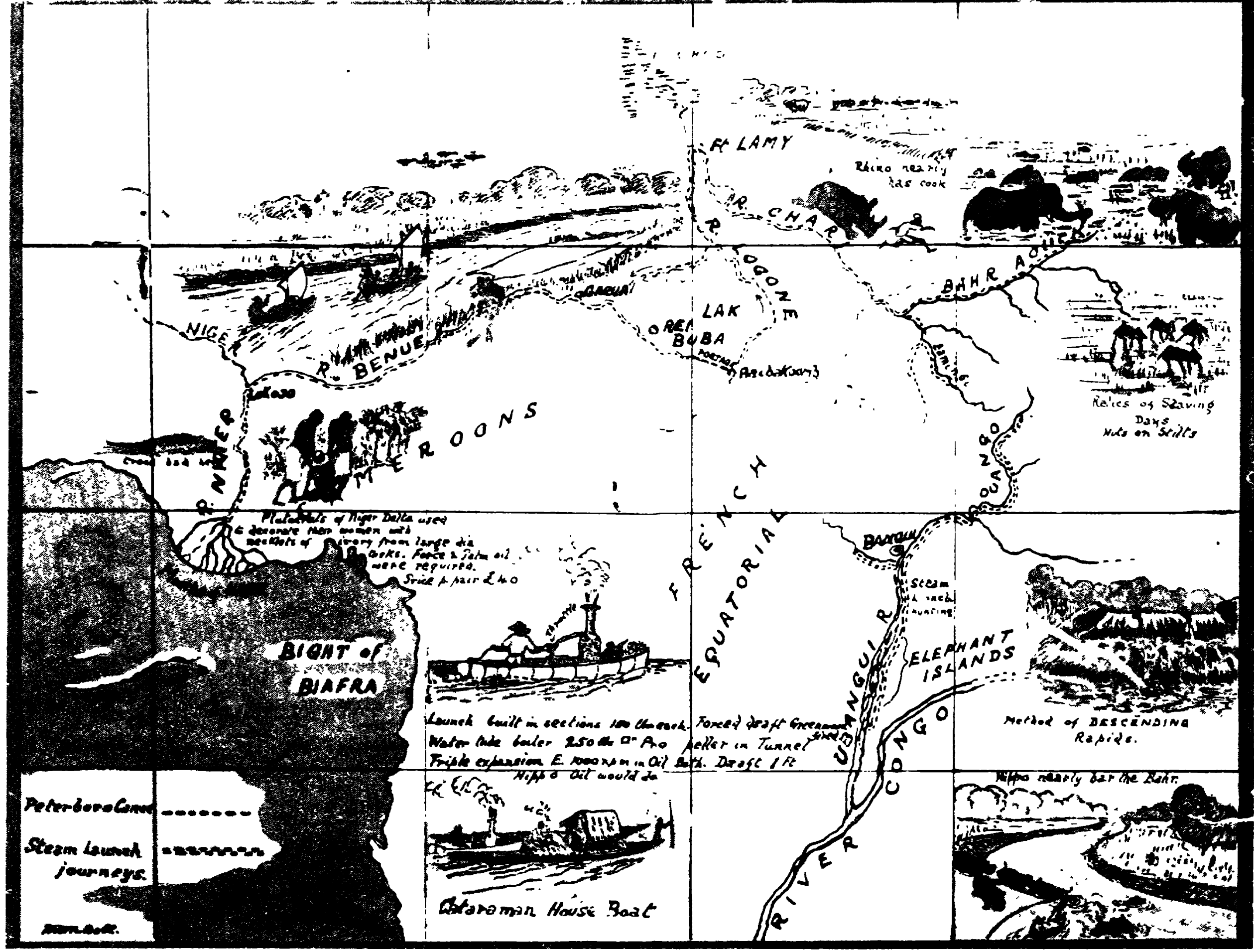
BELL OF AFRICA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Water tube boiler
Triple expansion
Hippo nearly bar the Bahr.
Peterboro Canoe
Steam Launch journeys.
Catamaran House Boat

BELL OF AFRICA

with appendix on

RIFLES and SHOOTING

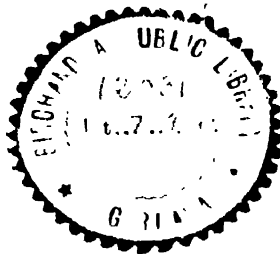
by

WALTER D. M. BELL

author of

The Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter and *Karamojo Safari*

Illustrated by the author



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THE CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	Foreword	vii
	Introduction	xiii
I	Early Days	1
II	Africa at last	12
III	The Yukon and the Boer War	21
IV	Back to Africa	29
V	Karamojo	40
VI	Dabossa	74
VII	Through the Sudd of the Gelo River	91
VIII	The Lado Enclave	100
IX	Hunting in Liberia	116
X	French Equatoria. The Ubangui River	137
XI	World War I	157
XII	The Ivory Coast, The Niger and The Benue	175
XIII	Buba Gida and the Lakkas	193
XIV	The Ascent of the Bahr Aouck	206
XV	Buffalo and Lion	222
XVI	Latter Days	226
	Appendix On Rifles and Shooting	232

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Facing Page
Areas West of the Nile Where the author hunted	*Frontispiece*
Escape from Germany in my home-built kyak	16
"I had no trouble in filling the cabin with frozen meat."	17
"The fire got my pony and I was made prisoner."	32
Bull elephant on the Pibor flats	33
Location of brain, heart and lungs	48-49
Sectionalized elephant skull showing location of brain	"
Skull of bull elephant after skinning	"
Brain shot, quartering from the rear	"
Karamojong blowing the kudu horn	144
Karamojong with large nose-ornament	144
Karamojong splendour	145
Elephant drive in the Ubangui River	160
A specially fine Karamojong head-dress	161
Frontal brain shot	208-9
The Yukon	"
The brain shot at work	"

FOREWORD

INHERENT in the make-up of mankind is the desire to wander.

Perhaps it is a hangover from prehistoric days, the motivating force that caused life to crawl from the sea, Neanderthal man to emerge from his cave and primitive tribes to migrate. Or, perhaps, even a hold-over from the halcyon days of boyhood.

Whatever it is, wanderlust is a trait which, in boyhood, modern civilization would curtail as being "delinquent" and, in manhood, would stifle as "unconventional".

However, it has been my observation that those men who seemingly have had the most out of life have been the fortunate few who overthrew convention and did as their heart dictated. Such a man was W. D. M. Bell, better known perhaps as Karamojo Bell.

If ever there were an adult counterpart of Mark Twain's immortal Huckleberry Finn, Karamojo Bell surely qualifies. He did what all men dream of doing. But, unlike the rolling stone of verse which gathered no moss, Bell amassed a fortune by doing what he had dreamed of doing as a boy. He killed elephant! He killed lots of elephant! He was one of the world's greatest elephant hunters. Perhaps her greatest. By his own admission, well before the end of his career, he killed a thousand elephant and, how many more since then, no one will ever know. For Bell was not immortal. He is now dead. But his feats will live forever.

What's more, Karamojo Bell left something behind him. Perhaps not the conventional footprints in the sands of time as have great politicians, renowned scientists and celebrated artists, but perhaps, too, something even greater. He has chronicled a period of history in a continent of operations that otherwise might well have been lost to all mankind. For who, save Karamojo Bell, could have documented the goings-on in the parts of Africa he came to know as home and amongst the primitive tribes which became his personal charges, occasionally even, his blood brothers?

Yes, Karamojo Bell made his own inimitable footprints. In fact, I have stumbled into them myself. For I, too, have many times seen his Africa, and several times in the very areas where, half-a-century earlier, Bell pitched his tents.

It was not my good fortune to know Karamojo Bell personally. I only knew of him. But I know for certain, in Africa, he is still a controversial figure. I have listened to many a fireside discussion centering on Karamojo Bell's exploits. I have heard many an argument surrounding his advocacy of small-calibre, high-velocity rifles for the world's largest game. In fact, it has been said that Karamojo Bell has been the death of many a lesser man who tried to emulate his feats.

Unquestionably, Karamojo Bell was no ordinary man. That he stumbled onto success by accident is obvious from reading this autobiography. That he was, strictly speaking, a rebel, but with a cause, is equally obvious. But, he must be credited with a burning determination that caused him to rebel at convention, else as a native of Scotland, he would never have visited Africa nor North America. Too, had he not rebelled at conventional arms, never would he have stumbled onto the combination that enabled him to dispatch as many as fifteen elephant in a single day's hunt.

No, he was not an ordinary man. Quite the contrary, Karamojo Bell was a most extraordinary man. In fact, he was extraordinary *before* he became a man.

Herein, it is chronicled that, prior to manhood, Bell had sailed several of the seven seas and traversed three of the world's continents; had taken part in the Klondyke gold rush and participated in the Boer War; had followed Arab slave raiders and provided meat for hungry cannibals; had killed man-eating lion in Kenya Colony and lived with lion-eating men in Uganda Territory; had mushed dogs through the frozen sub-Arctic and hiked burning miles through Equatorial, rhino-infested bush; had been a professional meat hunter on two continents, not to mention earlier poaching on a third. All this, and more, *before* he became a man.

In fact, at the age of 21, Bell was back in Africa to earn the title Karamojo which stuck with him throughout his life.

Unconventional as he was in dealing with life itself, Bell was a born organizer and a natural systematist. Too, he was headstrong. Once determined to accomplish a particular mission, defeat was not in his vocabulary. In fact, little short of success was tolerated even among his wild, aborigine followers.

Early, for instance, Bell had decided that he would become a professional elephant hunter. He had never seen an elephant, nor had he ever shot a rifle. These, however, were mere circumstances to be corrected in due course. And, corrected they were. Systematically, of course! Or, in the reading, it may not seem systematic in that it was much hit-or-miss. But, underlying the trial-and-error approach to his goal, Bell always exhibited a natural inclination to analyse results and benefit therefrom.

When his first rifle, a Fraser .303 single-shot failed to extract the shot cartridge and required the expedient of a ramrod through the opposite end of the barrel to dislodge same . . . when this happened, Bell merely learned to make his first shot count: "since I couldn't rely too heavily on a second".

Ultimately, disgusted with the .303's failure to extract, he traded it to a Greek trader for a .450 Winchester and a supply of ammunition loaded with hollow-point bullets. He was quick in realizing this combination was inappropriate for his elephant hunting when even lesser stuff scoffed at his efforts. Nor could he see the wisdom of toting a 35-pound, 4-gauge elephant gun as was done by many of the early-day elephant hunters. He disagreed with those who felt that nothing short of this veritable shoulder-canon would kill a colossus so large as an elephant. So, he acquired another small-bore, high-velocity rifle, turned to solid bullets and set about to prove his radical beliefs beyond doubt.

He was determined that a brain shot was the answer to successful elephant hunting. But, after shooting eight successive elephant in the head and seeing them amble unconcernedly off, he decided he must, at all cost, learn if the colossus, indeed, had a brain and, if so, exactly where it lay hidden!

When he had succeeded in killing an elephant with a heart shot, then in vogue among elephant hunters, he was all the more convinced

a brain shot must be perfected. For, in dying, the animal had made sufficient commotion and noise before succumbing to have frightened off the whole herd.

Directing his native helpers, he sawed the elephant's skull completely in half, dissected away the honeycomb cellular bone structure piece by piece until he knew exactly where the brain lay hidden. Not satisfied with that accomplishment, he next began a study of just how best to reach that brain location from the outside. He did the same thing with the heart, determining that he should be expert here too for, on occasion, a heart shot would be necessary. While he crawled inside the carcass, his natives drove spears in from the outside and Bell studied their relative position in relation to the heart. The better to memorize these discoveries, Bell drew pictures, made charts and otherwise committed them to memory.

That his brain anatomy had been worthwhile, Bell proved the next day by dropping his first elephant in its tracks with a single perfectly placed brain shot. Thereafter, it was the rare instance when more than a single shot was required to dispatch an elephant.

He became so expert with his rifles that he dropped birds in flight, shattered spears in native's hands and in other ways proved his prowess as Africa's No. 1 elephant hunter. Once, on the Victorian Nile, Bell was using up some unreliable ammunition by shooting at cormorants which winged past his position. Two men, watching his extraordinarily long shots asked to inspect his shotgun which shot so much farther than theirs. They were dumbfounded to learn that the shotgun was indeed a rifle!

Bell hit Africa at a time when firearms were relatively unknown to the natives. Those that did know them believed the bullet opened a hole into which the fire penetrated to kill, and that the bullet easily could be dodged merely by ducking when the smoke appeared. He arrived, too, at a time when slave-running was still in vogue and cannibalism was practiced, when disdain for a white man was widespread, and force was the only deterrent universally recognized by everyone. Bell's Africa was a different one than the modern safarist encounters when stepping from the plane in Nairobi's busy airport to be met by his white hunter.

Little wonder, around African campfires today, half-a-century later, Bell's exploits, his antics, eccentricities and accomplishments still provide prime conversation. For all men, at heart, are wanderers and, in Bell, they see a most envied vagabond, a rebel against convention, a systematic, organizing, determined wanderer who had the nerve to defy convention and achieve his boyhood ambition.

F. WALLACE TABER

INTRODUCTION

THROUGHOUT all of Africa wherever hunters, explorers and old timers gather together, the name and doings of Walter D. M. Bell are spoken of with the greatest respect, and indeed with awe. He was the most romantic, and probably the greatest of all of the old professional elephant hunters. In the course of his many safaris he penetrated alone into wild regions where he was the first, or at least almost the first white man. He always operated entirely with a small safari composed wholly of blacks. Being conversant with many native tongues, he gathered a more comprehensive knowledge of the native customs and thought than most any other early explorer. And he made a huge success, financial and otherwise, of his huntings. Unlike other hunters, his activities were not confined to East Africa. In the search for new and better elephant countries he wandered into the most remote districts from coast to coast—the basin of the Niger, French Equatorial Africa, and the Gold Coast.

Bell has left no exact record of the number of elephant he shot. He does, however, state that after completing his early safaris in Uganda, Karamojo, Dabossa and Abyssinia he achieved the goal of one thousand elephant which he had set for himself. To these must be added the very large number that he shot on the Gold Coast and in French Equatorial Africa. Unlike almost all the other professional hunters, who armed their native followers to hunt for them, and took personal credit for their kills, he shot practically all his elephant himself with his own rifle, excepting only six which his headman shot for him in Karamojo. He also probably killed a larger proportion of his beasts dead with a single shot, and he was never mauled nor had any hair-raising escapes. His hunting was the acme of efficiency.

Bell was a personal friend of mine. We had corresponded for years, as we had many things in common. About 1950 he wrote me of his desires to publish his complete memoirs. Formerly he had written two books; *The Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter* published in 1923, and *Karamojo Safari* published later. The former was a more or

less disjointed collection of essays which had formerly appeared in the magazine *Country Life*, while the latter was a more intimate account of one of his first safaris.

As he worked on these memoirs he wrote me that he could get no interest or encouragement from British publishers, and finally he asked me if I thought publication in the United States was feasable. I suggested that he send his manuscript to me and I would see what I could do.

Shortly after this I received a cablegram from his wife telling me that he had died suddenly of a heart ailment. And two days later I received the manuscript which he had mailed while still in his usual good health. This manuscript consisted of a number of chapters and essays, not consecutively arranged, together with a rather intimate story of his life that he had written for his wife; the whole, however, very completely covering his career. He indicated his desire that Chapters V to XII from his previous work *Wanderings* be included, and with the manuscript was enclosed a brief memorandum giving the dates by year of his various expeditions. It was evident that a large amount of editing would be necessary to prepare all this material for publication, and considerable research as well to locate accurately certain remote regions, and to more closely identify certain historical incidents. I knew of no one else who was competent and had the leisure to undertake this editing, so I determined to do it myself. Other than chronological arrangement, the more accurate locating of certain remote regions in which Bell hunted, and the identifying of certain historical incidents and individuals, I have taken no liberties with his text except omission of certain inconsequential matter. The incidents and the language are his.

Among the things that Bell is particularly noted for is his preference for small bore rifles of .256 to .318 bore, using solid (full jacketed) bullets, for all African game including elephant. Practically all of his hunting was done with such light magazine rifles, and with the greatest success. His success with such light weapons was undoubtedly due largely to two things. First, he was a remarkably accurate, fast, and dependable rifle shot; indeed one man in a thousand. He developed this skill in marksmanship by consistent

and intelligent training. Second, he had a most intimate knowledge of the anatomy of the various African animals, particularly elephant, and of the stance and outward appearance of all animals with relation to their vital organs, which enabled him to accurately direct his small bullets direct to vital regions. The small but relatively long bullets would reliably penetrate through bone and flesh to these deep seated vitals as well as would bullets from larger calibre rifles.

No sportsman of today has had Bell's experience, and probably not more than a handful have his anatomical knowledge. With a vast acquaintance among American riflemen, I know of but one or two who approach his skill in marksmanship, and do not know of any Englishmen who do so. And the concensus of opinion among present-day African professional white hunters is that it would be extremely dangerous for present-day sportsmen to follow his advice on the calibre of weapons for use on the larger African game—elephant, rhino, and buffalo.

A very small minority of the sportsmen who journey to Africa today to hunt have any skill whatever in rifle marksmanship. Most are utterly unable to place their shots with precision. Riflemen are made, not born. Moreover, unless a man has considerable skill with and reliance in his weapon, he will not remain cool in the presence of dangerous game close by. The small-bore rifles recommended by Mr. Bell almost completely lack any stopping or "turning" power should their bullet not instantly reach a very vital organ. Thus for both safety and success it is very necessary for all present-day hunters to employ the heavier calibres of modern rifles for such dangerous game, namely those of at least .416 bore or larger, using bullets of at least 425 grains, at muzzle velocities of 2,000 feet per second or more. Such rifles alone seem to have a fair degree of stopping as well as killing power, so that they will usually stop or turn a charge even when the bullet does not penetrate to a vital part. And those visiting sportsmen who lack skill with such rifles should always be backed up by a professional white hunter similarly armed. I also understand that lately rifles employing less powerful cartridges than the .375 Holland and Holland Magnum have been prohibited in Kenya and

Tanganyika for the hunting of elephant, rhino, buffalo and lion.

Lastly, I think it desirable to state that I have not had the opportunity of hunting in Africa. However, I have had the advantage of owning one of the best libraries in America on African sport, adventure and exploration, of which I have made a very extensive study for years. Also all my life I have hunted, largely alone, in America from the tropics to the arctic. Thus I have been able to interpret and analyse African conditions, so that to a small extent I have felt fairly competent to undertake the editing of my friend's lifework.

TOWNSEND WHELEN

I

Early Days

I WAS born in 1880 at my father's estate near Edinburgh, and was early burdened with the resounding name Walter Dalrymple Maitland Bell. Our family was of Lowland Scots and Manx ancestry. My mother died when I was two years old, and I therefore missed the early maternal influence. Our family was a large one—ten—and it was not perhaps unnatural that my father, who passed away when I was six, eyed me somewhat sourly as merely one of a pestilent brood. At any rate I have no enduring memories of him. I can remember sitting silently and awe-stricken on a high chair in his room while my sister, one year younger than I, was dandled on the parental knee, the memory of a highly polished walking stick, and the aroma of very good Havana cigars.

My father was a man of some substance. Starting in life as a timber merchant, he had by courage and acumen, accumulated a goodly portion of worldly possessions. He had bought himself a country estate where he proceeded to enjoy the privileges and pursuits then considered to be the normal way of life, and in due course he acquired a grouse moor, and even began to raise pheasants. He was by no means a poor performer at driven birds.

By the time I could read I showed quite a normal taste in literature. The penny blood in all its variety and sameness was easily acquired. Where I showed some abnormality was in straightway proceeding to carry out such manoeuvres as would instantly land me among the scenes of enchantment. My immediate aim was to kill North American buffalo in rivalry with Dead Shot Dick and others of my heroes, quite oblivious to the fact that these buffalo had long ceased to exist outside artificial sanctuaries. At this time I had one intimate, my younger sister Florence. With her I discussed a project that had somehow formed itself in my mind, to go to Monte Carlo

and shoot pigeons. The main point in favour of this scheme was that Florrie could go too. The shot pigeons were apparently to be our only means of subsistence. For some reason this scheme was discarded in favour of the bison plan. It may have been that the discovery of a pair of barrels of a breech-loading duelling pistol in my eldest brother's bedroom had something to do with the change of plans, for shortly after these disappeared from their wonted place, so did a small sum of money in pennies, together with a watch. Being country bred I got no way at all. Certainly I reached the proper embarkation point, Glasgow, but there frustration soon overhauled me. In tendering the watch to Uncle Three-Balls, suspicion was instantly aroused. There was a sudden appearance of a large and very real policeman. Out came the barrels of the duelling pistol, the hunting knife, pieces of string, and what remained of the pennies. Thoroughly scared, my home address soon followed, then a long wait by a warm fire in the police station and then, to crown all, who should appear but enemy number one, my elder brother, for my father was now dead. Ignominious end of a glorious project.

Continuing my poisonous career at home, it was not long before my guardians could look forward with relief to the time when this horrible brat could be sent off to school. They little knew what lay in store for them. By this time I had extended my readings, and Gordon Cummings' tales of elephant hunting had finally cancelled all other thoughts and aspirations. Elephants now displaced bison. Once irretrievably committed to boarding school, it at first did not seem such a hopeless case as I feared. For one thing I was a bit overawed to begin with. Soon, however, the trouble began. There was a particular boy whom I singled out for my peculiar brand of envy and malice. This boy was a first-rate man at games, and stood very high in the esteem of masters and boys alike. He was in fact a leader. That he was inclined to be a bully could not be denied, but then he came of such a high spirited line, such ancient robber stock, that much could be forgiven him or overlooked. But not by me. Oh no! The bigger the game, the higher the fury of my bitter enemy. Soon a cricket match between junior teams provided the occasion. As it happened my enemy had condescended to act as

umpire. Now this man of sixteen years had not the faintest glimmering of any feeling among the kids of eight or nine other than that of a proper deference and fear, due to his attainments in the field of sport. So when he gave me out, this unruly, sulky, and undisciplined brat retaliated with a whack on the head with his cricket bat, and all hell was let loose. The unforgiveable sin had been committed in broad daylight. An umpire had been assaulted during the execution of his duty, and in Great Brtain. It completely flummoxed the field. No one knew what to do. Silence and a great fear held the multitude. The school's Number One exhibit was seen in earnest colloquy with masters, while whispering groups of pale boys could be seen to shudder and totter on impact of such exclamations as, "What! Biffed the umpire on the boko?"

When I came within speaking distance I was greeted with horrifying details of what would happen to me. Apparently the Head had to be consulted, and it was not until that night that I got notice to appear before his august presence. By this time I was a bit shaken. Remember I was but eight years old. But when confronted by this tall man with a stoop, a very large head, and an outsized nose, who showed his utmost hostility by execrating the deed itself and its perpetrator, not only in flowing scholarly periods, but by nasty vicious cuts in the air with a cane, there formed itself in my stupid, obstinate head the thought, "I definitely dislike school and this man". However, instead of a sound caning by the Head, I was to be tried by the boys themselves and punished by them. A committee of the older boys tried the case, but nothing came of it. A sad case of thwarted justice.

As time rolled on I became more and more convinced that I had somehow got on the wrong road. School seemed to my muddled brain to lead nowhere near to the dazzling visions of sunlit prairies filled with pasturing herds of elephants waiting for my deadly rifle to lay them out. I formed the determination to end it all and get out, and so I just left for home. When asked by my guardians what I was going to do, I said I was going to Africa to hunt elephants. They said there were no elephants left now, and that anyhow I was not old enough. They, of course, were thinking in terms of South

Africa, where, truly enough, all big game had been nearly exterminated by Dutch and British hunters, aided by the advent of the .450 Martini breech-loading rifle. They lightly dismissed the remainder of the enormous continent, of which South Africa forms so small a part, chiefly because in those days not much was known about it outside the old Bristol and Liverpool trading firms whose past was so deeply rooted in the good days of ivory and slave trading that they had but little wish to advertise their trading territories. That the guardians were wrong we now know, but how wrong they were in their airy declaration will be evident when we pick up the latest Uganda or Tanganyika Year Book and under Elephant Control find that instead of being extinct or nearly so, elephants are actually on the increase, and in spite of a yearly destruction by the Control of from one-thousand to two-thousand head.

The fact remains that nothing would shake me in my determination. It was a puzzle all right. What were they to do with the troublesome brat? What about the sea? That was the time-honoured way out of the difficulty, and not a bad one either. So it was decided to apprentice me to a firm of sailing-ship owners. A point in favour of this scheme was that I would be unable to run away while at sea.

In due course articles were signed and a tailor visited to acquire a very fine sea-going kit, with sea-boots, oilskins, jerseys, dungarees, and a magnificent blue uniform with brass-bound cheese-cutter cap mounting the firm's house flag in blue and white enamel surrounded by a prodigious amount of gold braid, the whole outfit contained in a formidable wooden sea-chest.

Arrived at the docks, enquiries were made for the barque *Jupiter*. Luckily she could still be reached by wheeled vehicle, and in due course we drew alongside a racy looking iron barque of some eight-hundred tons burden. The tide being in, *Jupiter* had so far presented only her top sides, spars, rigging and masts, all newly painted. What a different scene presented itself when, warned by a raucous voice that the ship was about to warp out into the stream, we climbed the gangway and for the first time could see her decks; what a scene of apparent confusion and filth. Dazed looking men of different skin colours, stumbling about as if their hangovers

would trip them up, pursued by oaths and blasphemies from a vicious looking Liverpool Irish chief mate, ably seconded by a burly bosun with a broken nose. A quick introduction to the skipper was rapidly effected, and my brother hurriedly departed. Strangely, the beauties of the ship no longer seemed to attract me. I was gazing with mixed feelings at my overcoated and bowler-hatter brother as he hurried down the gangway out of my life for sometime anyhow, when there smote upon my ear a vast, "Hey! You!"

Turning towards the sound I wondered if it could possibly have any connection with me. The possession of that marvellous brass-bound uniform so beautifully folded in my sea-chest, had led me to suppose that I was already some kind of an officer. The next instant I was bundled down a hatchway still bundled in my shore kit, overcoat, boiled collar, gloves and all. All was dimly illuminated with a candle. The floor was covered with neatly laid coils of anchor cable. A man there, called Chips bellowed "Here she comes! Lay hold!" At first the cable was dry, but soon it came in good and wet from the dock bottom. Soon my shore-going gloves were reduced to slippery dangles and were thrown among the stinking coils. The work was heavy and the heat considerable, so off came the beautiful overcoat, followed soon by waistcoat and—dare I write it—dicky and cuffs. I began to enjoy myself. If they wanted to see me all mucked up they should do so, and I proceeded to become utterly foul. Soon the cable was all in and the anchor up, and I came up on deck. Here I addressed myself to Georgie, the senior apprentice, asking him where I could find a bath. The request was greeted with roars of laughter. Georgie said "here, my lad", and siezing me, laid me flat on the deck, and with a whoop of merriment, the whole gang of seamen who were washing down the deck, turned the hose and their brushes on me. Finally the ship's cook came to my rescue, and hauled the dripping rat down into his galley, where, alongside the stove, and with a large mug of well boiled, well-sugared, condensed-milked tea I dried out in time.

Such was my introduction to a sea going life. As an apprentice I was supposed to learn all the rudiments, and in four years would be in line for a mate's berth.

In one-hundred-and-twenty days by sail we reached Tasmania, and then to other ports. It now began to dawn on me that sailing ships were decidedly off, as regards getting to Africa anyway. So once more my highly developed technique of wandering was brought into play, and as a result I found myself working my way to New Zealand, on a steamer this time.

This working your passage is all very well, but when the ship arrives at its destination you are just hove out. Strange place, strange faces, no friends, no money for hotel or even food. You wander around until tired out and hungry, and you drift back towards the docks. But there are still good people on this earth, and finally I found food and shelter at the Sailor's Home. Bless the kind folks who run such institutions. However, so long as you are young, and not too obviously of criminal stamp, help is not long forthcoming, and I shortly found a job in a starch factory. Ten shillings pay for five-and-a-half days a week is no great wage, especially when it cost exactly that sum for a week's board and lodging at the small house where my kind friends deposited me. At this rate it soon dawned on me that I was getting no nearer my beloved Africa. To better myself I took a short job on a trading vessel, still ten shillings a week, but board and lodging found. Finally I decided I would go home and start out afresh for Africa. Maybe my people would understand that I was determined to get there, and might think that I was now old enough to be properly launched on my irrevocable career.

So I took a job on the *Destiny*, a large and very modern refrigerator steamer carrying frozen meat to England. My work consisted mainly in sweeping out the snow which formed in the cold air trunks running around the sides of the hold containing the thousands of frozen carcasses, each in its spotless muslin wrapping. So Cape Horn was rounded in calm waters, and in due time the Thames was reached.

I was now fourteen, and my people thought it was about time for me to settle down, choose a profession, and get some education. They still laughed when I begged them to fit me out for Africa. So after several abortive attempts to get the obstinate youth educated

in Scotland I was bundled off to Germany to a crammer who had been a master of languages at one of our public schools.

This Herr was an imposing looking creature and cultivated a fancied resemblance to Bismark, on the slenderest foundation as far as any of his pupils could see. Warned by my guardians of my propensities, he persuaded them to provide some shooting recreation for the purpose of offsetting the attractions of wanderlust. We attended the yearly auction of the village shooting in the communal woods and forests. It was got for five pounds, and a cheap twelve bore having been procured, I was turned loose to see what I could lay low. There were a few hares, an occasional partridge and some wood-pigeon. There were also roe deer, but these were very much sought after. One day I got one. I was not sure I was entitled to kill roe, so I thought it would be better to hide it and return to consult the Herr. He was given to starving his pupils, especially of meat, and was delighted when I told him of my exploit; wanted to know if it was well hidden; could he find the place in the dark? Then he said: "You will take a bicycle lamp and this sack and bring in every bit tonight". I got the whole roe in, much to his delight, and he fed the whole school on it for a week.

About this time of world history, Nansen produced a lovely book called *Farthest North*. Profusely illustrated, it contained complete working drawings of his kyaks, which had contributed so much to the success of his journeys. By this time I was somewhat tired of the Herr and his doings, and likewise had conceived an active dislike of that gentleman ever since he had dashed a new meerschaum pipe I was colouring to pieces on the cement floor of the salon; and then when threatened by me, had screamed for his ancient grandmother to protect Him from this boy half his size, and had robbed me of my revenge. So I now conceived a project to build a kyak as per Nansen's directions. It seemed to me that with such a craft and a gun the world would lie just before me like an open book.

The quarrel with the Herr having been patched up, a journey to Hanover was planned, with some alacrity on the Herr's part, since all expenses were paid by my guardians, and the Herr had a very good idea what was his due in the way of hotel accommodations,

cigars, and wines. My real object, of course, was the acquiring of various materials for the building of a kyak. It required some searching certainly, but finally some suitable bamboo was discovered in a dingy warehouse. Canvas, sail needles and palm, copper wire and thread were easy, and paint was procurable locally. The Herr paid for all this paraphernalia without suspicion, and rather to my surprise he seemed to have no objection to the kyak building. Perhaps he thought it would allay the wanderlust and would come to nothing anyway. It was not long before the kyak began to take shape, and so sporting did it look with its sharp double ends. My work continued with a rising tempo until one day there only remained the transportation of the craft from building site to river. It remained now to gather some provisions. Cartridges I already had.

The river upon which the kyak was to operate joined the Weser some forty miles down its course. The idea was simply to paddle down these forty miles, and on reaching the Weser it was easy to see from any map that nothing lay between one and all the seas of the world. It was these forty miles that might be troublesome. There were rapids marked. But kyaks were supposed to be able to go anywhere, the idea being that you simply carried them around any place they could not navigate.

So the day came when, unannounced, I cut loose from school and the august Herr, and started down stream at a most inspiring rate. For some time progress was uneventful. It happened that it was a mild enough looking mill weir that finally undid me. Some spike or projection on the weir caught the fast moving craft and quite simply ripped her open. Instantly she filled but did not quite sink. The weir was overlooked by a mill where it was not long before my predicament was noticed. Rushing to the rescue, the good millers soon had the wreck and its crew high and dry on the bank. Most of the cargo had gone to the bottom, but the gun had luckily been lashed to the cockpit. It was wet but undamaged. All hands now repaired to the mill where a scene of great hospitality unfolded itself. Some strong, rough brandy appeared, and some equally strong coffee. The jolly millers, male and female, partook of everything as though they too had need of reviving. My wet clothing

was soon sizzling before an enormous iron wood-burning stove, while the head miller wiped down with loving hand the twelve-bore shotgun.

While these jolly proceedings were going on I had time to review my situation, which seemed somewhat grim. Boat a total loss. Provisions gone to the bottom of a pretty deep pool. But the worst aspect of the case was undoubtedly the total lack of funds. The Herr was not such a fool as he looked. He had always carefully withheld from me any petty monies that would normally have been allowed. Meanwhile a meal of rye bread and sausage appeared. All partook of it in the hearty German manner, and the atmosphere became even jollier. The head miller continued to fondle lovingly the twelve-bore gun.

Asked where I had been going when the disaster overtook me, I disclosed to my astonished hearers that Bremerhaven had been my destination, at the mouth of the Weser, and that from that port I intended to take ship for England. The head miller assumed a thoughtful look, and presently drew from me the admission that I was completely without funds, and that at all costs a return whence I had come was completely out of the question. After pondering weightily these matters, he called for a railway timetable, setting aside the gun while he laboriously studied the complicated looking volume, while jotting down some figures with a stub pencil. Suddenly his brooding, weather-beaten features broke into a jolly smile as he announced with a huge laugh that "It could be done".

"Look", said he, "It will cost you so much by train from here to Bremerhaven. So much you will require for food. And I will buy your gun for that amount". The price given for a perfectly good shotgun just covered, by the barest margin, the cheapest class and the simplest food for the journey, leaving hardly a phennig over. Luckily a ship was easily found, and I was quickly home again to pester once more the harassed guardians with the eternal cry, "To Africa, to Africa!" Finally the guardians yielded at long last. To Africa I should go.

2

Africa at last

I WAS close to seventeen years old when my elder brother conveyed me to a gunmaker's shop for the choice of a suitable rifle. This part of the adventure was, of course, the mainspring on which all depended. A beautiful single shot .303 was produced at an attractive price—it was second-hand—and the bargain was soon concluded. All this was knocking on the gates of Paradise to me. Soon a second-class passage was secured on a small German cargo and passenger steamer bound for Mombasa, East Africa, among many other ports of call. I went aboard with no equipment other than my rifle and a small amount of ammunition. Nothing else was deemed necessary.

Mombasa in those days was still the headquarters for some fairly important trading caravans. Safaris to and from Uganda and beyond frequently left for or arrived from the mysterious interior. The trade was still a system of barter. On the one hand American and Manchester cotton goods, iron and brass wire, iron chain, Venetian glass beads, Dutch shag tobacco, and kauri shells; on the other ivory and a few slaves. As this latter trade was beginning to be frowned on by the authorities, especially by the Naval people, it had to be carried on under the elaborate camouflage so dear to the African mind, perhaps the commonest form being the conversion of savages to Mohammedanism by circumcision and the bestowing on the convert the name "Son of So-and-So", this was a grand game as it legalized everything, and enabled the father to use his "sons" in any way he saw fit. For years white men employed "boys" at the current rate of wages, only to find eventually that every cent of it was carried to the "father", who might or might not allow his "son" a small portion of his earnings as a gift.

It had always been my intention to join one of these trading

caravans; to live as they lived, and thus to penetrate parts of the vast interior that would otherwise be unattainable to anyone with as small resources as mine. The idea was that in return for the protection afforded by the guns of the safari, I would kill meat and ivory with my rifle. It must be remembered that at this time the larger proportion of the tribes were still a law unto themselves and were actively hostile to all travellers. Permission to traverse their country had to be paid for in "homgo" (tribute) if the tribe was warlike and numerous; if otherwise, a few shots from the safari guns smoothed the passage.

With this end in view I set some enquiries on foot, but met with small encouragement, to say the least It appeared that the very last thing these safaris wanted was the company of a white youth. To them he could be but a spy. They had no knowledge then of what a capable hunter, armed with a modern rifle, could do among the countless herds of elephant roaming the Equatorial Bush. Even the one or two experienced whites I consulted seemed dead set against the idea, pointing out that even if the safari leaders consented to the joining up of a white, which in itself was almost inconceivable as they were all more or less involved in illicit trade in "black ivory", a white man could not possibly stand the racket. For one thing, they pointed out, these caravans did not work on any time schedule. They spent months in preparation and years on the expedition itself. They frequently settled down in remote parts to trade; joined forces with one tribe to raid a neighbouring one that centuries of battling had reduced to a common degree of strength, when, of course, the sudden accession of a force of two or three hundred guns made the issue of the struggle a dead certainty. Then there was their little goings-on in these raids to be taken into account—the massacres, the disembowelling of pregnant women with a single knife slash across the tautened belly, and such. No; decidedly no! A white man could not stand the racket. I had to think again.

One day I visited a friend whom I had met on the steamer who was in charge of the stores for the survey parties of the newly projected Uganda Railway. He said that the survey wanted white men. It appeared that the transport for these parties consisted of

mules, American wagons, and Indian Muleteers. The latter had struck and refused to circulate unless they were given the protection of a white man on each safari. Native spearmen had been active in opposing one or two of these safaris, and lions had succeeded in killing several Indians besides stampeding mule trains. This was like a foresniff of Paradise for me, and I lost no time in seeking the official in charge, who engaged me forthwith, and ordered me to proceed up country immediately to the then headquarters of the transport at Voi. The only question asked was whether I had a rifle and ammunition. I was handed a letter to the official in charge at Voi, who apparently would do everything necessary. Included was a railway voucher which entitled the bearer to cover the few miles of the newly-constructed railroad.

Bidding my friends adieu, I embarked on my journey the next day. The train, filled to capacity with material, went off in great style, and a shower of sparks from the wood-burning engine, while excited babus in turbans, frock coats, and tight fitting pants blew whistles and waved flags. All very inspiring and jolly.

It was the time in world history when the solar topee was at the zenith of its power. That outrageous dictatorship had not yet been debunked, and it was still considered to be suicidal to be caught by the sun outside its enveloping shade. Very often it was so; when sun-heat from without met alcoholic heat from within. But I was no subscriber to this fetish. For one thing I had been through the tropics twice, once slowly on a sailing ship, and once less slowly on a cargo steamer, and no one wore a topee. Indeed, some wore no headgear at all. So I wore my single felt hat without suffering any inconvenience from the sun.

At one of the wooding stations (our locomotive burned nothing else) the news came through that a white man, one of the construction engineers, had been taken from his tent at Voi, by a lion and killed. This set my ears a-pricking. At last we were getting places, I thought. This was the stuff. The road was very new, and the speed was less than ten miles and hour, but soon Voi was achieved, and delivering my letter, I was fascinated by my first view of what was to be my job. Imagine a large clearing in African thorn bush where

all the larger trees had been left standing; only the lower stuff cleared away. Among the trees numerous tents were pitched. Long rows of mules stood tethered by lines to head ropes, while heel ropes attached to pegs lay idly on the ground behind them, to be used only at night as a precaution against stampedes caused by lions.

On every side were huge camps of bell tents occupied by Indian coolies—the construction gangs. But the odd thing about the whole show were the enormously thick thorn fences, fifteen feet high and twenty feet thick, that surrounded and sub-divided these camps. Most of the largest trees had platforms twenty to thirty feet from the ground. Here it was the precious white men slept.

Over a cup of tea, Brittlebank, my boss, disclosed what my job was to be. Apparently the whole organization was in the grasp of fear. Coolie gangs were refusing to work on the construction. Coolie muleteers were refusing to go on the supply trails to the forward surveying parties. Every tent of ten men had been issued a rifle. Everyone was within the camp zarebas by sundown. All gates were closed and still the marauding lions claimed their nightly toll in spite of fires, lanterns, shots, and firebrands. Parties of white men tracked the beasts as far back into the surrounding bush as they could hold the trail. No one could understand how a lion could possibly escape through or over those immense thorn fences and carry a man, but they did. Of course no one then knew the capabilities of lions. They have been known to get over such obstacles carrying a cow weighing six or seven-hundred pounds, so that an average coolie weighing about one hundred and thirty pounds would present little difficulty to these active cats.

So long as they confined their attentions to coolies the matter was treated with some calmness. But just lately a white man had been taken from his tent—dragged from it in spite of spirited resistance on the part of his boy. This episode brought things to a boiling point. The whole camp was in a ferment. Among many other attempts to outwit the cunning rascals, an elaborate steel cage was built, containing a smaller inner cage. The idea was to leave the door of the outer cage open for the lion to enter, while the inner

one was to contain human bait consisting of armed Sikh police. Once the lion was in they were to pull-to the outer door and then proceed to dispatch the lion. Everything went to plan, the lion came, walked around the cage, entered it, and the door clanged-to. Unfortunately, however, the bullet intended for him missed and shattered the locking device on the outer door. Once more the man-eater was at large.

Of course I was tremendously excited by all these doings. Africa was going to live up to my expectations by the look of things. I hastened to try out my single shot, falling block .303 rifle, and to familiarize myself with the bush, thrilling with the idea of coming on the man-killer all by myself, and of laying it out, of course. Although I never sighted a lion one thing I did find out. That was the poor extraction of these falling block actions. Under temporate climes it had presented no difficulties, but now under African suns the fired cartridge cases almost refused to leave the chamber. Indeed, it was only by the vigorous use of a ramrod that they could be induced to do so. I thought I would have to shoot mighty close and carefully as I could not count on a second shot in a hurry. To this early training much of my later success was probably due.

This, my first job in Africa, was to accompany a mule convoy, thereby instilling confidence in the Indian muleteers, poor things; to keep off hostile tribesmen and beasts of prey; and to see that the mules were properly fed, watered, harnessed, and vetted. Quite a bit of requirements for a boy at any rate, but I found it extremely interesting. The mules were lovely animals from Cyprus, the harness and fittings of the best, the American buckboard wagons just right for the job, and the muleteers a quiet, docile lot, on the whole not unkind to their charges. These being the hey-days of the white man, I had Indians to barber me, cook for and manicure me, all in a most efficient way, and on quite a volunteer basis. The truth was that these people were in a far, strange land, and in a blue funk of native Africans and the lions. Poor creatures, they thought all lions were man-eaters like those of Tsavo. They did not realize that only under exceptional circumstances does the African lion become a man-eater. Nor did they realize that they were as likely to be attacked by

the lion living among the vast herds of game that lined their route on all sides, as they were to be tackled by domestic cats. They even had confidence in the white convoy leader. Little did they know upon what slender grounds it rested.

Briefly the plan of operations was this. The mule trains took over stores at rail head for the advanced survey parties. Roughly speaking, the new railway followed the old caravan route to Uganda, so the mule convoys for the most part followed that ancient trail, with only minor digressions to the survey camps in the bush. There were no game laws in those days. In fact part of the convoy leader's job was to provide meat for all hands, and much good fun was enjoyed by all. Orders were that whenever the moon was sufficiently good the convoy moved by night, the boss either mounted on his riding mule, on a wagon, or on foot as choice. Generally I would be well out ahead with my rifle in hand. Anything more calculated to intoxicate a boy than this job could hardly be imagined. In the cool of the night the .303 extracted reasonably well, especially if a tree trunk were handy on which to thump the lever.

The first time that I drew a bead on an object that could be really distinguishable as a lion in the shimmering moonlight was one night when I was out ahead and on foot. For some time a grey shape had been noticed flitting along in front, but on the borders of the trail. Suddenly it stood clearly silhouetted dark against the floodlit trail beyond, the distance perhaps thirty or forty yards too far for a sure kill. Advancing slowly towards him I kept trying my sights on him but with little success. To my astonishment the lion now sat down in the middle of the road, and looked so uncommonly like a large dog that I paused and hoped I wasn't going to bring off a repetition of that Tsavo episode when someone mistook a donkey for a lion. Meanwhile the jingling of the approaching convoy smote in my ears, and just as I was about to give the beggar fire, a frantic shout from the leading muleteer made me look around. "Sahib! Sahib! No good! No good!" by a dozen voices, all calculated to scare away the lion. On demanding from the interpreter what all the fuss was about, it appeared that the unanimous opinion of the Indians was that it was crazy to shoot at the lion, and would inevitably result

in a charge and the stampede of the mules. By this time the lion had moved off. He had not minded a khaki-clad stripling, but an advancing horde of shouting men, and rumbling wagons had been too much.

I now had leisure to review my armament with somewhat critical attention. The rifle that I had to begin with and which seemed the most perfect one in the world began to assume a different aspect in light of recurring difficulties in extracting. Meeting one day a Greek trader at a common camp, we compared rifles. That of the Greek was a Winchester single shot black powder .450 falling block with a long, taper cartridge. Not exactly so modern a weapon as the beautiful Fraser .303, but still an accurate, hard-hitting gun, and above all a sure extractor. I offered an exchange after ascertaining that the count of ammunition was roughly that of the .303. Unfortunately all the cartridges had that abomination, the hollow copper-point bullet. But I knew nothing of this at the time, and as the Greek seemed dazzled with the .303, a trade was soon affected.

On buck the .450 performed quite well, although it spoiled much meat. As antelope were in their thousands this did not matter much. But on rhino I soon realized the shortcomings of that soft lead hollow shell. Had there only been some of the solid variety of bullets I would have been all right. As it was, I soon found I could kill buffalo by keeping the bullets well away from big bones, but those wretched bullets very nearly put me in queer straits.

One morning the boys came running into camp at sunrise in great excitement. A lion was drinking at the water hole. Now for the .450. Grass had mostly been burned off, leaving patches here and there. Clumps of high bush studded the hillside. An African with a muzzle loader joined me. The lion was spotted in a patch of grass, only his head showing. He laid his ears back and growled warningly. I fired for his head at some thirty yards, expecting to blow it clean off. Instead there was a most unholy to-do, but nothing offered for a further shot. The lion entered a near clump of bush and then silence. With the African I snooped around the bush but could neither see or hear anything. At last the African suggested the lion must be

My escape from Germany in my home-built kyak

"I had no trouble in filling the cabin with frozen meat."

dead. I devotedly hoped so, but was not too sure. I decided to climb a tree so as to see something from there. Carefully I laid my rifle across some branches, and was in the very act of drawing myself up when, whoosh and a roar, here came Leo in a split-second charge not two feet away. I just had time to flick up my legs as the yellow streaked through them. The African too was off in no uncertain manner. I dropped hurriedly to the ground with the rifle at the ready, and this is what met my startled gaze. Away down the hill in open ground raced the African fellow hunter. Behind him and rapidly overtaking him was the lion, obviously out for blood. Instantly I got the lion in my sights, but found that he almost covered the racing human figure so I dared not fire. Almost at the same instant the African fell, and that lion shot clear over him, breaking hard on all four legs, and turning on his tucked-down tail. As he came around I got in a shot on his shoulder, which obviously shook him, but did not knock him down. By this time my companion, who had darted off at a tangent, joined me, smiling all over his jolly, sweat-covered face. He seemed to treat his narrow escape lightly. Indeed he said he often dodged lions in that way. I thought he was a damned liar.

Meanwhile the wounded lion had denned up once more in dense bush. I thought it would be a good idea to leave him to cool off a bit, but the African had another idea. Telling me to wait and watch the bush, he went off towards camp and soon returned with a mob of boys, African and Indian. Some were armed with bush knives, some with sticks, and a few had burning faggots from the fires. There were two or three with drums and a few water-buck horns. Everyone was tremendously excited as they all advanced in some sort of line right into that infernal bush. Everyone shouted his loudest, whacked the drums, blew the horns, and made a most infernal din. They seemed not the least bit scared, but I was stiff with fright. I felt certain some one would get it, and I had very little confidence in my rifle left. Luckily the last shot at the shoulder had sickened the lion considerably, although even now he was full of fight when they came on him at three or four yards. It was with difficulty that I got in a finishing shot as

the boys mobbed him with their sticks and knives.

Examination showed that the first shot in the head had broken the lower jaw. That was probably why no one had been bitten. The second shot had caught him fair on the shoulder. Both bullets had simply blown up and caused only surface wounds. This made me think a bit. Out of these and other doings with rhino it became obvious to me that at all costs a bullet must not break up. It was a lesson that served me well in my later career as an elephant hunter.

I soon acquired a .303 Lee-Metford which was the latest army rifle. It used a nickel-jacketed bullet weighing two hundred and fifteen grains, and although soft nose bullets were being made for it, I would have none of them. Admittedly these so-called "solids" had to be accurately placed. But why should they not be so? The barrel was straight and the bullets flew truly, so it was merely a case of placing it properly on the animal so as to reach a vital spot. The lesson was well learnt, and I began my life-long study in nerve control and the knowledge of anatomy that was to serve me so well in later years.

The months passed with the rail head gradually creeping inland. What is now Nairobi was passed as just one of the many camping grounds. The lovely country of Naivasha was passed with no thought of the great changes that were to transform it in a few years. Donkey transport was coming more and more to the fore, and a large camp was established on the shores of Lake Naivasha for the resting and recuperation of transport animals.

I was now about ready to embark upon my long cherished resolve to become an elephant hunter. My own finances were not such as to enable me to outfit a safari on an adequate scale, nor was my knowledge of the country sufficient. Naturally the native Africans living along the route of the white men were shy of contacting people who seemed only intent on making them work, so that hitherto I had made little progress with my purely native contacts. It was therefore with eager anticipation that I welcomed the advent of an explorer.

This man was undoubtedly a German who, nevertheless, spoke almost perfect English. He arrived with all the recommendations

possible. It was reliably stated that he bore a personal letter from Queen Victoria herself. The railway transport was ordered to help him on his way. The traders were told they could supply him with anything and everything, and be certain of payment. He proceeded to take full advantage of everything so willingly offered. He paid for nothing, but that did not come out at the time. His project was to explore that part of the country lying between Uganda and Abyssinia where no boundaries had been fixed. It was when he was being "assisted" by my portion of the transport outfit that I met this great man. An amiable, smiling man, he seemed to present the very chance I had been waiting for. I lost no time in offering my services as hunter to his expedition, was accepted, and thought that at long last I was coming into my own.

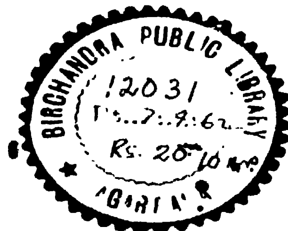
This explorer was insistent that it would be necessary for me to resign from my present job. He said he was going to Entebbe in Uganda where he proposed to outfit and organize his expedition. As soon as he was ready I was to join him, and as I had to give a month's notice, this would suit his arrangements admirably. He also intimated that the killing of elephant and the subsequent acquiring of ivory would be a welcome source of revenue to set against the cost of the expedition. All this talk simply fired me. No time was lost. In due time I left the Railway Transport, the while awaiting a speedy summons from my new leader. Alas, this summons from across the lake never came. I was now in a most awkward position. So far I had been fed and tented by Government, but now I had to fend for myself in a land where almost nothing could be obtained. I betook myself to a native village on the shores of Victoria Nyanze where, in return for a hut and native food, I shot hippo for the villagers.

The huts were clean and so were the inhabitants. In those days they were complete nudists. Being almost without body hair there was no cover for lice. But the native food was pretty plain fare consisting chiefly of native corn—millet—and various vegetables, with a little fish, generally in an advanced state of putrifaction. Mosquitoes were abundant and could only be held in check by keeping a fire smouldering all night, when the smoke became

intolerable, to white people at any rate. Everyone seemed to suffer from malaria, so that my scanty stock of quinine was soon exhausted. I began to have recurrent bouts of fever.

At long last news came through of the expedition. Instead of a summons to join it was to the effect that it had already left. Not a word for me. This was a facer indeed. Here I was in Central Africa, without resources, full of malaria, with nowhere to go. At all costs I must somehow get together my own outfit. I had learned my lesson never to rely on anyone for anything. But my youth was against me, and no one took seriously a boy of some seventeen years—a fever stricken one at that.

I tried again to get a job with some of the large Swahili-cum-Arab caravans that passed monthly through the Lake district, but I ran up against the same problem that existed in Mombasa. They were supposed to be trading caravans, but literally they forced from the villages their accumulations of ivory by force or even by local wars, and they were by no means above the slave trade, and the last person they wanted in their caravans was a white man, particularly an Englishman. Failing completely in this, I decided that the only way out of my difficulty was to return once more to my home, and try again for that assistance from my guardians that would set me up on my own. I could now point out to them that there were still elephants in Africa, that I knew where to look for them, and that I possessed the necessary knowledge to lead an expedition.



3

The Yukon and the Boer War

DECIDING to leave Africa for the time being, and go home to start an elephant safari with suitable finances, I took steerage passage to England, and mighty good it was, too, if somewhat crowded. My trustees still proved reluctant to allow sufficient funds for such a safari, but I lost no time in equipping myself with a good rifle. This time it was a .360 single shot, falling block, and also by Fraser of Edinburgh. I made sure that the extraction was good. The pressure in this cartridge was much lower than in the sun-baked .303.

Reading some months old papers of the recent gold strikes in the Klondike, I conceived the idea that as home circles still proved unwilling to finance me for Africa, I might strike it rich in the gold rush, so off I went to the Yukon. On the steamer bound for Canada I found a goodly company of emigrants, mostly from Scotland, and a very jolly crowd they were. Then on the train across continent I met many others, Klondike bound, and among them a brother Scot with whom I agreed to travel. This man, Micky, was of gigantic build physically but as so often happens, he had the nature of a very mild, timid child. Micky was going in to a brother who had struck it lucky, and proposed to take advantage of Micky's brawn in the development of his claim. As this entailed long and severe navvy work, Micky was just the man for it.

When we arrived at Skagway, Micky shouldered with ease the gigantic pack of bacon, beans, flour, etc., he had been told to bring with him. For my part I proposed to pack in my rifle, 160 rounds of ammunition, and just as much other truck as I could manage, which was but little. However, I pointed out that I would be able to shoot something as we went along to take the place of ordinary provisions, and Micky agreed with the utmost good humour. Our

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heads were full of grizzly bears, moose, or deer waiting to be shot by the wayside.

At Whitehorse we were sufficiently in funds to buy a scow, and we started down the Yukon River. Terrible accounts had been given us of the White Horse Rapids, a most deadly place they said, but they were more like a gentle mill-race. In fact we wondered when we were going to come to them long after they had been passed safely through. What a gameless country it appeared to be all the way down the river. We never saw a thing to shoot to add to our larder.

In due time we arrived at Dawson, and what a scene met our eyes. A milling throng was on the water front its main street. The beach was lined with craft of every description. The older toughs had six-shooters slung about them, but everything seemed fairly quiet and very busy. Only around the gambling halls were to be seen idlers. Micky had propounded a proposition on the way down that I should come with him to his brother's claim and work there a bit to see how things went. Faced with the proposition of how to find gold and what to do with it when found, how you staked a claim, and all the intricacies of the law in this connection, Micky's offer certainly had its points. Food alone was a burning question. I had nothing in the way of a food-bank, only my rifle and ammunition. Even with money food could not be got. Game on which to live was totally absent anywhere within miles and miles. So to the claim I followed my gigantic companion. The claim was on the Klondike within one day's trek, and here was the layout. A couple of rough log huts standing on the hillside overlooked a large heap of gravel down in the creek bottom. Some flumes of lumber conveyed water along and down by the gravel heap. There was a large hole in the ground from which the pay-dirt came. As the whole ground was frozen solid to an unknown depth from six inches down, it had to be melted by some means before it could be washed and the gold recovered. They called this "placer mining" and it entailed the hardest kind of work. For the melting of the pay dirt there appeared to be two methods of operation. The most primitive consisted in heating large stones in log and brushwood

fires. When hot they were dumped into the bottom of the hole to thaw what they could of the surrounding earth. There was an improvement just coming out, a steam plant where the steam was forced from a wood-fired boiler through perforated steel points driven into the frozen dirt. Micky and I were set to work straight away down in the hole shovelling the thawed dirt into boxes that were then hove up to the surface. It was all right for Micky, just the job for him, but it nearly broke my back. The pay was good, ten dollars a day paid in gold dust, but I soon tired of this work.

As I have said, food was all but unprocurable. My thoughts turned more and more to the hunting side of the picture. Meat from the game of the country was readily saleable at two dollars per pound. Of course all game had been shot or pushed back from the neighbourhood of such centres as Dawson. I was told I would have to go back a hundred miles to be sure of getting anything. Transport was once more the greatest difficulty. It was still summer and dogs and sledges could not yet operate. One day I was talking to a man called Bill—nobody used his own family name—and Bill made a suggestion that seemed good to me. He said he had a dog team, and that if we could manage to get into a game country he could freight the stuff into Dawson and sell it. We would have to go way back, one hundred and fifty miles he reckoned, before we could be more or less sure of a supply of game. We ought to be in there before the freeze-up. Bill seemed a decent man, and the partnership was formed forthwith without formalities or any further to-do. When we reached our game country we would put up a hut for headquarters, I was to hunt from there, and Bill was to freight the meat of what I shot from time to time into Dawson with his dog team, and sell it. He would leave a couple of dogs with me to help get the meat into the hut. We decided upon a locality high up in the mountains near timberline, about 200 miles east of Dawson. There were no signs of human habitation, White or Indian, except there were occasional signs that prospectors had been about. After cruising around a bit we came on a country that apparently had a lot of game, killing on one day two large moose and a grizzly bear. The meat soon froze solid. Here we erected our hut, and allowed the

dogs to fill up on meat, for they were in poor condition after their summer of bare subsistance rations.

I soon learned a lot from Bill. I had to. Unfortunately we had but one axe, which, next to the rifle, was the vital necessity. He could not leave it with me for he would need it on his return to Dawson, but he promised to bring another back with him, and in the meantime we laid in a stock of firewood. Bill showed me how to make snowshoes with willow and hide thongs, and much other woodcraft. I counted the ammunition for my rifle and I had 103 rounds left. Bill had 40 rounds for his .45 Colt six-shooter, and he said if really heavy and soft snow came I should be able to kill a moose with it if I could scare it up suddenly in heavy and deep snow, provided I was on snowshoes, and thus save the precious rifle ammunition. He did not seem to be at all daunted at leaving the pistol with me.

Quite promptly I shot another moose and several caribou, and packing all the meat possible on the sled, Bill left to sell it in Dawson. He hoped to get back in twenty-five or thirty days, but not to worry if it took longer, but to just keep piling the meat up, and keep the wolves and wolverines from it. Pretty soon the hut, which had appeared too large at first, began to assume the Christmas butcher shop look. Everywhere I turned I was confronted with carcasses. There now began a training in hunting that was to benefit me enourmously. Every shot had to kill—not one could be wasted. The cartridge that my Farquaharson used was nothing great judged by present day standards. Of .360 calibre, it had nothing but solid lead bullets, for I had learned to shun all hollow point or otherwise expanding abominations. The bullet had no great velocity; about 1,900 feet per second, so it was absolutely necessary to place the first and only shot accurately in a vital spot. I soon found that if I did so any bullet that would hold together would do the trick. I was forming the opinion that it is not the rifle so much as the man behind it that constitutes a killer; an opinion that nothing in my vast after experience has ever altered.

Although I had no trouble in filling the cabin with frozen meat, much of it was wasted, that is eaten by wolves, for when a moose was killed I could not possibly get it all home at once. I had to hang

some of it in trees, and when I came back for it, much of it was gone. And so the days wore on. Time began to pass slowly, but the two huskies were great fun and companionable. I tried to dress some of the skins that hung around, hard as boards, so as to reduce them to some sort of pliability. I just managed to get a couple of wolf skins to lie fairly flat on the bunk instead of sliding off. How I longed for an Eskimo or Indian woman to dress the skins for me.

I had been keeping track of the days by cutting notches in the log wall, and on the twenty-seventh cut Bill came back, bringing coffee, sugar, and flour, all obtainable for meat only. Gold would not have got a mouthful then. He was in great spirits and had got one dollar and seventy-five cents a pound for the whole cargo, bones and all. When he found he could hardly squeeze into the shack for the piles of carcases, all he could say was "Great work! Great work!" as he peered around. He made light of the smell from such part of the meat as had thawed out from the heat of the fire. When he saw the two dogs he had left with me he burst into laughter—they were rolling fat. He would soon take that off of them when he got them in the team.

Bill told me the latest Dawson rumours, all the gossip of a mining town, the latest news, the arrival of a police force, the latest gold strikes, and so on. He said he had banked the money he had got from the meat, and that he would like to leave the next day so as to make room in the hut for more. We reviewed the precious store of ammunition. There was still plenty for my rifle, and the .45 stuff had not been touched. Next morning we loaded the sled with a fearful load of meat, while the dogs consumed as much as they could hold. The start was somewhat downhill, and Bill was soon off in a smother of snow and yells to the dogs.

Now it turned much colder, and all the next day it snowed steadily. I overhauled the cumbersome snow-shoes, and my thoughts turned on trying to kill a moose with Bill's six-shooter. It had a 7½-inch barrel, and fired what was more like a rifle cartridge than a pistol cartridge, the bullet being a solid lead affair. The next time I saw a moose I had both the rifle and the pistol. With little trouble I got fairly close to it in a patch of thick scrub, I gave an unearthly

yell, and the startled beast launched itself into a straight-away stampede and inevitably landed in a heavy drift, where I got up close and shot it in the brain with the pistol.

Although game became noticeably scarcer in the immediate vicinity, entailing longer hunts and longer hauls, I never failed to have the hut full of meat when Bill returned. Meanwhile the money pile in bank must be growing, but Bill was singularly reticent on this subject. I should have demanded the opening of an account in my name, but I was young and trusting, and thoroughly enjoying myself. Bill seemed such a good fellow and so pleased with the way things were going. It was towards spring that Bill left on what was to be the next to last haul-out. Even when he said he would have to take back the .45 with him as wolves were troublesome on the trail, I scented no rat. He took even a larger load than usual as he said he could sell some of it on the way into Dawson to some claims that had started working. And that was the last I ever saw of Bill, but I did not know that at the time.

I hunted right along until the store was full, and then I waited and waited. I began to fancy Bill must have had some accident. River crossings were treacherous things when the break-up was near. Soon I began to wonder what to do. Spring was advancing, temperature in the daytime was rising. Soon I would have to do something about the now thawing meat. Finally I had to abandon the shack and follow Bill's trail. With three dogs I soon reached Dawson without any news of my friend's passage.

On arrival I commenced my enquiries. Sure, everyone knew dozens of Bill's. At the eating houses all were most guarded in their answers. There were two so called banks, but here I met with "Bill who?" "Bill what?" What had really happened was never discovered. I now had to face up to a crisis in my affairs, for I was pretty well cleaned up. The latest news in town was that some war had broken out in South Africa, and that Canada was said to be sending a contingent. The very thing, I thought, back to Africa! So I sold my rifle well enough, as I still had some ammunition for it, and beat it for the recruiting booth at Calgary by way of Nome and the Aleutians.

The Boer War

There was quite a test of shooting before you became accepted. Five-thousand men trying to fill five-hundred vacancies, but I managed through with a perfect medical and shooting record. I had to have a horse, and bought one with my last remaining dollars. As the Government immediately paid every man forty dollars for his horse this was all right. There were some good cow-punchers in the outfit, which was just as well for some of the horses had just been caught off the range and were wilder than deer. Some of the parades were as good of any rodeo, bucking horses all over the place. The sergeant-major was a real soldier, and had been lent from one of the Guard regiments to instil some sort of order in the mob. He had a fearful time, poor man. No one was yet in uniform. Many still wore their chaps, Mexican saddles, spurs, and their Stetsons.

Soon enough the mostly undisciplined mob of men and horses were licked into some sort of shape, put into uniform, and shipped off direct to Cape Town. Nobody knew why or whom they were going to fight, and cared less. But it was a change from monotony and a chance to see a bit of the world. In light of subsequent wars nothing need be said about the war itself. It consisted mostly of tedious horse-killing marches interspersed with occasional bursts of long range and largely ineffective rifle fire. Once, however, this fire was lucky enough to get my pony, and dismounted in that country with no cover, I was made prisoner. As I entered the Boer laager some women pointed to me and said: "Are you not a colonial too? Why are you fighting us?" There was another Englishman in the camp, and the two of us prisoners were given a whole sheep as our daily ration—nothing else. One evening, instead of returning to the wagon where we were supposed to sleep, we dodged into a mealies field and lay doggo for a while. Some sort of effort was made to catch us, but it was rather half-hearted, and we had no difficulty in making our nearest column. The only real danger was when we tried to make our presence known to a nervous sentry on out-picket duty.

We two now became attached to Headquarters as scouts, pre-

sumably because we were supposed to know something about the enemy. Actually what we did was to draw double rations and rustle Boer ponies wherever we could find them.

The campaign drew to its inevitable conclusion, and eventually I found myself in the homeland, and once more a free man. Immediately my thoughts turned to elephant hunting. Surely I could now raise the necessary for an expedition on my own, for I had now become of age. Nothing could stop me!

4

Back to Africa

IN preparation for this, my first well-organized expedition to Africa, my battery was my first consideration. My war experience had taught me that the British .303 Lee Enfield rifle was a useful weapon, and I thought that, used with the 215 grain solid jacketed bullet, it would serve me well. I successfully resisted the blandishments of the famous gunmakers with their wonderful illustrated catalogues showing the effect on big game of their marvellous wares. For my first real venture I backed my opinion that it was more where you placed the bullet than that bullet's particular striking energy, muzzle velocity, or anything else. So I acquired two sporting models of the .303, each with the ten-shot magazine. In fact they were the military arm with the barrel cut down a bit, and sporting pistol grip stocks. They cost £8 each.

It must not be imagined that this decision was lightly come to. I had at that time a great friend, Daniel Fraser, the celebrated gunmaker of Edinburgh. Often he would take me down to his testing range where he would have various rifles, single and double, in the "white" or raw stage, that is, before they were blued. Here I got a good insight into the intricacies of making two parallel barrels shoot together. They never did so, and consequently had to be adjusted so that their lines of fire crossed each other at the correct distance from the muzzle. But it was no joke firing the heavier bores such as .500 or .577 from a gunmaker's rest. The whole punch of the infernal artillery-piece expended itself against the leaning body of the firer—all in cold blood, mind you—so that one felt that one's whole skeleton would fall asunder. I took a strong dislike to these mighty pieces, although admiring their craftsmanship. Fraser would fire them all day long, getting better and better groups from them, without turning a hair. He often rated me for flinching

during the process of putting me through it.

What marvellous catalogues these old gunmaker firms used to turn out. With the loveliest and most exciting scenes depicting the different so-called "dangerous" game. One remembers that the "dangerous" character of the animals was much stressed in these catalogues. Not enough to scare the prospective hunter into abandoning altogether the project of placing himself in the same continent, but just enough to make him buy one—or better still, two—of the firm's products, when the "shock" resulting from the discharge would lay the hunter's assailant prostrate at his feet. The "shock" was carefully measured in so many foot pounds—they ran into the thousands—that the ravenous animal was to receive, but, curiously enough, no mention was made of what happened to the miserable human at the other end of the gun. The hitting of the animal seemed to be taken for granted.

Once the battery question having been settled, the rest of the equipment was easy, and once more I found myself at Kisumu on Lake Victoria. This time I reached it by rail as since my former visit the Uganda railway had been completed. At Kisumu I made friends with the naval captain in charge of a small steamer that had arrived in sections, and had been put together and into service for navigation on the lake. He advised me to try Uganda, or at least to see it, before deciding finally on my first hunting expedition. He offered to put me up at his headquarters in Entebbe, the capital of Uganda.

From there I went on a small expedition, and had my first taste of the really high grass hunting. This elephant grass is quite impenetrable to humans except on game trails. It is used by such animals as buffalo and elephant as a daylight stronghold from which to raid native gardens at night.

I had been warned that when in this grass these animals were quite aggressive, and as the visibility was a matter of feet rather than yards, the utmost caution was necessary. Everyone was emphatic that nothing less than a double .450 should be used in such cover.

On reaching a native village, by way of canoe and through the Sesse islands, I found plenty of evidence of buffalo. They came right

into the gardens at night, causing a lot of destruction. The lads in the village complained that nothing they could do would drive them out. In answer to my query as to where they now were, they pointed to a long swamp filled with elephant grass, at this time of year about twelve feet high. It was arranged that on the morrow there would be a hunt. Two middle-aged natives were ready and very willing to show the white man the buffalo in his lair. They said nothing about the appalling ferocity of these animals. As usual, the buffalo had been in the gardens during the night, but had not been subjected to the usual counter measures the natives would have ordinarily taken against them, such as spear and fire-brand throwing, or bombardment from their muzzle-loaders charged with bits of anything that came in handy. This was at my special request.

The edge of the swamp lay quite near the village, and we three hunters simply followed the fresh tracks straight into it. One native led, while the other followed behind me. Filled with lively apprehension after all the tales I had heard from white men, I was struck by the light-hearted and even eager way of my native companions. I noted that they carried a number of very paltry-looking spears. As they entered the fearful grass the leader handed several of his spears to the one in rear. I had killed buffalo before without experiencing anything extraordinary either in the killing of them or in their behaviour. But one or two white men had been killed or mauled by buffalo in Uganda, and it had been impressed on me that the Uganda buffalo were different from all others in their dislike for white men. That they would show diabolical cunning in waylaying the hunter, charge suddenly out on him, and in fact show the utmost resentment and fury should he invade their retreat. With these forebodings in mind I could not help in contrasting the cool way in which my companions were undertaking the actual hunting of these ferocious animals with nothing but a spear in their hands.

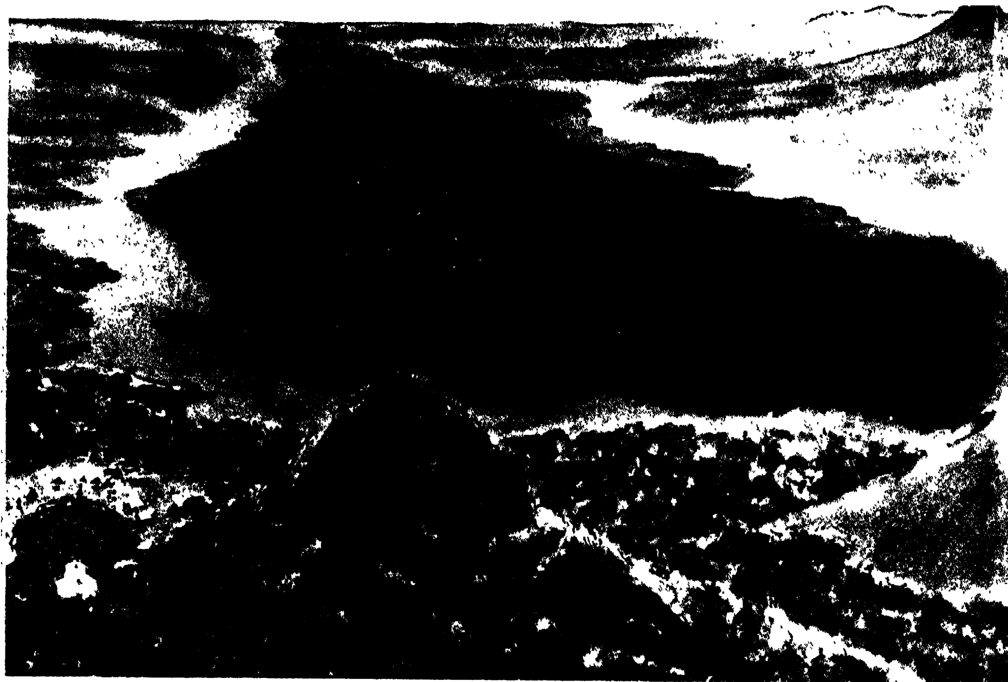
To my surprise we were still within earshot of the village when the leader stopped stock still. They could hear something. The leader lent sideways on the wall of stiff grass to let me past. With rifle at ready, and expecting almost immediately to receive a head-

long charge at two or three yards range, we advanced slowly and silently towards what we could now distinguish as the breathing of some heavy beast. But when we had closed to a range of perhaps five yards there was a sudden end to the heavy breathing. I peered about trying to glimpse something. The moment I moved—and khaki drill gives off a certain scratching noise when rubbed against strong grass—there was a commotion. "Here he comes!" I thought, and covered the expected spot with my rifle. Almost instantly I realized that the noise was receding. The poor old Buff had had the scare of his life and was hell bent for the far-away. The two natives had not moved and were as cool as be-damned.

We went on and worked that swamp here, there, and everywhere. We got up close to buffalo several times, but always they heard us and ran away. Only once did I catch a glimpse of a fast disappearing rump, and into it I instantly put a shot, so fed up was I with the shyness of the quarry. Now, I thought, we will see some fireworks. A wounded buffalo in high grass was supposed to be the very devil. What was my surprise and delight when, after what appeared to be about a mile, but was actually about a hundred yards, we stumbled right on a kneeling buffalo. The native was leading when suddenly he launched his spear and leant aside disclosing the kneeling animal with the spear still quivering in his stern. I had it covered and was just about to let go when it struck me the animal must be dead. How we laughed; the natives from joy at the meat prospect; I from relief. As always I had used a solid bullet which had entered through the massive hip-bone formation and raked right forward into the vitals, and thus killed him. Had it been a soft nosed bullet goodness knows what might have happened.

Passing from Southern Uganda, where elephants were scarce, I was determined to visit Unyoro where elephants were known to be numerous and the ivory good, and I presently found myself in the very centre of good elephant country. The country was rolling, with much cultivation on the ridges, and swamp between. The natives were extremely friendly, towards an elephant hunter anyway, and there was no lack of news of elephants raiding the plantations. When one saw the devastation caused by a night's visit of a few of

"The fire got my pony and I was made prisoner."



Bull elephant on the Pibor flats north of Murua Akipi

these marauders one wondered how anyone had the heart ever to plant anything again. The villagers had one or more muzzle-loading gas-pipe guns. These they would grossly overload and blast into the raiders with great spirit and determination. When I asked to see what sort of bullet they used, they said it did not matter; anything would do so long as it made a hole in the hide so that the fire from the powder could enter. *It was the fire that killed!* This was the widely held view at that time in many parts of Africa.

It was here in Unyoro that I got my first chance at elephant, and learned how to kill them. But the quest of elephants had to be delayed because I came down with a rousing go of dysentery, and it was through this that I met Ormsby. A friend in Entebbe had given me a letter of introduction to him, and straight away he undertook to cure me of this dysentery, treating that disconcerting disease on a malarial basis, shoving large doses of quinine into me at frequent intervals, whilst giving half-hourly doses of Epsom Salts. In no time the cure was effected, to my great relief and eternal gratitude to my new friend.

Ormsby had been with the ex-missionary Stokes on the original Central African trail, Dar-es-Salaam—Ujiji, the great slavers' route from Zanzibar to the Congo, long before white government came. Great were his tales of the doings in those days. Ormsby had to do with the organizing and running of Stokes safaris of so called "trade goods" consisting largely of gas-pipe guns, percussion caps, and powder. He recounted how a certain Bishop, about to visit Uganda, was induced in all innocence to allow a couple of hundred porters of Stokes to join his safari, each carrying a load of guns tied up in trade cloth. Stokes was subsequently hanged by the Belgians when his reputation stank so that compensation was accepted on a monetary basis and the whole incident passed over.

Ormsby told me that the whole country of Unyoro was literally crawling with elephant, and that the ivory was enormous, being of the "soft" or most valuable kind. He warned me that the grass was lousy at times and very high. It was the rainy season, the most uncomfortable but the most profitable time to hunt elephant as the ubiquitous and all pervading African is

confined by the elements to his native village.

I shall never forget my first introduction to elephant. There were eight large bulls in a small mud bath. Now, attached to the station where I was based at this time there was a soldier of the garrison who had killed one or two elephant with the brain shot, and thought he knew all about it. He very kindly drew me diagrams showing the exact position of the brain from the side, and my head was filled with his instructions. According to these the brain was very high up in the dome of the elephants head, about where a man would have a bowler hat three sizes too small for him. I regarded these instructions as infallible until six successive failures began to shake my faith in them. Either the elephant the soldier had killed had been afflicted with a brain worn on the top of its head, or the soldier had flinched and pulled down his shot and so penetrated the proper place. So when I came on these elephant I went lambasting shots into those massive domes without any effect whatever, and I think with little or no damage to the dome-carriers. At any rate I caught up with several of my dome-punctured victims and found them, to my consternation, browsing peacefully along. Herein lies an argument for the use of the small-bores only on elephant. Had I been using, say a .577 or a .600, I still would not have killed my beast, but I would perhaps have damaged the dome enough to let in the rain or flies. A .303, .275, or .256, all one-shot killers, would leave hardly a trace of their passage through the spongy structure, the hide closing up tightly the tiny puncture.

In a flurry of exasperation at seeing one of my dome-pricked friends calmly squirting water from a puddle over his sizzling hide, I gave him a .303 in the body just behind the point of the shoulder—not quite low enough for the heart itself. Here now was reaction at last. Hitherto my head shots had been received, if not with contempt, at least in silence. Not so this body shot. The welkin—whatever that may be—split from the top to bottom, and the old fellow rushed off in a most amazing way. Just as suddenly he stopped, swayed and fell crashing to the ground. This was the body shot. His mates were thoroughly alarmed by the splitting cries and the ghastly groans of the dying monarch. It would be safe to say that every elephant for

a mile or two round would be alarmed. It was a lesson never forgotten, and I determined to master the brain shot or die in the attempt.

We were no distance from Ormsby's comfortable house, so leaving the boys to cut away all the hide and flesh from the head, I trudged off home and demanded a saw capable of sawing down right through an elephant's head. Then with all hands on the job, the head was set up on end and sawn in twain right down between the tusks to the enormous ball-joint housing on the skull. The secret recess of the brain was a complete revelation. I would say that no one should be allowed to have a license to kill elephant until they had seen and studied such a lay-out as we had out there in the bush, with swarms of buzzing flies around us.

Having absorbed what I could of the entrancing problem into my mind, memory and sketch book, I felt desperately eager to put my newly-acquired knowledge to the test of actual experience. I do not think I slept a wink that night, so fearful was I of forgetting the lessons learnt. Even before sun-up we were hot on the trail of some raiding bulls, my little .303 simply itching to be at them. It was a normal, rainy season day, hot sun in the early morning, cloudy mid-day, thunder, lightning and downpours for the rest. We got into our game during a cloud burst with lightning fizzing about and crashes of thunder overhead. I doubt if the report of the .303 was heard at all. I was immensely relieved to find the medicine good and the first one drop, a side shot. With renewed confidence I continued the good work and made the discovery that if elephant are dropped stone dead where they stand their companions are not much alarmed, and continue to stand around, very greatly to the hunter's profit.

I hunted for some time under Ormsby's hospitality, and got the brain shot thoroughly into my system. With experience came increased knowledge. I found that if in falling from a brain shot an elephant happened to touch a companion, either by falling sideways against him, or prodding him with a tusk, it was calculated to alarm him. The solution was to kill first the furthest away animal that seemed to have all four feet on the ground, and was not swaying

about from one foot to the other as they so often do. When so executed this first shot results in the farthest away beast suddenly kneeling. The head is still borne by the elastic neck muscles, the ears still retain some motion, and the fellow seems alive although stone dead. The others regard him as though they wore specs low on their noses, and have to raise their heads high to see through them. And this is when the hunter profits, or should. Things can go wrong even then. One bungled shot may result in a stampede, either towards or away from you. It was not until later in my career that I adopted and developed the shot at the brain through the neck muscles from behind.

Although the brain shot is speedier in results and more humane than the body shot, yet the latter is not to be despised. Many hunters employ no other. These will generally be found to be adherents to the "Big Bore" school, and particularly professional hunters who are not certain of their clients marksmanship, advise this shot. The heart and lungs of an elephant present, together with the huge arteries immediately adjacent, a large enough target for anyone, provided his or her nerves are sufficiently controlled to allow of the rifle being aimed at the correct spot. If this is not the case, and the whole animal is treated as the target, to be hit anywhere, then the results will be flight or a charge on the part of the elephant. Should the latter occur on thick stuff or high grass the novice will have a very unpleasant time indeed. An angry bull elephant is a magnificent sight, but an extremely difficult animal to deal with, even for the practised shot. For one thing he is generally end on, and the head is at a high angle and never still. If the novice comes through the encounter undamaged he will either leave elephants severely alone for the rest of his life, or he will be extremely careful where he puts his bullet next time.

The natural inclination of most men is to fire too quickly straight at the beast anywhere. This must be resisted at all costs. If you can force yourself to wait until you have counted ten slowly the animal is yours. When you are in this state of mind try and get to a range of about thirty yards at right angles to the fore and aft line of the animal. Now see if the fore leg is clearly visible for the greater part.

If it is, and is fairly upright, you may use its centre line as *direction.* A third of the distance from the brisket to the top of the back is the *elevation.* If struck there or thereabouts either the top of the heart or the lungs or some of the arteries will be pierced and the animal cannot live, even when the bullet used is as small as a .256. He may run fifteen or twenty yards, subside into a walk for another forty or fifty yards, stand about for some time, and then susbide. This is a pierced artery. He may rush away for thirty to sixty yards at a great pace and fall in his stride. This is a heart shot. Or he may rush off spouting bright red blood from his trunk in great quantities. This is a shot in the lungs.

If you have missed the vital area and are high, you may have touched the spinal column. But it is so massive at this spot in a large elephant that it will rarely be broken, so that even when he comes down he will soon recover and be up and off. Too far forward you may get the point of the shoulder, and your bullet may have so weakened the bone that when he starts off it may break. An elephant can neither trot or gallop, but only pace, therefore one broken leg anchors him. If your bullet has gone too far back and into the stomach you may be in for a lively time, as nothing so angers them than a shot so placed. If he comes for you meaning business no instructions would help you, simply because you would not have time to think of them. Hit him hard and quickly, and as often as you can, about a line between the eyes, or in the throat when his head is up, and see what happens. Never turn your back on him. While you can see him you know where he is, and besides you cannot run in thick stuff without falling. Always stand still and shoot whichever animal threatens you most is what I have found to be the best plan.

* * * *

About this time the mutiny of the Sudanese troops occurred, when they flogged and shot their white officers. All of the exceedingly few white men in the country were enrolled to stamp out the mutineers who were now ravaging the country as only primitive natives armed with modern weapons can. They had all the rifles, machine guns and ammunition then in the country, except for one Maxim that belonged to the Uganda Marine, but they got the

steam launch that mainly constituted that Marine. Captain Fowler got away with the machine gun and lost no time in mounting it in a large native canoe. It was said, and doubtless was true, that in order to induce his paddlers to close range in the ensuing engagement, sundry paddlers were pistolled and bundled overboard to the waiting crocs. Be that as it may, the range was closed, when Captain Fowler plying his .450 - bore Maxim with great application to the waterline of the launch manned by the enemy, soon had the satisfaction of seeing it founder with all hands drunk as lords.

Of course Ormsby joined in the good work, and a tough job they had. He and trader Grant were hastily enrolled and given charge of a nondescript bunch of Swahili porters, roustabouts, boys, natives and riff-raff. Every sort of gun was pressed into service, muzzle-loading trade guns, Sniders, with a few Martinis. Fortunately for them, the mutineers were so drunken on success and native wine and women that their threat as a fighting body was much impaired.

One may ask what caused the mutiny. It was the age old problem of women. Now Africans have no nonsense about women. They know that women are endowed by Nature with far more stamina than men. They know that women can work harder and longer than men, and that they can carry bigger loads far longer distances. In their way of living the male is a rather delicate fighting machine, requiring well-prepared food, abundant drink of a stimulating nature, and the necessary leisure to enjoy all these things, combined with a minimum of work of any description. The ambition is naturally to surround oneself with as many women as possible.

Then, a high-ranking white man issues an unheard-of-order to the effect that no women must be taken on an imminent expedition. One can imagine the consternation in the ranks. Some of these men had fought all over the Sudan, in Abyssinia, and even for the Turks in Arabia, and always they had carried their women with them. The white man's idea that women were an encumbrance was to them sheer lunacy. When it was explained to them that the white man considered women too delicate to stand the rigours of campaigning they thought they were simply mad. So when the

General made it quite plain that he meant every word of it, they quite definitely said: "To hell with the white men and their silly notions. We'll rid ourselves once and for all of them and their nonsense." Which they straight away did in no uncertain way. Every white officer they were able to catch was immediately caught up, flogged and shot.

Then ensued a period during which a great time was had by the mutineers. Of course they took possession of all Government property, including the stock of arms and munitions. They re-introduced the practice of slavery, the abandoning of which at the white man's order had been such a blow to their "African way of life". In short they played merry hell while it lasted. Now anyone who knew the Sudanese, or any other Africans for that matter, of that time, would quite instinctively know what the general treatment of the unarmed natives would be at the hands of these hard-drunken toughs. No one in their senses would expect anything but robbery, murder and rape, with the sale into slavery of any survivors. So when I read recently that these troops had mutinied because they refused to have any hand in the oppression of their coloured brethren", I could not help laughing. This extraordinary statement was contained in a travel book, and was probably made in all good faith. So history is made.

With the suppression of the rebellion, all the Arab and Swahili traders who used to do such a thriving trade in Uganda were now finding it more and more difficult to carry on business. Government, their deadliest enemy, was spreading out. Prohibitions and regulations were cramping their style. It became essential to find some country where the cursed white man had not yet established himself. A country where a man could still slit a throat or grab a native girl without being badgered by alien law. Such a country was *Karamojo.*

5
Karamojo

I HAD very fair success with my hunting in Unyoro, the average weight of ivory that I obtained from the elephants that fell to my rifle being 67 lbs., so the venture was decidedly to the good, financially as well. But soon I began to hear tales of a new and wonderful unexplored country called Karamojo. Elephants were reported by the black traders to be very numerous with enormous tusks, and there was no sort of administration to hamper the hunter with restrictions and game laws. Above all there seemed to be no other person hunting in this Eldorado except the natives, and they had no firearms. I found out that the starting point for all safaris into this country was Mumias, a native town and Government Post at the foot of Mount Elgon, which formed the last outpost of civilization for a traveller proceeding North. So there I went.

At the time of which I write, 1902, Mumias was a town of some importance. It was the base for all trading expeditions to the Lake Rudolph basin, Turkana, Dabossa and the Southern Abyssinia country. In the first few years of the trade in ivory this commodity was obtained for the most trifling sums. For instance a tusk worth fifty or sixty pounds could be bought for two or three shillings worth of beads or iron wire. As time went on and more traders flocked to Karamojo to share in the huge profits of the ivory trade, competition became keener. Prices rose higher and higher. Where once beads and iron wire sufficed to buy a tusk, now a cow must be paid. Traders were obliged to go further and further afield to find new territory until they came in violent contact with raiding parties of Abyssinians away in the far North.

When most of the dead ivory in the country had been traded off the only remaining source was the yearly crop of tusks from the elephants snared and killed by the native Karamojans. For these

comparatively few tusks competition became so keen and prices so high that there was no longer any profit when as much as eight or ten cows had to be paid for a large tusk, and the cows bought down at the base for spot cash brought from two to five pounds each. Hence arose the idea in the brains of two or three of the bolder spirits among the traders to take by force that which they could no longer afford to buy. Instead of traders, they became raiders. In order to assure success to a raid an alliance would be made with some tribe that was already about equal in strength to its neighbours through centuries of inter-tribal warfare. The addition of three to four hundred guns to the tribe's five or six thousand spearmen rendered the results of this raid by the combined forces almost beyond doubt, and moreover, conferred upon the raiders such complete domination of the situation that they were able to search out and capture the young girls, the acquisition of which is the great aim and object of all activity in the Mohammedan mind.

Complete and magnificent success attending the first raiding venture, the whole country changed magically. The hitherto more or less peaceful-looking trading camps gave way to huge armed bomas surrounded by high thorn fences. Everyone—trader or native—went about armed to the teeth. Footsore or sick travellers from caravans disappeared entirely, or their remains were found by the roadside, native women and cattle were heavily guarded, for no man trusted a stranger.

Into this country of suspicion and brooding violence I was about to venture. As soon as my intentions became known among the traders at Mumias I encountered on every side a firm barrage of lies and dissuasion of every sort. The buying of pack donkeys became impossible. Guides were unobtainable. Information about the country north of Turkwell was either distorted or false, or entirely withheld. I found no Mohammedan boy would engage with me. The reason for all this apparently malicious obstruction on the part of the trading community was not at the time known to me, but it soon became clear when I had crossed the Turkwell and found that the peaceful, polite and prosperous-looking trader of Mumias became the merciless and bloody Dacoit as soon as he had crossed

that river and was no longer under European control. Numbering among them, as they did, some pretty notorious ex-slavers, they knew how unexpectedly far the arm of the law could sometimes reach, and they no doubt foresaw that nothing but trouble would arise from my visit to the territory they had come to look upon as their's by right of discovery. It surprises me, when I think of how much they had at stake, that they resorted to no more stringent methods than those related above to prevent my entry into Karamojo. As it was, I soon got together some bullocks and pagan boys. The bullocks I half trained to carry packs, and the Government Agent very kindly arranged that I should have eight Snider rifles with which to defend myself, and to instil confidence among my Baganda, Wanyamwese and Kavirondo boys. The Sniders looked well and no one knew except myself that the ammunition for them was all bad. Then I had my personal rifles, at that time a .303 Lee Enfield, a .275 Rigby Mauser and a double .450-.400, besides a Mauser pistol which could be used as a carbine, and which soon acquired the name "Bom-Bom", and a reputation for itself equal to a hundred ordinary rifles.

While searching through some boxes of loose ammunition in the store at Mumias in the hopes of finding at least a few good rounds for my Snider carbines I picked up a Martini Henry cartridge, and while looking at its base it suddenly struck me that possibly it could be fired from a Snider. And so it proved to be. The base being .577 calibre fitted perfectly; but the bullet being only .450 bore, was scarcely what you might call a good fit for a .577 barrel, and there was, of course, no accuracy to the thing at all. But it went off with a bang and the propensity of its bullet to fly off at the most disconcerting angles after rattling through the barrel from side to side seemed to just suit the style of aiming adopted by my eight askaris, for on several occasions jackal and hyena were laid low while prowling round the camp at night.

Bright and early one morning, my little safari began to get itself ready for the voyage into the Unknown. The loads were got out and lined up. First of all an askari, with a Snider rifle, very proud in a hide belt with five Martini cartridges gleaming yellow in it.

He had polished them with sand for the occasion. Likewise the barrel of the old Snider showed signs of much rubbing, and a piece of fat from the tail of a sheep dangled by a short string from the hammer. Then my chop boxes and camp gear borne by porters, followed by my boy Suede and Sulieman the cook, of cannibal parentage be it whispered. As usual, all the small loads seemed to be jauntily and lightly perched on the massive heads and necks of the biggest porters, while the big loads looked doubly big in comparison to the spindly shanks which appeared below them.

Usually when a safari started from Mumias for the "Barra", as the bush or wilderness is called, the townsfolk would turn out with drums and horns to give them a good send-off, but in our case we departed without any demonstration of that sort. We passed through almost deserted streets, and we struck out for the Turkwell, the trail skirting the base of Mount Elgon for six days as we travelled slowly, being heavily laden. I was able to find enough hartebeeste and oribi to keep the safari in meat, and after two or three days march the boys became better and better, and the bullocks more and more docile. I purposely made the marches easy at first in order to avoid sore backs, and it was easy to do so as there were good streams of water crossing our path every few miles.

On the seventh day we reached the Turkwell River. After descending several hundred feet from the high plateau we crossed by the ford and pitched camp on the opposite or north bank. The Turkwell has its source in the crater of Elgon and its slopes. Its waters reach the dry, hot plains of Karamojo after a drop of about 9,000 feet in perhaps twenty or thirty miles. In the dry season, when it is fordable almost anywhere, it totally disappears into the sandy river bed while still some days march from its goal, Lake Rudolph. It is a queer and romantic river, for it starts in lava 14,000 feet above sea level, traverses bitterly cold and often snow-covered heath land, plunges down through the dense bamboo belt, then through dark and dripping evergreen forests, to emerge on the sandy plains of Karamojo. From this point to Rudolph its banks are clothed with a more or less dense belt of immense flat-topped thorn trees, interspersed with thickets of every kind of thorny bush, the haunts of

rhino, buffalo, and elephant. Throughout its entire course its waters were drunk, at the time of which I write, by immense herds of elephant during the dry season. Even after disappearing underground, elephant and natives easily procured water by simply making holes in the soft, clean sand of its bed.

At that time the Turkwell formed the northern boundary of European rule. North of it was no rule but disrule. The nearest cultivated settlement of Karamojo natives was at Mani-Mani, some 150 miles to the north, but scattered about in the bush were many temporary settlements of poor Karamojans who got their living by hunting and snaring everything from elephants downwards.

Dreadful tales of murders of peaceful travellers had been related by Swahilis, and we were careful not to let anyone straggle far from the main body. At night my eight askaris mounted guard and kept a huge fire going. Their vigilance was extraordinary, and their keeness and cheerfulness, fidelity and courage of a very high order, showing them to be born soldiers. Their shooting was simply atrocious in spite of practice with a .22 I had, but notwithstanding their inability to align and aim a rifle properly, they used sometimes to bring off the most brilliant shots under the most impossible conditions of shooting light, thereby showing a great natural aptitude to point a gun and time the shot.

While we were drying out the gear that had got wet while crossing the Turkwell two natives strolled into camp. These were the first Karamojans we had seen, and I was very much interested in them. They showed great independence of bearing as they stood around leaning on their long, thrusting spears. I had some difficulty in getting into conversation with them, although I had an excellent interpreter. They seemed very taciturn and suspicious. However, I got it explained to them that I had come for one purpose only—to hunt elephant. They admitted that there were plenty of elephant, but when I asked them to show me where to look for them they merely asked how I proposed to kill them when I did see them. On showing them my rifles they laughed, and said they had seen Swahili traders using those things for elephant, and although they killed men well enough, they were useless against elephant. My

answer to this was that I had procured some wonderful medicine which enabled me to kill the largest elephant with one shot, and if they would like to see this medicine working all they had to do was to show me where the elephants were. They retorted that if my medicine was truly sufficiently powerful to kill an elephant instantaneously, then they could not believe that it would fail to show me their whereabouts also. This grave fault in my medicine had to be explained, and I could only say that I grieved heartily over the deficiency, which I attributed to the jealousy of a medicine man who was a rival of he who had given me the killing medicine. This left them not altogether satisfied, but a better impression was produced when I presented them with a quarter of buck meat, while telling them that I killed that kind of meat every day. They went off without holding out any hope of showing me elephant, and I thought I had seen the last of them. I sat until late in my long chair by the camp fire under a brilliant sky and wonderful moon, listening to the talk of my Nzamwezi boys, and wondering how we were going to fare in the wild land ahead of us.

An early start was made the next morning, and we had covered perhaps six or seven miles when the two natives came stalking along, appearing to cover the ground at a great rate without showing any hurry or fuss. I stopped and called the interpreter and soon learned that four large elephant had that morning passed close to their camp in the bush, and that when they left to call me the elephants could still be heard in the vicinity. At once I was for going, but the interpreter and the headman both cautioned me against treachery, declaring that it was only a blind to separate us preparatory to a general massacre. This view I thought a bit far fetched, but I ordered the safari to get under way, and to travel well together until they reached the first water, where they were immediately to cut sufficient thorn trees to completely encircle themselves in camp, to keep a good lookout, and to await my coming.

Taking my small boy and the gigantic cook's mate, whose featherweight load I had transferred to the cook's head, I hastily put together a few necessities and hurried off with the two Karamojans at a great pace. We soon struck off from the main trail and headed

for the Turkwell valley. Straight through the open thorn brush we went, the elephant-hide sandals of my native guides crunching innumerable darning needle size thorns under foot, the following porters with their light loads at a jog trot, myself at a fast but laboured walk, while the guides simply soaked along with consummate ease.

Supremely undemonstrative as natives usually are, there was yet observable a kind of suppressed excitement about their bearing, and I noticed that whenever a certain bird called on the right hand the leader would make a low remark to his companion with an indescribably satisfied kind of gesture, whereas the same calling on the left hand drew no notice from them beyond a certain increased forward resolution and a stiff ignoring of it. The significance of these signs were lost on me at that time, but I was to come to learn them well in my later dealings with these tribes. They were omens and indicated success or failure to our hunting.

On the whole they were apparently favourable. At any rate the pace never slackened, and I was beginning to wish for a slowing down. As we drew nearer to the Turkwell valley signs of elephant became more and more numerous. Huge paths worn perfectly smooth and with their edges cut as clear as those of garden walks by the huge pads of the ponderous animals began to run together, forming more deeply worn ones converging towards drinking places on the river. Occasionally the beautiful lesser kudu stood watching us or loped away, flirting its white fluffed tail. Once we passed a rhino standing motionless with snout ever directed towards us. A small detour round him as we did not wish to get mixed up with his sort, and on again. Halt! The little line bunches up against the motionless natives. A distant rumble resembling somewhat a cart crossing a wooden bridge, and after a few seconds of silence, the crash of a broken tree.

Elephant! *Atome*! in Karamojo. Word the first to be learned and the last to be forgotten of any native language. A kind of excitement siezes us all; me most of all, the Karamojans least. Now the boys are told to stay behind and make no noise. They were at liberty to climb trees if they liked. I took my .303, but of course it had been

ready for hours. Noting that the wind—what there was of it—was favourable, the natives and I go forward, and soon we come to the broken trees, mimosa and white thorn, the chewed fibrous balls of sansivera, the moist patches with froth still on them, the still steaming and unoxidised spoor, and the huge tracks with the heavily imprinted clear-cut corrugations of a very recently passing bunch of bull elephants. In number they were five as nearly as I could estimate. Tracking them was child's play, and I expected to see them at any moment. It was, however, much longer than I anticipated before we sighted their dull grey hides, for they were travelling as well as feeding. It is remarkable how much territory elephant cover when thus feeding along. At first sight they seem to be so leisurely, and it is not until one begins to keep in touch with them that their speed is realized. Although they appear to take so few steps, each step of their slowest gait is about six feet. Then, again, in this feeding along there is always at least one of the party moving forward at about three-and-a-half miles per hour, although the other members may be stopping and feeding, then catching up again by extending the stride to seven feet or more.

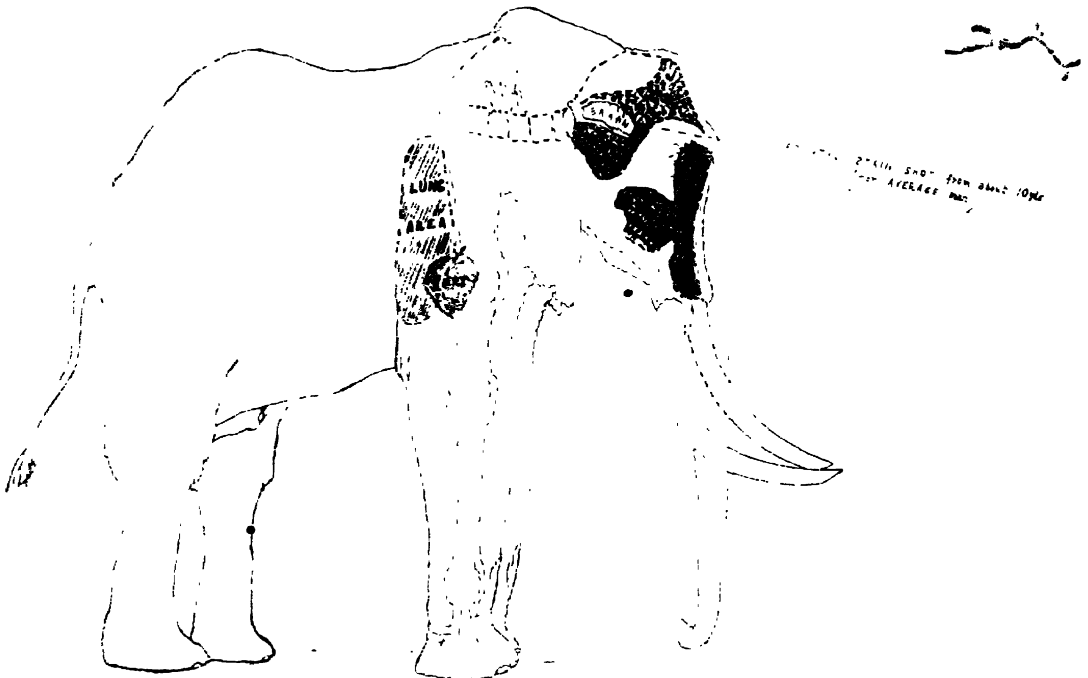
As soon as they were in sight I got in front of the Karamojans and ran to about twenty yards from the stern of the rearmost animal. Intense excitement now had me with its usual signs, hard breathing through the mouth, dry palate, and an intense longing to shoot.

As I arrived at this close proximity I vividly remember glancing along the grey bulging sides of the rearmost animals, who all happened to be in motion at the same time in single file, and remarking a tusk of an incredible length and size sweeping out from the grey wall. I instantly determined to try for this one first. With extraordinary precautions against making a noise, and stoopings and contortions of the body, all of which after-experience taught me were totally unnecessary, I got away off at right angles to the file of elephants, and could now grasp the fact that they were all very large and carried superb ivory.

I was now almost light-headed with excitement, and several times on the verge of firing a stupid and hasty shot from my jumping and flickering rifle. So shaky was it when I once or twice put it to

my shoulder that even in my then state of mind I saw that no good would come of it. After a minute or two, during which I was coming to a more normal state, the animal with the largest tusks left the line slightly, and slowly settled into a halt beside a mimosa bush. I got a clear glimpse of his broadside at what looked like about 20 yards, but was really 40 yards, and I fired for his heart. With a flinch, a squirm, and a roar he was soon in rapid motion straight away, with his companions in full flight ahead of him. I was rather surprised at this headlong flight after one shot as I had expected the elephant here to be more unsophisticated, but hastily concluded that the Swahili traders must have been pumping lead at them more often than one imagined. So I legged it for the cloud of dust where the fleeting animals had disappeared. Being clad in running shorts and light shoes, it was not long before I ran almost slap up against a huge and motionless grey stern. Recoiling very rapidly indeed from this awe-inspiring sight, I saw on one side of it an enormous head and tusk which appeared to stick out at right angles. So drooping were the trunk and ears, and so motionless the whole appearance of what had been a few seconds ago the very essence of power and activity, that it was borne straight to even my inexperienced mind that here was death. And so it was, for as I stood goggle-eyes the mighty body began to sway from side to side more and more, until with a crash it fell sideways, bearing earthward with it a fair-sized tree. Straight past it I saw another elephant, turned almost broadside at about ten yards, evidently listening and obviously in the point of flight. Running forward a little so as to get clear sight of the second beast, I sat quickly down and fired carefully for the shoulder, when much the same performance took place as in the first case, except that No. 2 came down to a slow walk after a short burst of speed, instead of to a standstill as with No. 1.

Ranging rapidly alongside I quickly put him out of misery and tore after the others, which by this time were thoroughly alarmed and in full flight. After a mile or two of fast going I found myself pretty well done, so I sat down and rolled myself a cigarette of the strong black shag so commonly smoked by the Swahilis. Presently my native guides came up with every appearance of satisfaction on their



Location of brain, heart and lungs

Sectionalized elephant skull showing location of brain

Skull of bull elephant after skinning

Brain shot, quartering from the rear, must be directed straight for the brain as shown in the sectionalized skull

now beaming faces. After a few minutes rest we retracked the elephant back to where our two lay dead. The tusks of the first one we examined were not long but very thick, and the other had on one side a tusk broken off some two feet outside the lip, while the other was the magnificent tusk which had filled me with wonder earlier on. It was almost faultless and beautifully curved. What a shame its companion was broken!

As we were cutting the tail off, which is always done to show anyone finding the carcase that it has been killed and claimed, my good fellows came up with the grub and the interpreter. Everyone, including myself, was in high good humour, and when the Karamojans said that their village was not far off we were more pleased than ever, especially as the sun was sinking rapidly. After what appeared to the natives no doubt as a short distance, but seemed to my sore feet and tired legs a very long one, we saw the welcome fires of a camp and were soon sitting by one while a group of naked savages stood looking silently as the white man and his preparations for eating and sleeping. These were simple enough. A kettle was soon on the fire for tea, while some strips of sun-cured hartebeeste biltong writhed and sizzled in the embers. Meanwhile my boys got the bed ready by first cutting down all the grass and smoothing down the knobs off the ground, while another spread grass on it to form a mattress. Over this the canvas sheet and blankets, and with a bag of cartridges wrapped in a coat for a pillow, the bed was complete. Then two forked sticks stuck in the ground close alongside the bed to hold the rifle, and all was ready for the night. I cleaned my rifle, loaded it, and lay down utterly tired, and soon dropped off to the music of hyenas' howling.

As soon as it was light enough to see we left for the dead elephants and the way did not seem half as long in the fresh morning air as it had appeared the evening before. We quickly arrived, followed by all the villagers, men, women and children, everyone in high spirits at the sight of the mountains of meat. In this country the meat of elephant is esteemed more highly than that of any other animal, as it contains more fat. I was anxious to get the tusks out as rapidly as possible in order to rejoin my caravan, so I divided the Kara-

mojans into two gangs and explained to them that no one was to touch the carcases until the tusks were out, but that then they could have all the meat. They set to with a will to get all the skin and flesh off the head. It is necessary to do this so as to expose the huge bone sockets containing the ends of the tusks. About a third of their length is so imbedded, and a very long, tedious and hard job it is to get all the skin and gristle cut away. Nothing blunts a knife more quickly than elephant hide because of the sand and grit in its loose texture. When the skull is clean on one side the neck should be cut off. This alone is a herculean task. The vertebra severed, the head is turned over by eight or ten men, the other side is similarly cleaned. When both sockets are ready an axe is used to chop them away, chip by chip, until the tusk is free. This chopping should always be done by an expert, as otherwise large chips off the tusk itself are liable to be taken by the axe.

The chopping out is seldom resorted to by natives, requiring as it does so much hard work. They prefer to leave the sun and putrefaction to do the work for them. On the third day after death the upper tusk can usually be drawn without difficulty from the socket, and the underneath one on the following day. On this particular occasion no one was at all adept at chopping out, and it was hours before the tusks were freed. Later on my Wanzamwezi became very expert indeed at this job, and twelve of them whose particular job it became could handle as many as ten bull elephants in a day, provided that they were not too distant from one another and that they had plenty of native assistance.

While the chopping out was going on I had leisure to watch the natives, and what struck me first was the remarkable difference between the men and the women. The former were tall, some of them quite six feet four inches, slim and well made, while the latter were distinctly short, broad, beefy and squat. The married ones wore aprons of dressed buckskin tied around the waist by the legs of the skin and ornamented with coloured beads sewn on with sinew thread. The unmarried girls wore no skins at all and had merely a short fringe of black thread attached to a string round the waist and falling down in front. As regards hair, all the women wore

it plaited and falling down all around the head, giving the appearance of "bobbed" hair. Some of the men wore the most extraordinary looking periwigs made up of their own and also their ancestors hair mixed with clay so as to form a kind of covering for the top of the head, and falling down the back of the neck. In this pad of human felt were set neat little woven sockets in such a way as to hold upright an ostrich feather in each.

The people with whom we were dealing at the moment were poor and therefore hunters. Africans differ from us entirely on the question of hunting; whereas with us it is the well-off who hunt, among them it is the poor. Having nothing but a few goats and sheep, these hunters inhabit the bush, shifting their villages from site to site according to the movements of the game. Their system of taking game is the snare; their only weapon a spear. The art of snaring has been brought to a unique development by these people, for they have snares varying in size for all animals from elephant down to dik-dik. The snare for elephant is a great hawser four-and-a-half inches in diameter, of twisted antelope and giraffe hides. The skins are scraped and pounded with huge wooden mallets for weeks by the women before being twisted or "laid" into the rope which forms the snare. The running nooses at both ends are beautifully made. Besides the snare there is a thing like a cart wheel without any hub, and with scores of thin spokes meeting in the centre where their points are sharp. The snare is laid in the following manner: A well frequented elephant path is chosen, and somewhere near the spot decided on for the snare a large tree is cut. Judgment in the choosing of this must be exercised as if it is too heavy the snare will break, and if too light the snared elephant will travel too far. A tree trunk which ten or twelve men can just stagger along with seems to be the thing. This log is then brought to the scene of action, and at its smaller end a groove is cut all around to take the noose at one end of the rope. The log is laid at right angles to the path with the smaller end pointed towards it. A hole a good bit larger than an elephant's foot is then dug in the path to a depth of two feet or so. Over this hole is fitted the cart wheel. Round the rim the large noose of the snare is laid, and the whole covered carefully

with earth to resemble the path again. The snare is now laid, and if all goes well some solitary old bull comes wandering along at night, places his foot on the earth borne by the sharp spokes of the hubless wheel, goes through as the spokes open downward, lifts his foot and with it the wheel bearing the noose well up the ankle, strides forward and tightens the noose. The more he pulls the tighter draws the noose until the log at the other end of the snare begins to move. Now alarmed and presently angry, he soon gets rid of the cart wheel, but as its work is already done, that does not matter. The dragging log is now securely attached to the elephant's leg, and it is seldom he gets rid of it unless it should jam in rocks or trees. Soon he becomes thoroughly alarmed and sets off at a great pace, the log ploghing along behind him. Should a strong, vigorous young bull become attached to a rather light log, he may go twenty or thirty miles. As soon as it becomes known to the natives that an elephant has been caught, everyone within miles immediately seizes all his spears and rushes to the spot where the snare had been set, and from there eagerly takes up the trail of the log. When they come on the somewhat exhausted animal they spear it to death. Then every scrap of meat is shared among the village which owns the snare, the tusks becoming the property of the man who made and laid the snare. The spearing of an elephant, with its enormously thick hide, is no easy matter as the animal can still make short active rushes. Casualties are not infrequent, and should anyone be caught he is, as a rule, almost certain to be killed.

While the tusk getting operations were going on I took the opportunity to examine the relative positions of the heart, lungs and brain in relation to the conspicuous points of the animal's exterior such as the eye, the ear, the line of the foreleg and the point of the shoulder. In order to fix the position of the heart and lungs I made some boys get the stomach and intestines out. This was a terrific job, but we were ably assisted by the powerful native women. The "innards" are very greatly prized by all natives who eat elephant. The contents of the stomach must have weighed a ton, I should think, and I saw the sack which contains the clear pure water so readily drunk by the hunter during the dry season when he finds himself

far from water. It is from this internal tank that the elephant can produce water for the purpose of treating himself to a shower bath when there is no water. He brings it up into his throat, whence it is sucked into the trunk and then delivered where required. The first time I saw an elephant doing this I thought he must be standing by a pool of water from which he was drawing it. I was many weary miles from water and the sun was scorching, and I and the boy with me were very thirsty, so we hastened towards the elephant which moved slowly through the bush. Very soon we arrived at the spot where we had seen him at his shower bath, but no spring or pool could I find. I asked the Karamojan about it and he then told me, with a smile at my ignorance, that the nearest water was at our camp, and that all elephants carried water inside them and need not replenish their stock for three days. Coming up with the elephant I killed him and got Pyjali (my Karamojan tracker) to pierce its water tank, and sure enough water perfectly clear barring a little blood gushed out, which we both drank greedily. It was warm certainly, but quite tasteless and odourless, and very wholesome and grateful.

When everything had been removed except the lungs and heart I had spears thrust through from the direction from which a bullet would come. I meanwhile peered into the huge cavity, and when a spear pierced a lung or the heart, I immediately examined its situation and tried to commit it to my memory. One thing I noticed was that when the animal was lying on its side the heart did not occupy the cavity which was obviously intended for it when upright, therefore an allowance had to be made. Another thing I was impressed with was the size of the arteries around the heart. It extended the killing area a considerable distance above the heart, and I have often since killed elephant with a shot above the heart.

From this first dealing with Karamojans it began to be borne on me that they were not as bad as the Swahili traders had tried to make out. My subsequent dealings with them confirmed this impression. As far as I was concerned I had hardly any trouble with them, but at the same time some terrible massacres took place while I was in their country. These affairs were the most completely

successful operations I ever heard of from the native point of view. On three occasions massacres of well-armed trading caravans were attempted, and on two there were no survivors among the traders and no casualties among the natives, while on the third there was only one trader who escaped. I will describe later on the method employed by the natives so successfully, for it was not until later that my Karamojan friend Pyjale told me the inside of the thing.

For the next few days nothing of note happened except that we passed the remains of two black men by the roadside—stragglers from some trading caravan probably, judging by the bits of cloth lying about. Here was a state of things requiring explanation. We were now close to Mani-Mani, the up-country base for all trading caravans. It was also a populous centre for Karamojans with whom the traders were perforce at peace. And yet here on the roads were two murdered men obviously belonging to the traders. On my arrival at Mani-Mani I found the explanation. Among Karamojans, as among Masai, Somalis and other tribes, a young man is of no consideration, has no standing with the girls, until he has killed someone. It does not matter how he kills him, he may be asleep or unarmed. When he has "done someone in", either man or woman, other than Karamojans of course, he has the right to tattoo the right side of his body for a man victim, and the left side for a woman. Moreover, at the dances he mounts a very tall ostrich feather dipped blood red, and then he is looked upon as a man. He may and does now demand anything from the unmarried girls. He may flog them should they resist. And this atrocious incitement to murder is the cause of death to any leg-weary straggler from caravans. That the Swahili leaders never made these wayside murders a *causus belli* shows them to be what they were, callous snivellers. That they could have put down this custom was shown when some of my boys lost their way among the villages. As soon as it was reported to me I got together five of my askaris and raced off among the herds of Karamojan cattle. We rounded up a huge mob and held them more or less in one place. Spearmen rushed about, women holloaed, and shields were produced from every hut. I was so hot and angry, thinking that the missing boys had been murdered, that I was eager to begin attacking

straightaway. It looked as if about four hundred spearmen were assembled and I meant to give them a genuine shaking up with my ten-shot .303, followed by my ten-shot Mauser pistol. I felt confident that as soon as I let loose on them, and killed one or two, the others would run like rabbits. It never came to a fight, for some old unarmed men and women came tottering up, picking grass at every step, biting it in two and casting the bits to the wind. This meant peace, peace at any price. Where were my porters? They did not know, really they did not. But they would be all right. Nobody would harm them. I told them to go and produce every one of them unharmed or I would take and kill their cattle and a lot of them besides. Moreover, if any armed man approached anywhere near the cattle I would shoot him dead. The cattle would remain there—between ourselves we could not have handled them—until the porters were produced.

And produced they were, very quickly. They had merely lost their way among the villages, and had been guided back. I did not regret having this opportunity of showing the natives that so far as my people were concerned we were prepared to fight savagely for any member of the safari and not—as the traders did—let stragglers be murdered without protest. The noise of this affair travelled far, and probably saved us a lot of trouble in our later dealings.

Another reason for this apathy on the part of the Swahili traders was, I think, that the certainty of murder awaiting anyone on the road prevented desertion. They were enabled by this means to keep their boys for years without payment of wages. So long as they could keep the boys from reaching Mumias alive there was no redress. Hence it was difficult for the Government representative at Mumias to get reliable information of the internal state of Karamojo.

On our arrival at Mani-Mani we were met by one Shundi, a remarkable man. Kavirondo by birth, he had been captured early in life, taken to the coast, and sold as a slave. Being a man of great force of character, he had soon freed himself by turning Mohammedan. Thence onward fortune had smiled on him until at last here

he was, the recognized chief *Tajir* (rich man) of all the traders. Just as he had been a leader while slave trading was the order of the day, so now he led when ivory had given place to slaves as a commodity.

World's Record Tusks

One thing that made Shundi conspicuous in my mind was the fact that he had owned the slave who had laid low the elephant which bore the enormous tusks, one of which now reposes in the South Kensington Museum. This colossal tusk weighed fresh 236 pounds, and it has now dried to about 226 pounds. Its neighbour was acquired by Joseph Rogers & Sons, and weighed fresh 223 pounds, and has now dried to about 216 pounds. These weights have never been exceeded so far as known. The larger one was 10 ft. 1 in. along the outside curve, with a circumference where the solid ivory begins of 23⅓in. I have several times killed elephant with tusks exceeding this diameter, but they were all broken.

Shundi sold these tusks in Zanzibar at the current price of ivory. He did not realize, in fact nobody did, what a prize he had got. He told me a slave of his, of the Chagga tribe, had killed the elephant on the forested slopes of Kilimanjaro, working singly in his back yard as it were (the Chagga tribe inhabit these regions) so he was familiar with the territory. He fired his muzzle-loader into the body and fled. The elephant travelled but a short distance; nevertheless, the body was not found until the next day.

Whether there are elephants that attain a shoulder height of 12ft. is a much debated question. It is not easily settled because of the difficulty of measuring the animal when it is dead. If it falls on its side the knee is always bent, and is extremely hard to straighten. Should it fall kneeling, as with a brain shot, it is impossible to measure; one can only guess at it. But it is only reasonable to suppose that an elephant with two such formidable tusks as Shindi's must have attained sufficient height to enable it to carry its tusks free from encumbering bush, ant-heaps, and other obstructions, especially as they were not unduly curved. When pushing a tree over for better browsing, an elephant pushes it with the base of his trunk. If his tusks were inordinately long and fairly straight, and his statute

restricted, his tusks would be in danger of fouling the ground. I would suggest, therefore, that Shundi's elephant may have been 12ft. at the shoulder, and perhaps a bit more.

Shundi was accompanied by a large body of traders of all sorts. There were Arabs, Swahilis, one or two Persians, and a few African born Baluchis, and a pretty tough lot they looked. Beside their mean and cunning air Shundi, the great coal-black Bantu, appeared like a lion among hyenas. They hated my appearing in their country, but did not show it. Shundi took it in the spirit that what had to be had to be, but some of the lesser villains were obviously nervous. They pretended to wish me to camp inside the town, but I preferred to remain outside. The town was of very considerable size, although the buildings were of a temporary character. I remarked at an extraordinary number of women about, and thought that I recognized Masai types among them. This was so, for I afterwards learned that Shundi alone had over eighty women, many of whom were Masai from Kilimanjaro.

With native politeness gifts of food, etc., were offered, and presently all withdrew, intimating that they would return when I had rested. They must have been feeling rather uncomfortable about the appearance in their midst of a white man, possibly an agent of the detestable Government so troublesome about raiding. I did not actually know at the time, but learned afterwards, that at the very moment of my arrival in their midst they had an enormous raid on the Turkana under way.

In the afternoon they came again and we had the usual ceremonial palaver. Everyone was strictly guarded, but they made a distinct effort to embroil me with the natives in the hope, I suppose, of getting me so mixed up in some shooting affair that I would become more or less one of themselves. I refused to have anything to do with their intrigues. I got little information regarding elephant from these people. In fact, neither side could quite overcome a severely suppressed but quite strong hostility to the other.

I stayed a few days at Mani-Mani as there were repairs to be attended to, and man and beast required a rest. The first sign of trouble soon appeared, caused, I feel certain, by Swahili intrigue.

It was the dry season and all animals were watered once a day at the wells dug in the otherwise dry river bed. My animals were being watered as usual; that is water was drawn from the well in buckets and emptied into a watertight ground sheet laid over a depression in the sand. Word was suddenly brought to me that the natives refused to allow my animals to be watered. I went at once to the scene and asked the natives what all the trouble was about. There were about forty young bloods leaning against their spears, and they laughed in the most insolent manner without giving me any answer. I turned to my herders and beckoned them to bring up the animals. As they began to do so three of the bloods strode over and began flogging the thirsty bullocks in the face and driving them off. I seized from the nearest Karamojan his cutting-edge club, sprang over to one of the bullock obstructors and dealt him the hardest blow on the head I possibly could. I was fairly hefty, in good training, and meant all I knew. To my astonishment the native turned on me a smile, instead of dropping dead or at least stunned, while the club flew to atoms. I had hit his shock absorbing periwig, previously described.

I must confess it was rather a set-back. However, one good effect it had was that everyone, except myself, roared with laughter, and then when even I began to see the humour of it, I spotted a mischievous devil calmly jabbing his spear through our priceless waterproof ground sheet. This would not do so I drew my Mauser pistol. Now these natives were then at a most dangerous stage of ignorance with regard to firearms. Their experience of them had been gathered on raids with the Swahilis, and they all firmly held the conviction that all you had to do to avoid being struck by the bullet was to duck when you saw the smoke. While I was fitting the wooden holster to the Mauser they watched me carefully. They had probably never seen such a gun before if they even recognized it as such. When therefore I had it fitted up and was covering them no one moved. They were waiting I suspect for the smoke. And when they heard the particularly vicious bang of the little Mauser and saw no smoke, the laugh this time was rather on them, and especially on the gentleman who had been so busy with his spear and on my

ground sheet, for he now stood looking at a half-severed and completely spoilt spear in his hand, with a ridiculous air of surprised injury. In a few seconds the humour of this phase struck all concerned, although the natives began to edge nervously away. All their swagger was gone now. I had been approaching the fellow with the damaged spear, and now suddenly set on him, relying on my herds to help me. Never have I felt anything like the sinewy strength of that greasy native; he was all but off when my boys secured him just in time. Seeing some flourishing of spears going on among the others, I began dusting about them with the little Mauser. Seeing no smoke, yet getting wang wang right and left of them, they turned and bolted. I got in another clip of ten and kept them dodging dust for 400 or 500 yards.

On returning I put it out among the natives that our prisoner would be released when ten goats and sheep had been paid by his family as a fine. They were soon forthcoming. Up until now I had been looked upon by the natives as a sort of poor Arab. In this idea they were no doubt helped by the traders. They had never seen white men, and they saw my mean little safari and drew their own conclusions. But after the affair at the waterhole I was treated with much greater respect, and with a kind of good humoured indulgence much as a very persistent headstrong child might be looked upon. And eventually, after a few more "incidents" we became fast friends, and they would do almost anything for me or my people. One instance of this I may as well here record, although it happened long afterwards.

Away down in civilized parts I had left two aged Wanyamwezi boys in charge of my cattle ranch, which was situated a few miles from Nandi Boma. At the Boma post office I had left directions for my letters to be forwarded to another Boma on the slopes of Elgon, where I used to send every six months or so to get them. All my letters went as directed until there occurred a change of District Commissioner. Now one of my old pensioners looking after the ranch had orders to report every fortnight to the D.C. that all was well or otherwise. In pursuit of these instructions the old boy appeared one day before the District Commissioner, who asked him

who he was. He said he belonged to me. The D.C. said he had some letters for me, and told the boy to take them to me, thinking that I was at the ranch a few miles off, instead of which I was actually over 600 miles away. That dear old man took the letters without a word, went straight back to the ranch, and prepared to follow me into what was much of it quite unknown country. He told the other boy, who was also about sixty-five years of age, that he would have to look after everything himself as he was going after the Bwana. Being a thrifty old soul he had much stock of dry smoked beef from cows which had died. His preparations were, therefore, almost complete. An inveterate snuff taker, he had only to grind up a good quantity for the journey and he was ready. Shouldering his Snider, and with the packet of letters cunningly guarded against wet, he set off through the wilderness, steering due north. Sleeping by night alone by his camp fire and travelling the whole of the day, he came wandering through what would have been to anyone else hostile tribe after hostile tribe. Countries where, if I sent at all, I sent at least five guns as escort, he came through without trouble. How often he must have been looked upon by the lecherous eyes of would-be bloods as fair game for their spears and as a means of gaining the coveted tattoo marks and the blood-red ostrich feather. But so sublimely unconscious was he of any feeling of nervousness, and so bold and confident in his bearing, that nothing happened. Being old and wise, he courted the routes which led through the most populous centres instead of dodging along the neutral zones between tribes as a nervous man would have done. Whenever he went to sleep in the largest villages he demanded and got the best of everything, and eventually reached me intact. It was a splendid effort. He walked into camp as though he had left it five minutes before, and he still had smoked beef and snuff when he arrived. The dear old hoarder had lived to some purpose on the natives as he passed through. He arrived, if you please, escorted by a number of Karamojan big-men, this dingy and, I have to say it, very dirty old man. The letters, alas! proved to me most uninteresting in themselves, but nevertheless they formed a link with civilization. They were chiefly bills from unscrupulous Coast merchants being rendered

for the third and fourth time, although already paid at least once.

The Coming of Pyjale

From Mani-Mani we moved on to Bukora, another section of Karamojo. I was warned by the Swahili that Bukora was a very bad country. The people were very rich in cattle and correspondingly insolent. Everyone who passed through Bukora had trouble. Either stock was stolen or porters murdered. I cannot say I believed all this, or perhaps I would not have been so ready to go there. But that there was some truth in their statements I soon found. In fact there were moments when it was touch and go. Looking back on it calmly I can see that it was nothing but chance that saved us. We pushed our way smartly right into the middle of Bukora, intending to camp near some large village, but to our disappointment the cachments of water were nearly dry. We were obliged therefore to move to some wells on the outskirts of the villages. This is always a bad place to be attacked in. Natives are much more willing to attack people outside than when they are right in their midst. When you are close alongside a village and there is any question of hostilities, the people of that particular village feel they will probably come in for more of their share of the trouble when it begins. They have their goods and chattels there, their corn, cows, babies, fowls, etc. For these reasons they are against hostilities. Another advantage to the travellers when close to stockaded villages—as these were—is that they can be rushed and held against the rest of the tribe.

However, I was young in those days and without much thought of anything, and camp by the wells I would, and presently the camp began to fill with apparently friendly natives. They dropped in by two's and three's and stood around, each man with two spears. I thought they seemed a nice, friendly, sociable crowd, and took little further heed of them. Then comes my headman, a Swahili, to me. "Bwana, there is no good brewing. These people mean trouble. Look around, do you see a single woman anywhere?" I laughed and asked him what he thought they would do. He said that at a given pre-arranged signal they would start spearing everyone. And then it dawned on me how absurdly easy it would

be for them to do so. When you came to look around with this thought in your mind it became apparent that every man was being marked by several spearmen. If he moved they also lounged about until they were again close to him. I must say they appeared to me to act the indifference part very well. When I had convinced myself that something of this nature was afoot, I naturally got close to my shooting irons, ready to take a hand when the fun started. In those days I always wore fifty rounds in my belt.

Now I thought that if I could only supply something sufficiently distracting the affair might never begin. There, over the plains, were plenty of game. I took my rifle and got the interpreter to tell the Karamojans to come as I was going killing meat. They came at once in fair numbers. They had already heard of my wonderful rifles, and wherever I went I always had an audience eager to see them or the Bom Bom (Mauser pistol) at work.

Hardly had we gone a few hundred yards, and while we were still in full view of the camp, when a herd of zebras came galloping across our front. They came well spread apart and just right for my purpose. I shot one after the other as hard as I could fire. I was using a ten-shot .303 and when I had fired the ten shots the survivors of the herd were too far off. I was careful not to reload in the ordinary way, for I carried another charged magazine. Consequently the natives thought I might have any number of shots left in this quite new and terrifying weapon. No smoke and such a rapid fire of death—they had never seen the like. Bing! bing! bing! bing! they kept saying to themselves, only much more rapidly than the actual rate of fire. And the zebras, strong brutes, knocked right down one after the other. No! This was something new. They had better be careful about fooling around with the *red* man. He was different from those other red men among the Swahilis, who used to fire great clouds of smoke and hit nothing.

After an episode of this kind one feels somehow that a complete mental transformation has taken place. One is established right away above these, in some ways finer, but less scientific people. But this knowledge comes to both at the same time. I now ordered these previously truculent, but now almost servile savages, to flay, cut up, and carry to camp every bit of meat and skin. When I saw

anyone sneaking a bit of fat or what-not I blackguarded him soundly. I rushed the whole regiment back to camp loaded with several tons of meat, many of them forgetting their spears in their hurry. But had I ventured to bullyrag them like this before the zebra incident I would have had a spear thrust for answer, and right quickly too.

I now began to push enquiries about elephant, but with no great success at first. One day a Bukora boy came to camp and while in conversation with some of my people casually told them he had recently returned from no-man's land, where he and some friends of his had been looking for Kumamma. The Kumamma were their neighbours to the west. They had been looking for them in order to spear them should things be right; that is should the enemy be in sufficiently small force for them to easily overcome. When the numbers are at all equal, both sides retire smartly. This is the normal kind of state in which these tribes live. It leads to a few deaths certainly, but keeps the young men fit and out of other mischief. Every young man goes looking for blood frequently, and as they carry no food except a few handfuls of unground millet simply soaked in water, and as they never dare to sleep while in the neutral zone, it acts as a kind of field training.

This youth had seen no Kumamma, but had seen elephant. My boys told me this, and I tried to get the lad to go with us to hunt. He said he would have to come back and let me know. He did so and brought a friend, who was a remarkable looking man. Strange as it may seem, he had a most intellectual head. He was perhaps thirty-five years of age, most beautifully made and tattooed for men victims only, I was relieved to see. Pyjale was his name, and now began a firm and long friendship between this distinguished savage and myself. I cannot say that I have ever had the same feeling for any man as I came to have for Pyjale. He was, I found, a thorough man, courageous, quiet, modest, with a horror for humbug and untiring in our common pact, the pursuit of elephant. He was with me during the greater part of my time in Karamojo, and although surrounded by people who clothed themselves, never would he wear a rag even. Nor would he sleep comfortably as we did on grass

and blankets. The bare, hard ground out by the camp fire, with a hole dug for his hip bone, and his little wooden pillow had been good enough for him before, and was good enough now. No one poked fun at Pyjale for his nakedness; he was the kind who do not get fun poked at them.

Pyjale was game to show us elephants, but said we would have to travel far. His intelligence was at once apparent by his saying that we ought to take tents as the rains might come any day. He was right, for come they did while we were hunting. I asked him what I should do about the main safari. He said I would leave it where it was; no one would interfere with it. If I liked I could leave the ivory in one of the villages. This, I gathered, was equivalent to putting one's silver in the bank at home. And so it is, bizarre as it may seem. You may leave anything with the natives—ivory, beads which are money, trade goods, stock, anything—and not one thing will they take provided you place it in their care. But if you leave your own people to look after it they will steal it if they get a chance.

Thinking that it might save trouble, I put all my trade goods and ivory in a village, and leaving the safari with plenty of rations, I left for a few days hunting, taking a sufficient number of porters to bring home any ivory we were likely to get. This was necessary as at this time the natives did not yet follow me in hundreds wherever I went, as they did later on.

We trekked hard for three days and came once more in sight of the Debasien range, but on its other side. On the night of the third the rains burst upon us. The light calico tents were hastily erected in a perfect gale and downpour. Even Pyjale had to shelter. In the morning he said we were certain to see elephant if we could only cross a river which lay ahead of us. When we reached its banks it was a raging torrent, red with mud and covered with patches of white froth. There was nothing to do but camp and wait until the spate subsided. While this was being done I saw a snake being carried down by the swollen river. Then I saw another and another. Evidently the banks were being washed away somewhere.

A boy pointed to my shorts and said that a *doodoo* (insect) had crawled up inside one of my legs. Thinking perhaps it was a fly,

or not thinking at all, I slapped my leg hard with my open hand and got a most frightful sting, while a huge scorpion dropped half crushed to the ground, but not before he had injected quite sufficient poison into me. "Insect", indeed! How I cursed that boy. And then by way of helping me he said that when people were stung by these big black scorpions they always died. He was in a frightful state. And then another fool boy said: "Yes, no one ever recovered from that kind". I shouted for whisky, for certainly you could feel the poison going through the circulation. I knew that what the boys said was bunkum, but still I drank a lot of whisky. My leg swelled and I could not sleep that night, but I was quite all right next day.

The river had gone down somewhat, so I proposed to cross. No one was very eager to go across with the rope. A rope was necessary as some of the boys could not swim and the current was running too strong for them to walk across the bottom under water carrying stones to keep them down, as they usually did. I carried at that time a Mexican rawhide lariat, and thought that this stretched across would do nicely for the boys to haul themselves over by. So I took one end to the other side and made it fast, when the safari began to come over. Once the plunge had been taken I found that more of them could swim than they had led me to believe. Then the inevitable when rawhide gets wet—the rope parted. As luck would have it there was a boy about mid-stream when it happened. The slippery end slid through his fingers and he went rapidly down stream. His head kept going under and reappearing, but as he had a smile on his face each time he came up, I thought he was another humbug pretending not to be able to swim. His friends, who knew perfectly well he could not swim a yard, said not a word, and it was not until he gushed water at the mouth instead of air that I realized he was drowning. I ran down the bank while another boy plunged in at the crossing place. I reached the boy first by a second, and we soon had him towing to the bank. Black men are good to save, but they never seem to realize their close call and do not clutch and try to climb out on you. While towing to the bank I felt something on my head and put up a hand to brush it off. Horrors, a snake! It was merely trying to save itself on anything above water level, but

I did not realize this. Whenever I knocked it off it seemed to come on again. Luckily we just then reached the bank or in another instant I would have abandoned my drowning porter to save myself from the beastly serpent. It was all very silly, and the snake was nearly at its last gasp, but I did not see the humour at the moment. Needless to say the boy was all right after vomiting up a bucket or two of water.

While we were getting ready for the march we heard elephant. To my inexperienced ear the sound seemed to come from some bush four hundred or five hundred yards away. But Pyjale, to my astonishment, said that they were a long way off and that unless we hurried we should not see them before sundown. As the sun then indicated about one o'clock, I thought he was wrong. But he was not, and it was half-an-hour before sunset when we met them, still far away. I remember looking industriously about all those miles, expecting momentarily to see the elephants, while Pyjale soaked along ahead of me without a glance aside. The only explanation of this extraordinary sound carrying that has ever occurred to me is humidity of atmosphere. During the dry season the earth becomes so hot that when the first rains fall it is evaporated in steam, and the humidity is remarkable.

Here we were face to face with such a gathering of elephant as I had never dared to dream of even. The whole country was black with them, and what lay beyond them one could not see as the country was dead flat. Some of them were up to their knees in water, and when we reached their tracks the going became very bad. The water was so opaque with mud as to quite hide the huge potholes made by the heavy animals. You were in and out the whole time. As we drew nearer I thought we ought to go decently and quietly, or at any rate make some pretence of stalking them. But no, that awful Pyjale rushed me, splashing and squelching, right up to them. He was awfully good, and I began to learn a lot from him. He treated elephant with complete indifference. If he were moved at all, and that was seldom, he would smile. I was for treating them as dangerous animals, especially when we trod on the heels of small bogged down calves, and their mothers came rushing back at us in most alarming

fashion, but Pyjale would have none of it. Up to the big bulls he would have me go, even if we had to go under infuriated cows. He made me kill seven before sundown stopped the bloodshed.

With great difficulty we found a spot a little higher than the surrounding country and fairly dry. As usual at these times the little island was crawling with ants of every description. How comes it that ants do not drown, although they cannot swim? They appear to be covered with something that repels water. Scorpions and all other kinds of horrors were there also. One of the boys was bitten and made a fearful fuss all night about it.

I expected to do well on the morrow, but when it came not an elephant was in sight! Such are the surprises of elephant hunting. Yesterday when the light failed hundreds upon hundreds of them in sight, and now an empty wilderness. We had not alarmed them for, I noticed that when a shot was fired only the animals in the vicinity ran, and that only for a short distance. There were too many to stampede even had they been familiar with firearms, and the noise was such as to drown the crack of a .303 almost immediately.

I asked Pyjale what he thought about it. He said that at the beginning of the rains elephant wandered all over the country. You could never tell where they might be. With water and mud and green food springing up everywhere they were under no necessity to frequent any one district more than another. Pyjale's advice was to get the ivory out and take it home, and then he would show me a country where we were certain to get big bulls. Accordingly the boys set about chopping out, while I went for a cruise around to make certain there was nothing about, I saw nothing but ostrich, giraffe, and great herds of common and topi hartebeeste. On crossing some black cotton soil I noticed that it clung to the boots in a very tiresome way. Each time you lifted a foot ten to fifteen pounds of sticky mud came with it. At this stage the ground was still dry underneath, only the top few inches being wet. From the big humps lying about where antelope had pressed, it was obvious that they had, too, the same trouble I was having of mud clinging to the feet. But in watching Pyjale it appeared that it did not stick to naked human feet to anything like the same extent. Pyjale told

me, and I afterwards saw it actually done, that it was possible to run down ostrich, and the heavy antelope such as eland, when the ground was in this state.

Returning we found the boys well on with their chopping out. Towards evening we started for home, being much troubled with swollen rivers. Most of the boys walked through the rivers when we could find a place where the current was not too strong, the heavy tusks keeping them on the bottom. But it was a curious sight to see them calmly marching in deeper and deeper until their heads went right under re-appearing again close to the other bank. Of course the distance they traversed was only a few yards, but for fellows who cannot swim as it was not bad.

One camp from home (the safari) we slept near some flooded wells. The boys took their tusks to scrub them with sand and water, the better to make an appearance on the morrow, when we would rejoin the safari. This is always a source of joy to the Wanyamwezi, to carry ivory to the base. When allowed to do so they will spend hours dancing and singing their way into the camp. The women turn out, everybody makes a noise of some kind, from blowing a reed pipe to trumpeting on a waterbuck horn or beating a drum or tin, in fact anything so that it produces noise.

While they were scrubbing the tusks one of these slipped from the boy's hands into a well. I heard of it and went to see what could be done. To test the depth I tried one of Pyjale's nine foot spears. No good. Then I tied another to it, but even then I could not touch bottom. Pyjale said the bottom was very far. Then I looked at one of my boys squatting on the edge of the well. He had been a coast canoeman and shark fisher, than whom no finer watermen exist, and knew what I meant without a word passing. He tied his cloth between his legs and stripped his upper body. Then jumping into the air, he twisted half around, and went down head first into the very middle of the well. It seemed ages before his head appeared, but only for an instant. Down he went again, and after another long wait he came up with the tusk, and swimming or treading water. Eager hands clutched the tusk and drew it out, the boy crawling out himself. This particular tusk weighed 65 pounds, the length

being almost the diameter of the well, so it had to be brought up end on. How he did it I cannot imagine. The water was the colour of pea soup, and a scrubbed tusk is like a greasy pole to hold. Of course it would not weight 65 pounds when submerged, but it was a pretty good effort, I thought. I know I would not have gone 20 or 30 ft. down that well for any number of tusks.

These boys have the most extraordinary lungs. I once sent one of them down to disentangle the anchor of a motor launch which had got foul of something. There were about four fathoms of chain, and the boy went down this hand over hand. I only wanted him to clear the anchor, when we would heave it up in the ordinary way. But presently up the chain came the boy and the anchor.

On the morrow we entered Bukora again with fourteen white tusks. We had a great reception at our camp, and the natives were rather astonished at our rapid success. Pyjale stalked along without any show of feeling. The boys who had stayed behind had nothing to report except the loss of three of our sheep by theft. Now it was essential to nip this kind of thing in the bud. I did nothing that day, merely sending Pyjale to his home with a handsome present. I knew he would put it round as to the kind of people we were. Natives always exaggerate enormously when back from a scurry in the bush, and his account of our doings would probably have made me blush had I heard it.

Next day when Pyjale came with a pot of fresh cow's milk as a present, I asked him if he had heard anything about our sheep. He said no. I asked him to point out the village which had stolen them. He said they would kill him if he did so, therefore he knew. I said that he need not go with me, if only he would indicate it. He said the village with the three tamarind trees was where the thieves lived.

I went over quietly in the evening as though looking for guinea fowl. The village was quite close to our camp. When their stock began to come in I signalled to some boys. We walked up deliberately to the herds, no one taking any great notice of us. I separated out a mob of sheep and goats, and we started driving them towards camp, but very quietly and calmly. It is wonderful how imitative Africans are. If you are excited they at once become so. If you are calm and

deliberate, so are they. A more dramatic thing would have been to take the cattle, but these native cattle are not used to boys wearing clothes as mine did, and we found at Mani-Mani that they became excited and difficult to handle unless they see their own black naked owners about. Pyjale I had carefully left out of the business.

As soon as our object dawned on the Karamojans there was the usual commotion. Women wha! wha! while rushing from the huts with shields; warriors seized these and rushed with prodigious speed directly away from us, while we pushed our two or three hundred hostages slowly along. Arriving at camp we just managed to squeeze them all into the bullock boma. There were noises all around us now. The boys were uneasy; there is always something in the alarm note when issued by hundreds of human throats. Dark was soon on us, and we sat up by the camp fires until fairly late. Nothing happened, as I had expected. Discretion had won. They hated that little bom-bom so.

What I wanted now was that they should come. I wanted to tell them why I had taken their sheep. Presently there appeared to be great signs of activity in one of the nearer villages. Native men coming from all directions. My boys were all eyes on this, to them, impending attack. I thought they must be born fools to try anything of that sort in broad daylight. Pyjale had been absent so I hoped he was at the meeting. Presently he appeared. He said they had had a discussion and concluded not to attack us. I told him to go straight back and invite them to come; I wanted to be attacked. And moreover, if my sheep were not instantly brought I would proceed to kill the hostage sheep I held, and that then I would proceed to hunt the thieves. This acted like magic. I suppose they thought that I had known the village of the thieves, and I also probably knew the actual men themselves. Our sheep were very soon brought and the hostages released.

I took the opportunity when the natives were there to impress on them that we did not want anything from them. All we wanted was to hunt elephant in peace, but at the same time I hinted that we could be very terrible indeed. I got some of the older men to dry up and sit down in a friendly way, and we had a good talk together.

I now brought out the card to which I owe all my success in killing elephant in Karamojo. I offered a cow as a reward for information leading to my killing five or more bull elephant. This was an unheard of reward. Normally natives never kill or sell she-stock of any kind, and cows could be obtained only by successful raiding. Now, among Africans there are numbers of young men who just lack the quality which brings success to its lucky owner, just as there are in every community, and to these young men my offer appealed tremendously. That they believed in my promise from the very start I thought a great compliment, not only to me but to their astuteness in perceiving that there was a difference between white men and Swahilis.

When my offer had gone the rounds the whole country for many miles around was scoured for elephant, with the result that I never could have a day's rest. Everyone was looking for elephant, but had the reward been trade goods scarcely a soul would have bothered about it.

The first man to come in was remarkable looking enough to satisfy anybody. A terrible looking man, with grotesquely hideous face above a very broad and deep chest, all mounted on the spindliest of knock-kneed legs. Chest, arms, shoulders, stomach and back heavily tattooed, denoting much killing. By reputation a terrific fighter, and very wealthy. At first I thought he was come to show me elephant, but he said that first he wanted to become my blood brother. He said he could see that I was a kindred spirit, and that we two should be friends. He said he had no friends. How was that? I asked. Pyjale answered in a whisper that the lion never made friends of jackals and hyenas. And so we became friends. I was not going through the blood brotherhood business, with its eating of bits of toasted meat smeared with each other's blood, sawing in two of living dogs, and nonsense of that kind. I took his hand and wrung it hard, having it explained to him that among us that was an extraordinary potent way of doing it. That seemed to satisfy the old boy, for the act of shaking hands was as strange to him as the act of drinking another's blood is to us.

I said: "What about those elephants?" "Wait" was the answer,

and off he went to return shortly with a fat bullock. And I then found that my friend was the wealthiest cattle owner anywhere about—a kind of multi-millionaire. I thought to myself, well, he will not look for elephant, nor did he, but he had some without number, whom he scattered far and wide to look for them. He had arranged the thing most perfectly. We went with food for a few days and returned laden with ivory, besides which we had some of the jolliest nights in the bush.

This great man being now my friend, our troubles were at an end. Wherever we went we were followed by scores of young unmarried girls and one old maid—the only one I came across in Karamojo. She was so outstanding above the average in good looks, so beautifully made, and so obviously still quite young, that I often asked why she should remain a spinster. They told me that no man would marry her because she was so beautiful. But why should that be a bar? We white men liked our wives to be beautiful. They thought this strange even for white men. They said they never married beautiful women as all men wanted them. They also gave me another reason, that these very attractive women wanted all men. And I must say that our camp beauty gave decided colour to this latter statement.

No sooner had we arrived back with our imposing line of beautiful tusks than other natives clamoured to take us to elephant. They wanted me to go there and then, but I needed a rest. In the evening I presented my friend with a heifer, when to my astonishment he refused it. He said he wanted nothing from his friend. I was rather suspicious about this at first, but I need not have been, as I subsequently found this man to be thoroughly genuine. I am convinced he would have given me anything. It is a big affair in their lives, this blood brotherhood. Apparently we now owned everything in common. He offered me any of his daughters in marriage, and thank goodness never asked me for my rifle. From now on he followed me around like a faithful dog, some of his young wives attending to his commissariat arrangements wherever he was. He even took my name which was Longelly-nyung or Red Man. And he now began to call his young male children, of whom he was very fond, by the same

name. He was a delightfully simple fellow at heart, and as courageous as a lion, as I had proof later.

After a few more journeys to the bush lasting from four to ten days, I found I had as much ivory as I could possibly move, and this while still on the fringe of Karamojo. I decided to return to Mumias, sell my ivory, fit out a real good expedition capable of moving several tons of ivory, and return to Karamojo fitted out for several years in the bush.

6

Dabossa

HAVING now the wherewithal to fit out a real good safari from the sale of my ivory, I proceeded to discharge my Baganda porters and to engage in their place Wanyamweze. Bagandas being banana eaters, had shown themselves to be good lads enough, but poor "doers" on ground millet, flour and elephant meat. Dysentery was their trouble. Whereas Wanyamweze seemed capable of keeping in condition indefinitely under severe safari conditions. All my former boys had a good pay-day coming, as of course they had been unable to spend anything while in Karamojo. Consequently they one and all went on the burst. A few new clothes from the Indian shops, and the rest on native beer was the rule. When drinking largely of native beer no other food is required, as the whole grain is contained in it. My two Nandi cowherds spent hardly anything of their wages. The only thing I ever saw them buy was a fat sheep and two tins of sweet condensed milk. They rendered down about two quarts of fat from the tail of the sheep, poured in the contents of the milk cans, stirred it well, and drank it off.

This time bullocks were not employed, donkeys taking their place. It was in connection with the buying of these donkeys that a remarkable feat of foot travelling came to my notice. A trader wished to sell me some donkeys—probably raided—which he had left at Mani-Mani, about 150 miles away. He offered a Karamojan a cow as reward for bringing them down in time for me to buy, and the boy had them there at the end of the fourth day. As nearly as I could ascertain he had covered 300 miles in 100 hours.

We crossed the Turkwell about one-hundred strong, this number not including women and camp followers. At Mani-Mani and Bukora some of our cows were exchanged for sheep, goats and donkeys. A decent cow would bring sixty sheep or goats. Having now

so many mouths to feed it was necessary to buy more donkeys, and I raised our donkey strength to a hundred. This meant I would have about eighty constantly loaded. They were chiefly employed in carrying grain to our base camp in Dodose, sometimes from Mount Elgon, over 200 miles away, where banana flour could be got, or from the country near the Nile, 150 to 200 miles distant. Through all this trekking, with two donkeys to one saddle, they never had a sore back.

On our arrival at Mani-Mani we found the Swahili village almost deserted. Everyone was out on a raid. They had reckoned that no one in their senses would return to the wilderness as soon as I did. They could not conceive how I had spent the proceeds of all that ivory in so short a time. I learned that they were out against the Dabossans in whose country I meant to hunt. I therefore laid out my route so as to intercept the returning raiders. Passing through Bukora we were greeted as old friends, a very different reception from our first. Pyjale immediately joined up, and after taking a few good bull elephants from the Bukora-Kumamma neutral zone, we trekked leisurely and heavily laden northward.

At the last village of Bukora we met commotion and wailing, occasioned by the murder of three young Bukora girls of marriageable age at the hands of some roving band of Jiwe bloods. These affairs were of quite common occurrence, and the natives could never understand the disgust and abhorrence they drew from me. I was eventually able to stop the killing of females at least while I was in the country.

Pitching camp late one night in the fighting zone between Bukora and Jiwe, lions were sighted leaving the rocky hills for the game-covered plains. Although almost dark I succeeded in killing two within a short distance of camp. I returned and was seated by the camp fire when I heard alarming shouts from the direction of the dead lions. In this kind of life something is constantly turning up, and one soon learns to be always ready. The occurrences are so simple as to require but simple remedies. Everything seemed to demand the presence of a rifle and just an ordinary sense of humour to transform an imminent tragedy into African comedy. Seizing my

.275 I rushed through the darkness towards the shouts, and what I found was that one lion had been skinned and the other half flayed when it had suddenly come to life again. The boys said that as they were removing the skin it suddenly and without warning stood up, opened its mouth and rushed at them. But what I found was a half-skinned lion with its head alive but the rest of it dead or paralysed. It could open its mouth and growl furiously, but its springing at them must have been supplied by the boys' imagination or to excuse their headlong flight. Some nerve must have suffered damage in the lion's neck, leaving the body paralysed but the head active. One of the boys had been seated on it when it growled, and his account of the affair in camp raised bursts of deep-chested Wanyamwezi laughter.

These camps in the wonderful African nights of the dry season linger in my memory as the most enjoyable I ever experienced. Other nights have been more exciting and more exhilarating, but also harmful in their after-effects. Poker or flying by night, sitting up for elephant or lion, provide quick pulse beats between periods of intense boredom, but for level quiet enjoyment give me the camp chair by the camp fire with a crowd of happy and contented natives about, and the prospect of good hunting ahead and the evidence of good hunting by your side. Looking back on my safaris I can discern that they were quite exceptionally happy little collections of human beings. For one reason health was simply splendid. Everyone was well and amply tented. All slept warm and dry. Mosquitoes were rare and stomachs full. Fun was of poor calibre perhaps, but high animal spirits were there to make the most of it. The boys had their women—wives they called them. Tobacco could be traded from the natives or bought at cost price from the safari slop-chest.

Fighting among the men was always settled in the ring with 4-ounce gloves provided by me. When this was found too slow—and they sometimes pounded each other for an hour on end without being washed out—sticks were provided and the thing brought to an end more rapidly with the letting of a little blood. When the women bickered too persistently a ring would be formed, permission got, and the two naggers dragged in. Each would then hitch up her short

cloth about her ample hips, and after being provided with a hippo-hide whip, at it they would go with fire almost equal to the men, but with this difference—where the men used their heads and tried to prevent the other from injuring them, the women waited motionless and guardless for each other's strokes. It was the most extraordinary form of fighting ever seen. A would catch B a stinging swing on the back and stand waiting for B to give her a frightful cut across the shoulders. And so on it would go—szwop! szwop!—for about ten minutes, when B would suddenly cast her whip on the ground and flee, A in hot pursuit, while shouts of laughter would greet the decision, especially strong when either combatant lost her last shred of cloth. I must say the women never bore malice and were always great friends afterwards. Even during the fighting they never showed vice, for they could as easily as not cut the eye out of their unguarded opponent. Yet I never saw anything approaching an injury inflicted in these affairs.

Then in the evenings there was football. When I first introduced this game I tried to teach them rugger. They were born rugger players. Fast, bare-footed, hard, muscular and slippery, they cared not at all for the ant-heaps, boulders or thorn bushes which littered their day's playground. After carrying a hundred-weight all day, pitching camp, building thorn bomas for the animals, and bringing in firewood for the night, they would go to rugger until dark. So bad were some of the injuries sustained owing to the bad terrain, that a new game had to be evolved more suited to the ground. It was a simple kind of massed rush in which any number could engage. Goals were marked out, then the ball was placed at half-way, and the two opposing sides drew up in line about 15 yards from it. At a signal both sides would charge full tilt at each other, meeting about where the ball was. Then the object was to get the ball by hook or crook to the goal. No off-side, no boundaries, no penalties, no referee and no half-time. Darkness terminated the game. So hard was the ground and so incessant the wear on the ball that it was seldom that one lasted a month. But how they could kick it without breaking their toes always puzzled me.

Our reputation had preceded us, and we were welcomed by the

Jiwe people, so much so that they wished for blood-brotherhood, but I evaded it. We hunted happily in their country for some time, and learned of an attack on their country by some Nile tribe with numerous guns of muzzle-loading type. The Jiwe with spears alone had not only repulsed the attackers, but had massacred most of them. Inadequate supplies of munitions had been their downfall. The firearms which had been picked up by the Jiwe had since been traded off to Swahilis.

While chasing elephant in the Jiwe country one day we happened to start some ostrich running. They took the same line as the fleeing elephant and soon overhauled them. When close up the cock bird suddenly began the fantastic rushes here and there usually seen in the breeding season. One of his speed efforts took him close past a lumbering bull elephant on the outside of the little herd. These elephant had already been severely chased, and several of their number had been killed. When, therefore, the black form of the ostrich raced up from behind him the poor old elephant nearly fell over from fright. His trunk shot up and his ears looked like umbrellas turned inside out by a sudden gust. But recovering almost instantly, he settled back to his steady fast retreat.

Our next country northward was Dodose, where I proposed to establish my base camp. On entering it we found it high-lying country among steep little granite hills. We were well received and soon became friendly. Some wonderful elephant country was reached from Dodose, and it was here that I got my heaviest ivory. Buffalo were also very numerous. It was beautiful elephant country as elephant could frequently be found with glasses from one of the numerous hills.

It was now the dry season, and there was only one route to or from Dodose, where the Swahili raid was on. I therefore put a lookout post on this route to bring me news of anyone coming south on this trail. This post consisted of four of my best Wanyamwezi boys with two natives. As soon as any sign of the returning raiders was seen the boys were to send a native with the news, while they remained to try to keep any Swahilis until my arrival. I had expected the raiders to have a fore-guard of some sort, and that I would have

time to arrive on the scene before the coming of the main body. Instead of this up marched the whole body of raiders, cattle and captives, all in charge of my four stalwarts. What they had told the Swahilis lay in store for them I never learned, but it was evidently something dreadful judging by the state of panic they were in. I counted their guns, and took their captives—all women—and cattle from them, warning them that next time they would be landed up in prison or be shot, and sent them packing.

After a considerable hunt in and around Dodose, it was now time, the first rains being imminent, to be moving northward towards Dabossa. In entering new country for elephant it is always best to get there before the first rains are on, as the animals then desert their dry-season thick haunts for the open country.

Before approaching the inhabited part of Dabossa I knew that it would be necessary somehow to get into communication with the natives. They had just recently been raided, and would be very nervous and likely to attack any strangers approaching their country. The Dabassan cattle recently taken from the raiders were therefore placed in charge of some of the Dodose notables, while I and a good little safari headed northward, taking with us all the captive women. While still about forty miles from Dabossa it became evident from signs that Dabossans were about. We therefore camped by water and built a strong thorn boma. Everyone was warned not to leave the boma by night, but one of my personal boys—a brainless Kavirondo—thinking perhaps that orders were not meant for him, broke camp and was promptly speared. His cries effectually raised the camp, but the extent of his hurt bore little resemblance to the volume of his noise. He had a nice little spear thrust in a tender spot.

The boy's misfortune was promptly turned to account for, after stilling his cries, we got the Dabossan captives to shout into the night all our news. Our reason for being there, our intentions, how we had their cattle ready to return to their owners—so far had the narrative gone when first one voice from the dark and then others began asking news of such and such a cow or heifer, so-and-so's bull or bullock. Later women or girl captives were asked after. Eventually men appeared and were persuaded to come to camp.

Relations became friendly almost at once. At daybreak it was arranged for some natives to go at once to Dabossa and spread the news, while others accompanied some of our boys back to Dodose in order to identify the cattle. This was thought necessary as we did not know the cattle from any others, and also because it was almost certain that the Dodose notables would try to palm off their duds for the good Dabossan animals. In the meantime I remained hunting the surrounding country.

In a few days there arrived a runner from Dodose with the news that my Dodose notables had held a meeting, and courage brewed by numbers and beer, had flatly refused to give up the Dabossan cattle left in their charge. Not knowing my native gentlemen as well as I ought to have, and that courage so rapidly got was as rapidly lost, I was on the point of rushing back to Dodose when another runner arrived saying that all was well, and that notable after notable had singly and surreptitiously returned the full tally of cattle left with him. I was relieved to hear this as there were constant native palavers taking up a great deal of my hunting time.

The cattle soon arrived, drank up our small pool of water, and we pushed off all together for Dabossa. The captive women were now of course quite free to go or stay, and without exception they remained with us in idleness until removed by their men folk on our arrival in Dabossa. Had I allowed it most of them would have remained as "wives" to my men rather than go back to the heavy work of tilling their home gardens.

We had a huge reception at Dabossa. There must have been close to 3,000 spears assembled in the huge open space where we camped. Pow-wows were the order of one long and weary day when the cattle were handed over and the captives returned to their relatives. Peace for us at any rate was assured, but when I told the Dabossans that no one would attack them, and that they ought to trade peacefully, they swore they would massacre every Swahili who might venture into their country. After I had explained my wish to hunt elephant an old woman got up and made a long speech to the effect that they owed everything to me, and that they ought to give me a pair of tusks. This they did, not particularly long ones. But what was better

than tusks was guides to the Murua Akipi (Mountain of Water) country, said to abound in elephant.

This Murua Akipi was the aim of my journey. I had heard of it from native sources. It was a wonderful country where anything might happen. Huge elephants lived there, and bad Abyssinians came from there. Elephant cemeteries were to be found there. Water which killed whoever drank it, and which looked so cold and clear, was there. No white man had ever seen it, although every traveller was supposed to be trying to reach it for the mysterious "thahabu" (gold) it contained. In fact if anyone asked for anything under the sun anywhere within a radius of one hundred miles he would be referred to that mysterious blue peak, Murua Akipi.

We trailed along through monotonous cultivated country for several days, then, coming to the end of Dabossa, we entered an exceptionally huge deserted area. Here hardly anyone ventured as Habashi (Abyssinian) prowlers might be met. For several days this large open cotton-soil plain with bands of thorn bush, was covered with great numbers of ostrich and topi hartebeeste. Abyssinians had recently raided the outskirts of Dabossa and all the boys were rather nervous, having heard dreadful tales of the Habashi. We were not long in coming on signs of their methods. Away over the plains some small black objects were seen. My Zeiss glasses showed them to be people, apparently women, seated on the ground. At closer range there were seven of them, all young women. Closer still they appeared to be bound in a sitting position, and all were in a very bad state. For one thing, their tongues all protruded and were black and fly covered. This was thirst. Their arms were passed inside the knee, and were lashed securely to the outside of the ankle, and so they were abandoned in this shameless fashion to rescue or death from thirst.

Having water with us we soon released them and forced sufficient moisture between tongue and teeth. Contrasted with those dreadful tongues how beautifully primitive their teeth appeared. Small, regular and widely set apart from each other, nothing seemed to tarnish their whiteness.

These hardy creatures soon recovered sufficiently to stand up,

and we packed each on a donkey to our next camp where sufficient water for all was got. The next day we sent them off to their homes, feeling pretty certain there would be no more Abyssinians between them and Dabossa, as water was still scarce.

We now sighted Murua Akipi as a minute tooth of pale blue just cutting the horizon. I thought we would reach it in two days, but it required four days of long marching to reach a small kopje a few miles from its base. That tiny tooth grew larger and larger each day until it looked an enormous size. I daresay it is not more than 2,000 or 3,000 feet, but being surrounded by huge plains, it shows to great advantage.

One day while crossing the plains we had a smart shower which turned the black powdery soil into very tenacious mud. Walking became a trial for anything but naked feet, and I asked Pyjale if the conditions were right for running down antelope. He assured me they were, and I told him and the Dabossans to try it when opportunity arose. This was not long, for as we came out on a thorn belt we surprised a herd of eland and topi. Off went Pyjale and the Dabossans, taking off their spear guards as they ran. Off went the antelope too, and for some time Pyjale and company lost ground. Through my glasses I could see that the eland threw up much more mud than the topi, and the topi much more than the natives. Consummate runners as all the natives were, Pyjale was easily best. He could probably have closed with his beast sooner than he did but for his running it in a circle for my benefit. The heavy fat eland was soon blown, and Pyjale presently ranged alongside, and with a neat and lightning dart of his spear, thrust it to the heart. The movement was barely perceptible through the glass.

While on the subject of native runners I would like to tell what took place at Kampala, the capital of Uganda, in the year when Dorando won the Olympic marathon in England. Everyone was marathon mad, and the fever spread to Uganda. A marathon for native runners was organized as part of the attraction of the Show. Native chiefs were warned to seek out and train any likely talent they might have. The training consisted of feeding the runners largely on beef.

The course was from Entebbe to Kampala show ground, with one complete circuit of the ground. The course was carefully marked, and two whites with bicycles were told to ride with the runners. The distance, I believe, was almost exactly the same as the English course. About thirty runners started in the hottest part of the day, experienced heavy rain en route, which turned to mud and washed out the bicycles, and thirty runners arrived together at the show grounds, tore around the ground singing and leaping in the air, fresh as paint, completed the course still together, and went on circling the ground, thinking they were giving their lady friends a treat, I suppose. They had to be stopped eventually, but the most astonishing thing was that their time for the course was almost exactly Dorando's time. They thought it was better fun to come in all together than by ones and twos.

Camp was pitched at the foot of the kopje, sufficient rain water being found in the elephant baths for all our requirements. The next morning I climbed the little hill in pouring rain. From its top I had a good view of the Murua to the south, while to the north a river was visible flowing northward. On its banks were verdant green flats which might have been as smooth as tennis lawns but for the fact that they were thickly speckled with black dots which the glasses and then the telescope showed to be the backs and heads of scores of bull elephant. The grass was young swamp grass and about six or seven feet high. The big tripod telescope showed some wonderful ivory, and I have never seen before or since so many *old* bull elephant in one place. Bunches of young herd bulls were comparatively common, but here were numbers of aged bulls.

Knowing how all naked men hate rain, I left Pyjale in camp and took instead a well-clad boy whose feet had worn out earlier in the journey, and who had since been recuperating at the base camp. Nothing takes condition off a naked African like heavy rain. Strong as their constitutions are, they wilt when constantly wet, once the native oil of the skin is pierced.

Straight for the swamps through the thorny flats we went, and came out of some very dense wait-a-bit almost under the trunk of a single old monster. I thought of trying a shot through the palate

for the brain, but wisely refrained and withdrew quickly a few paces while the old bull stared straight at us, still unsuspicious, and affording an easy frontal shot.

Passing on, we were presently on the edge of the green swamp, and now how differently the smooth looking lawn appeared; huge broad-leaved grass, still young but seven or eight feet high in places. While all the dry country was still parched after the long dry season, here in this rich flood land the grass had two or three months start, hence the number of elephant. But why only bulls? That is known to them only. I had a grand day among them in spite of the grass. Soaked to the skin, the temperature just suited the white man, and I returned washed out but happy to a comfortable tent, hot bath, pyjamas, and food ready and good enough for a keen appetite, and the best of service. Off with wet and mud-covered things, dump them on the ground sheet; good boys are there ready to pick them up, wash them, and dry them by the huge camp fire. Fresh clothes every day—what real solid comfort one has in the bush! No laundry bills to face, and no clothes to be careful of. Creases in the trousers are not required below the knee, and the harder the usage the softer the wear. Having tasted Heaven already, I think I must be booked for the other place. Ten good tails was the count for the day.

Mounting Look-out Hill next morning, no elephant were visible, so off went the cutting-out gang with their axes, etc., and my yesterday's companion as guide to the slain. In the evening they returned with some magnificent ivory, but having found only nine carcases. Having the tails of ten I thought they had failed to find the tenth, and I turned in, meaning to show them on the morrow. I remembered now on looking at the ivory that the missing animal had exceptionally long tusks. I had measured them with my forearm, and three-and-a-half lengths had they protruded from the lip. Resolved to find him, we searched the whole area of that swamp, but nowhere could he be found. At last I came to the spot from whence I had fired, as I supposed, the fatal shot. After a little search I found the empty .275 case. There, a few yards away, should have been the elephant. Here was where he lay on his side; ground flattened, mark of under tusk in mud, all complete. But no elephant

could be found. It was a case of stun and nothing else. And there, on those plains there probably wanders to this day an elephant distinguished from others by having had his tail painlessly amputated by human hand and Sheffield cutlery while under the influence of a unique anaesthetic. Meanwhile I had lost two grand tusks. One of the other bulls had a single tooth, but almost made up for this fraudulent shortage by weighing 134 pounds for his single tooth. The weight for the nine bulls was 1,463 pounds, all first rate stuff, and the value then in London somewhere about £877.

After some fairly successful hunting in the neighbourhood it was time to move on to the wonderful mountain. Its wonder had somewhat eased off by our close contact. Indeed, it now appeared just like an ordinary looking African hill, extremely sterile and forbidding looking. Although from a distance it appeared to be an isolated peak, on closer acquaintance there were seen to be not a few foot-hills of insignificant height. It was on the spur of one of these that we met with Abyssinians. As we headed across the plain men were seen scuttling up the rocks, and my glasses showed mules tethered some way up. Everyone was in a twitter. Habashi have a truly awful reputation for nameless atrocities in those parts, and had it lain with them my safari would have chosen instant flight rather than to come within rifle shot of those mounted terrors. For my part I felt tolerably all right, as the glasses showed no sign of the enemy being in any force. And then I thought if I were in their place and saw a safari of our size marching resolutely towards them I should feel pretty anxious. This thought comforted me to such an extent that I did a foolish thing. I was at that time trying to get a really good pair of oryx horns, and when, almost under the noses of the Abyssinians lying in the rocks, up got a good oryx, I let drive. Too late, the thought that the enemy might think I was firing at them flashed through my mind. I rushed up to the fallen buck and seemed busy with it. As a matter of fact we subsequently found that the great, fierce, bold Abyssinians were in a much greater funk than we were. We shouted in Arabic that we were friends, and invited them to come down. We tried everything without success, and at last camped peacefully beneath them. As evening was drawing

on, and they had not yet come, I strolled up to the mules without arms in case they might be scared. Then I sat down and smoked, hoping they would join me. But no, all I could see of them was their heads among the rocks. I went slowly towards them, and when I was quite close I found the poor devils were literally shivering. Good Heavens! I thought, what devilment have you been up to to be in such a state? It was only by sitting down with them in their funk holes, and chewing coffee berries which they offered, that they could be persuaded to come forth. It was impossible to talk with them. They knew no Arabic, and we knew no Abyssinian. However, we made out that they were ten days ride from their base and were out for elephant. Slaves, in other words, I suspect. They made me a present of a goodish mule, while I gave them in return a fine tusk. We parted, mutually relieved to see the last of each other.

At the end of a short march across lava dust plains we reached the wonderful mountain Murua Akipi. Skirting the base of it, we found a fine well-worn elephant road which we followed for some miles until a branch of it led up a gully to a little level plain surrounded by rocky, lava-strewn hill-slopes of a most forbidding description. For a few yards in the centre of the plain there was some short and verdant green grass dotted here and there by the white bleached skulls of elephant, while half buried leg bones showed their huge round knuckle ends. In the centre of this green oasis were three pools of intensely clear green water. All round the edges of the grass there were glistening lines of white powder, evidently high water marks. I tasted the water; it was certainly very bitter.

Here was what native information called an elephant cemetery, and at first sight I thought it was. But on looking around and thinking it over a bit I was struck by the fact that there were no recent bones or skulls. Again, all the skulls seemed to have undergone about the same amount of weathering. I talked it over with Pyjale, and he told me that he had heard from the old men, who had it from others, that there once came a dreadful drought upon the land; that so scarce had water become that springs of the nature in question were the only ones left running, and that they then became so strong that animals and men drinking of their water immediately

died. Even now as we drank it in a normal season the water was very bitter, although it appeared to have no after-effect beyond acting as a slight aperient. Natron, is, I believe, the impregnation. So much for elephant cemeteries.

Still skirting the base of Murua Akipi on well-worn elephant paths, we next day sighted zebra high up on the mountain side. Halting the safari, I went to investigate, and found a pool of fresh water sufficiently large for several days. Here we camped, and from this spot I did the mountain. From its top away to the north-east could be seen a distant line of hills which I took to be Abyssinia. To the north-west I could trace the course of the river which had afforded such good results in elephant. It meandered away through huge open plains until lost in the distance. I imagine it must flow into the Akobo or Pibor. At the time of which I write the maps were a blank as regards this region.

With my eyes well skinned for gold, I washed the gravel in the pot holes of the stream beds but without results. Soon tiring of this prospecting, I began to search the surrounding country for game. With clear atmosphere and good glasses all kinds of game were seen. The dry, lava-dust plains were covered with herds of oryx, ostrich, giraffe and gazelle. In the thorn belts elephant were seen. To find game I used prismatic binoculars, and to examine the animals more closely I had a large telescope on a tripod. With this I could almost weigh the tusks of elephant seven or eight miles distant. Sometimes rhino would be seen love-making. The inclination was to spend too much time at the eyepiece. But what dances that glass led me. I would watch two or three heavy old bull elephant feeding slowly about. It looked absurdly easy to go down to the plain and walk straight to them. But this I knew was not so, and I would try to memorize the course which lay between me and the animals. But however I tried it was always most difficult to find them once the flat was reached. Everything altered and looked different. My hunting around Murua Akipi was so successful that I found my safari already too heavily laden to attempt the following of the north flowing river. Only in these two particulars—the presence of large elephant, and Abyssinians—had the wondermongers been right

about Murua Akipi. Gold was not found. The deadly wastes were merely natron springs. The elephant cemeteries had been cemeteries during one exceptionally dry season only, or so it seemed.

For a hunter well equipped with foodstuffs a hunt of three months' duration in the country around Murua Akipi would have shown astonishing results. As it was we carried with us flour traded on Mount Elgon, some 600 miles south of us. Of course everyone was on half rations, that is every boy received a condensed milk can half filled with banana flour for one day, with the addition of as much elephant meat and fat or bush meat as he cared to take. In addition to this everyone got salt. The condition of all was magnificent. My food was arranged in the following manner. There were four milk cows constantly in milk. As they went dry they were exchanged for others from the native herds. Two or three of these cows, with their calves, accompanied me wherever I went; while two rested at the base camp in Dodose. Hence I always had milk, the staple of all native tribes. In time I came to drink it as they did, that is sour. Mixed with raw blood as they took it, I could never master, although it then became a perfect food, I am convinced. Fresh milk as we drink it at home is regarded by all pastoral tribes in the light of a slow but sure poison. They all declare that the drinking of milk in its fresh state leads to anæmia and loss of power. Under no conditions will they drink it fresh, but will always stand it in a calabash where it soon sours.

My two cows were milked night and morning. The evening milking was put to stand in a calabash and was sour by morning. The calabash was carried by a boy, and I drink it about 9 a.m., after marching from about 6 a.m. This I found did me well throughout the day without anything else, and no matter how hard the travelling. It seemed a perfect food. One did not get thirsty as after a meat meal, neither did one become soon hungry as after a farniaceous meal. Meanwhile that morning's milk was carried in a calabash all day, and was ripe for the evening meal. Then around the campfire I would frizzle dry bush meat in the embers.

A boy's feeding arrangements were as follows: he would wake up about 2 a.m., having slept since about 8 p.m. On his campfire he

would warm up a chunk of smoked elephant or buck meat. This he would not touch until the first half of the day's march, generally about 9 a.m. He would then have this first meal, consisting entirely of smoked beef. After that he would perform his hard day's work. In the evening at sundown his flour, if on half rations, would be made into thin gruel with fat added, and a pinch of wild tamarind to "mustard" it. When on full rations thick porridge stiffened off the fire with raw flour would be made, after that more smoked meat. Here again absolutely fresh meat was never eaten, always smoked or dried meat.

As regards the thirst-resisting qualities of the grain and meat diet as opposed to the milk and meat diet, there was no comparison. Pyjale, who shared my milk, once went three days without food or drink, whereas a grain-eating boy, who became lost was rescued just in time after only thirty-six hours without water.

After consulting the donkey headman it was decided that we had almost as much ivory as we could carry. Many of the tusks were too long for donkeys and should have been taken by porters. It was decided to return to our base through untouched country. The news was received with shouts of joy. It is wonderful how one comes to regard the base camp as home. Whereas on the way up the camps had been rather gloomy—disaster having been prophesied for the expedition, now all was joy. The safari chronicler became once more his joyous self, and his impromptu verse became longer and longer each night. The chronicler's job is to render into readily chanted metre all the important doings of the safari and its members. It is a kind of diary, and although not written down, is almost as permanent when committed to the tenacious memories of natives. Each night, in the hour between supper and bedtime, the chronicler gets up and blows a vibrating blast on his waterbuck horn. This is the signal for silence. Then begins the chant of the safari's doings, verse by verse, with chorus between. It is extraordinarily interesting but very difficult to understand. The arts of allusion and suggestion are used most cleverly. In fact the whole thing is wonderful. Verse by verse the history rolls out on the night, no man forgetting a single word. When the well-known first part is finished, bringing the

narrative complete up to and including yesterday, there is a pause of expectation—the new verse is about to be launched. Out it comes without hesitation or fault; all of today's events compressed into four lines of clever metric precis. If humorous its completion is greeted with a terrific outburst of laughter, and then it is sung by the whole lot in chorus, followed by a flare-up on indescribable noises; drums, pipes, horns and human voices. And then to bed, while those keen-eyed camp askaris mount guard; although they cannot hit a mountain by daylight, they fire and kill by night with a regularity that always leaves me dumb with astonishment. Remember they are using .450 bore bullets in .577 bore barrels, and explain it who can. They call it "medicine".

We traversed some queer country on our return to Dodose. All kinds were met with. We went thirty days on end without seeing an elephant, and in the succeeding four days I killed forty-four bulls. A lioness came within a foot of catching a boy and was shot. The dried skins of elephant were found occupying much the same position as when filled with flesh. Now they contained nothing but the loose bones, all the meat having been eaten away by maggots and ants, which had entered through nature's ports. Why the skin had not rotted as in other parts I could only ascribe to the dryness of the atmosphere. Finally we staggered home, heavily laden with ivory, to our base camp. That safari was one of my most successful. We "shuka'd" or went down country, with over 14,000 lbs. of ivory, all excellent stuff.

I continued to hunt in this Karamojo-Dabossa country for five years, from 1902 to the end of 1907, returning five times to Kenya and the railroad to sell my ivory, and to recoup my safari. The average weight of the tusks I shot on these safari's was 53 lbs., including about ten per cent single or broken tusks.

7

Through the Sudd of the Gelo River

MY hunting in the vast semi-desert country to the north-west of Lake Rudolph, as related in the last two chapters, had seemed to indicate that the swampy country further to the north, around the eastern tributaries of the White Nile would be very productive of elephant. In 1908 this wild country lying around the western and south-western base of the Abyssinian plateau seemed to us to present a most favourable field of operations. And as the boundaries had not yet been delimited between Abyssinia and the Sudan on the one hand, and Abyssinia and Uganda on the other, we felt there would be more scope for our activities in that region than elsewhere. The object was elephant hunting.

In order to reach this country we were obliged to cross Abyssinia. We took steamer to Djibuti on the Red Sea, ascending thence by railway to the then railhead, Dirre Doua, and then by horse, camel and mule to Addis Ababa, the capital. Here the only trouble we had was from our legation. Our representative regarded every English traveller in the light of being a potential source of trouble to him personally, and was at little pains to conceal his thoughts. Luckily we had been recommended financially to the bank, and this fact smoothed our path. Apparently in these matters the main question is whether one is the possessor of a few hundred pounds or not. In one of our colonies I was once bluntly asked by the Government representative if I had any money. Of course the poor man was merely trying to do his duty; but before I could think of this I had replied, "Precious little". Throughout my stay in his province he regarded me with the gravest suspicion.

Along the route from Addis Abeda to Gore in the west we were much pestered for presents by the Abyssinian military governors. We had been warned about this and were supplied with some auto-

matic pistols. They invariably turned these down and tried to get our rifles, but invariably accepted the pistols. These gentry have to be reckoned with, as it is within their power to hold up the traveller by simply declaring the road to be dangerous.

At Gore we came under the rule of the famous chief Ras Tasama. He reigned over the whole of the western part of Abyssinia, tolerated no interference from the Emperor, but paying him a considerable tribute. This tribute was mainly composed of slaves, gold, and ivory. The gold dust was gathered annually from the river beds after the rains, and by the subject races. We were informed that Gore's quota amounted to 4,000 ounces. Ivory was obtained from the negro tribes living in the lowlands below the Abyssinian plateau. One chief with whom we came into contact was required to provide 300 tusks annually, and apparently could do so easily. It will give an idea of the immense number of elephant in the country when I mention that this little chief had under him quite a modest little tribe, occupying a country which could be traversed in four days of easy marching.

Slaves were raided from tribes which could not or would not provide ivory. We gathered that these raids were extremely brutal affairs, for which the Abyssinian habits of eating raw meat and drinking rawer alcohol seemed peculiarly to fit them, and just before our arrival at Gore a raid had resulted in the capture of 10,000 men, women and children. This figure is probably an exaggeration, but it was evident from the accounts of witnesses whom we questioned that the numbers must have been very considerable. They said that the mules, with children lashed on them like faggots, required half a day to pass through the town The only sign of slaving that we ourselves saw was when we met a body of mounted Abyssinians guarding some wild-looking natives from some distant land. Even if their patient phlegm and air of despair had not drawn our attention to them, the fact that they were completely nude, very black, and wore ornaments such as necklaces made up of countless little round discs of ostrich eggshell, otherwise unseen in Abyssinia, would have done so. We were spared the sight of children.

From information gathered it now became necessary to obtain permission from Ras Tasama to proceed off the beaten track for the purpose of huntimg elephant. So far we had followed the well beaten Addis-Gambela-Khartoum track. We stated our wishes at the first interview with the Ras. He was an imposing looking old man, short of stature, but with the expression of power, authority and dignity so often found in outstanding Africans. Accompanied by our one-eared interpreter, who had lost the other one as a punishment for having sided with the Italians in the war, we were received in the hall of his house, a two-storeyed building of oval shape, and a fine specimen of Abyssinian architecture. The usual compliments passed between us, and the customary present was duly presented by us. This took the form of a case of liqueur brandy and a little banker's bag containing fifty golden sovereigns. As usual in Africa the gift was received without demonstration. We then proceeded to state out business through our interpreter. We were elephant hunters and wished to have the Ras's permission to hunt, and his advice on where to go. Drinks were served. Our choice was old *tedg* (honey mead), the national drink. It was clear and sparkling, very good and rather like champagne. The Ras told us it was nine years old. He himself preferred *araki*, which is almost pure alcohol flavoured with aniseed. He then remarked he knew of a country where there were many elephant. This remark we thought distinctly promising, but he made no further reference to the subject of so much importance to us. The visit ended.

On our return to camp we asked our interpreter what we should do now. He said we would get what we wanted, but that we should give the Ras another present. We looked about and finally decided to give him one of our sporting rifles. Next day, after arranging to call on him, we duly presented this beautiful weapon, together with a lot of cartridges. More hope was doled out to us without anything definite happening, and so it went on for three weeks. By that time the Ras had become possessed of eight mules, fifteen camels (he asked for these), several firearms and sundry cases of liquor, besides the presents first mentioned. We were then at the end of our resources and in desperation. This the Ras probably knew as well

as we did, for at long last the desired permission was given, but only verbally without witnesses. Once he had given his word, however, the thing was thoroughly well done. A guide was provided to take us to the hunting grounds. This man not only guided us, but as long as we remained in the country owing allegiance to the Ras we were provided with everything the country afforded.

After descending the steep edge of the Abyssinian Plateau we arrived at the rolling plains, several thousand feet lower and very much hotter than Gore. Mosquitoes were to be reckoned with once more. The natives were now very black, naked, Nilotic and pagan, but paid tribute to Ras Tasama in ivory. The guide took us to the chief of these people. He was a great swell and wore an Abyssinian robe. While at his village he feted us, and in the night came secretly to ask if we wished to buy ivory. We replied guardedly that much depended on the price asked. He then sent for a tusk and we were overjoyed to see that the ivory of the country was large and soft. We asked if that was all he had. He said he had more. Could we see it? Yes, and he led us to a stockade where he had a considerable amount of tusks hidden in a hole and covered with mats. One of these was very large, about 150 pounds I would say. We then asked him what he wanted for his ivory. "Guinneea", he said. It took us some time before it dawned on us. He wanted guineas, as English or Egyptian sovereigns are called. We were astonished and wondered how he was acquainted with them. It appeared that at Gambela there was a Greek trader who apparently bought ivory, and it was there that our friend had dealt in sovereigns. But of their true value he was ignorant, evidently confusing them with some smaller coin as he asked for an impossible number for a tusk. We knew that this chief was in high favour with Ras Tasama, and that he paid tribute of 300 tusks annually. This fact, combined with the sight before our eyes, seemed to denote enormous numbers of elephant somewhere, and yet we had seen no tracks so far. We asked where all this ivory came from. The chief smiled in a superior way, telling us to wait and he would show us so many elephant that we would be afraid to look upon them, let alone hunt them.

He was right about their numbers, for in a few days after leaving

his village we came upon the trail of a roaming herd. The well-beaten part of this trail was literally several hundred yards wide. I am afraid to estimate how many animals must have been in that herd. Although it was several days old I wanted to follow it. I took it to be a migration of sorts. But the natives said no, there was no need to, there were plenty more. And sure enough they were right. We arrived at a small village on the banks of the Gelo.

Looking upon our map we found that the Gelo River from Lake Tata down stream was marked as unknown. Accordingly we made inquiries among the natives about the country down stream, and were told that there were no natives for many days, that the whole country was under water at this season, and that no one would go.

This was good enough for us. We opened negotiations with the chiefs for some dug-out canoes, which we obtained from various sundries. They were poor carriers and very cranky, so I lashed them together in rafts of three. It was now necessary to deal with our followers. All the Abyssinians would have to return as they were daily becoming more fever-stricken. With them would go the mules. The guide rightly considered he had done his job. There remained four of my old Swahili followers from British East Africa, who had been shipped through Thomas Cook and Son from Mombasa to Djibuti, and four Yemen Arabs we had picked up on our way through. The Swahili's were old hands, had been everywhere with me for about ten years, and cared not a rap where we went. The Arabs were new, but splendid fellows. They hated the thought of crossing Abyssinia by themselves, and were therefore obliged to go with us.

On loading up the flotilla it was found impossible to carry all our stores. We made a huge bonfire of the surplus, and I well remember how the ham and bacon burned. We regretted burning all these good things, but as a matter of fact we were better off without them. Laying in a stock of native grain, we pushed off into the current and down stream. It was the rainy season, and the discomforts we suffered were sometimes acute. Almost immediately on quitting the chief's village we entered a region where hard ground rose only a few inches above water level. Great areas were entirely

covered with water, only the tops of the 12-foot grass showing above. Whenever we turned one of the many bends of the river, and these were hard banks, there would be a continuous line of splashes, which advanced with us as the crocodiles plunged in. The water was teeming with fish, especially the lung-fish, which continued rising night and day to breathe, as we supposed.

In this swamp country every night was a time of horror, and camping a perfect nightmare. Well before the sun was down the mosquitoes appeared in myriads. Luckily our boys had each been provided with a mosquito net. These nets I had procured with a watertight canvas cover so that they also acted as small tents. They could be slung between sticks or paddles stuck in the ground. Without them no man could long survive the quite serious loss of blood and sleep. To add to our troubles, firewood was non-existant. In the hot, sweltering nights, when it was not raining, the moon would appear almost obliterated by the clouds of mosquitoes hanging to the net, while the massed hum seemed to be continuous. And yet there was no fever among us, presumably because of the lack of infection sources. Several times no dry spot could be found, and we stuck it out as best we could on the canoes.

Of game we saw nothing except elephant. No buck or buffalo, nor even hippo in that desolate region. How numerous elephant were I cannot say, for we never hunted them unless we actually saw them from the canoes. Low in the water as we were, and with high grass everywhere, it was necessary for the animals to be within a few yards of the bank to come within our view. Hunting thus we killed some thirty bulls as we drifted along. Allowing that we killed half we saw, that would mean that sixty bull elephant crossed our narrow path at the moment we were there or thereabouts. If this region were only a few miles deep on either bank, and was frequented on a similar scale, it would indicate an enormous number of elephant. We took little heed of cows, but of these quite a hundred came into our view.

All our boys being Mohammedans, we two whites were the only eaters of elephant meat. Luckily for the others, fish were easily caught. At one place where we killed elephant we found a raised

piece of ground perhaps three or four feet above the water. It had three trees on it. We were simply delighted to reach shore again, and as we had killed six good bulls that day, the camp was merry—at any rate the white portion of it. As we were obliged to wait here three or four days for the elephant to rot before drawing the tusks, we pitched our tents and made everything comfortable. In the night a terrific rainstorm blew up, and when it was at its height red ants invaded us. My companion was got out first and had to vacate his bed and tent. I could hear him cursing between the thunder claps. Presently he came into my tent quite naked, as they had got into his pyjamas. I told him to lay a trail of parafin all around the tent, while I proceeded to tuck my net well in all around me. As he was laying the trail the rising water came rushing in, bearing its thousands of desperate ants. They swarmed over everything they touched. I lay, as I thought, secure, my companion fled, slapping and brushing his naked legs and cursing dreadfully.

For some time the enemy failed to penetrate my fine mesh net, but when they did get me they got me at once. Without two thoughts I was out in the pouring rain and throwing off my pyjamas. After brushing off the fiery hot devils, I found they were mounting my legs just as fast. My companion called through the storm to me to get up on an upturned bucket. I found one at last and mounted, and thus we rode it out.

There was bad "medicine" in that camp, for next day my companion got gassed when he drew a tusk, and was violently sick; and while carrying the tusk back to camp stepped on a huge fish while walking through mud and water, which threw him headlong into it. We were now obliged to cast gear in order to carry ivory. Spare axes, tools and camp gear went first, and finally provisions and tents. At last we could take nothing more aboard and float. We left ivory standing on the banks. We had formed the idea of returning, properly equipped, for this inland navigation, and headed down stream with about two inches freeboard. Our sluggish Gelo bore us slowly into the sluggish Pibor, which pushed us gently into the livelier Sobat. On our way down this river to the Nile we were so short of food and the usual wherewithal to buy it that we were

obliged to part with one of our tusks for native grain, fowls and a couple of sheep. We camped frequently by the villages of the Nuers, and were astonished to learn on our arrival at the Nile that we were then at war with this tribe.

I am inclined to think that we were rather lucky to have come through this sudd region of the Gelo so easily. At one place the open channel divided equally into two, and we debated which one we should follow. We tossed, and the paddle decided on the right-hand channel. We followed it, but never saw where the other channel rejoined.

After reaching the more open waters of the Sobat the lightest breeze raised sufficient lop on the water to come aboard with our dangerously low freeboard. As it was, we were caught about mid-stream once, and before we could reach the bank the whole flotilla settled down. Luckily we were only a few yards from the shore, and in about ten feet of water. Our boys were magnificent and got everything out while we plugged shots into the water to keep off crocs. Had we foundered further out the whole of our ivory, rifles, etc., would have been lost.

The hunting of elephant in this swampy region was of the severest description. That is the reason for their migrating here in such numbers, I think. The ground was too rotten for ponies or mules, even should they survive the myriads of flies and mosquitoes. The grass was mostly the 12-foot stuff with razor-like edges and countless, almost invisible spines, which stick into exposed limbs. Locomotion for humans was only possible when following elephant tracks. When within even a few paces of the animals it was generally impossible to see them. I used to mount on a boy's shoulders and fire from there, but the stance was so wobbly and the view so obstructed by grass tops as to make it most unsatisfactory. Having a large telescope mounted on a stout tripod, I fitted a tiny board on the tripod top and found it most satisfactory, although the jump from my rifle, slight as it was, knocked me off once or twice.

On this safari the health of everyone was excellent, considering the hard work and poor food. We whites were troubled somewhat with indigestion caused, I think, by our native grain flour having

got wet and fermented a bit. There was practically no fever, and our tough old Swahilis came through without turning a hair. The Arabs however, lost condition. The tusks of the elephant that I shot on this safari averaged 56 pounds each.

8

The Lado Enclave

ARRIVING at the Nile, I immediately proceeded to organize in the Enclave de Lado, which at for elephant hunting that time comprised the country bordering the western bank of the Upper Nile from Lado in the north to Mahazi in the south. It was leased to Leopold, King of the Belgians, for the duration of his life and for six months after his death. This extension of the lease was popularly supposed to be for the purpose of enabling the occupiers to withdraw and remove their gear.

While the King was still alive and the Enclave occupied by Congo authorities, I stepped ashore one day at Lado, the chief administrative post in the northern part. Luckily for me, the Chef de Zone was there, and I immediately announced my business of elephant hunting. The Chef was himself a great shikari, and told me he held the record for the (then) Congo Free State with a bag of forty seven, I think it was. He was most kind and keenly interested in my project, and promised to help me in every way he could.

As regards permission to hunt, he told me that if I merely wished to shoot one or two elephants, he could easily arrange that on the spot, but that if I wanted to hunt elephant extensively I should require a permit from the Governor, who lived at Boma, at the mouth of the Congo. The price of the permit was £20, and it was good for five months in one year. It was quite unlimited, and of course was a gift to anyone who knew the game. The Belgians, however, seemed to think that the demanding of 500 francs for a permit to hunt such dangerous animals was in the nature of pure extortion; they regarded as mad anyone who paid such a sum for such a doubtful privilege.

I was naturally very eager to secure such a permit, especially when the Chef told me of the undoubtable herds of elephant he had

seen in the interior. By calculation it was found that the permit, if granted, would arrive at Lado in good time for the opening of the season, three months hence. I deposited twenty golden sovereigns with the Treasury, copied out a flowery application to the Governor for a permit, which my friend the Chef drafted for me, and there was nothing to do but wait.

My visit to Lado was my first experience with Belgian domestic arrangements. The Chef de Zone lived entirely apart from the other officers, but with this exception they all messed together. The Chef himself was most exclusive; he gave me to understand, in fact, that he regarded his subordinate officers as "scum". He gave me many cryptic warnings to have nothing to do with them, all of which was rather lost on me then as I had never hitherto come in contact with white men just like that. When, therefore, I was invited to dine at the mess I accepted, little knowing what I was in for. The mess-room was very large, or rather a large thatched roof standing on many pillars of sun-dried brick. In place of walls nothing more substantial than mosquito netting interposed itself between the diners and the gaze of the native multitude, comprising the station garrison and so on. This system of architecture suits the climate admirably, its sole drawback being its publicity. For when the inmates of such a structure have the playful dinner habits of our forefathers, without their heads, and try to drink each other under the table, and when, moreover, the casualties are removed by native servants from that ignominious position one after the other, speechless, prostrate and puking, the whole affair becomes a kind of movie show, with sounds added for the native population. When, for instance, the Chef de Poste, whose image is intimately connected in most of the spectators' minds with floggings, ambitiously tries to mount the table, fails, and falls flat, the "thunders of applause" of our newspapers best describe the reception of his downfall by the audience.

At the dinner in question we started well. One member of the mess contributed five dozen bottles of beer. Another a case of whisky. A demi-john or two of the rough ration table wine, rendered somewhat alcoholic by the vagaries of wine in the Tropics, was also

available. But the effort of the evening was when a sporting Count produced a bottle of Curacao. We sat down. Directly in front of me in the usual position I found some plates, a knife, fork and spoon. But on three sides I was surrounded by eggs. There were, I think, three dozen of them. On looking round I observed that each diner was similarly provided. Then soup arrived, very strong, good, and liberally flavoured with garlic. It was made from buffalo killed by the Post's native hunters. Meanwhile I noticed my neighbours handing out their eggs to the boys, and giving instructions regarding them. I was at a loss. Hitherto I had regarded my eggs as being boiled and ready to eat, all the time wondering how I was to eat so many. Then I caught the word 'omelette' pass my neighbour's lips as he handed a dozen or two to the boy. I tumbled to it. They were raw, and you simply handed them out as you fancied. What a capital idea. I set aside a dozen for an omelette, a half-dozen to be fried, and half-dozen to be poached. I thought that if I got through that lot I should have enough.

The next dish appeared and was placed before the senior officer at the head of the table. It looked to me like a small mountain of mashed beetroot. Into its sugar loaf apex the officer dug a large wooden salad spoon, turning in one rotary motion its perfect sugar loaf shape into that of an extinct volcano. With deft and practised hand he then broke egg after egg into the yawning crater. As well as I could judge, the contents of the eggs were in no case examined. To anyone acquainted with the average African egg this means a lot.

On to the sulphur splotched and quivering mass pepper and salt were liberally poured, then vinegar, and a vigorous stirring prepared it for presentation to the one bewildered and suffering guest. I took a moderate helping of the red crater slopes, avoiding the albuminous morass, wondering how you handled it anyhow, and what would happen if you broke the containing walls. I watched the dish go the rounds with great interest, hoping someone would be bold with the large spoon, prematurely burst the crater, and be engulfed in the ensuing flood. But alas! with marvellous dexterity man after man hoicked out a plateful of the nauseating stuff without accident. They were used to it.

Now I tried a taste of the minced beetroot lying before me. It wasn't beetroot at all. It was raw buffalo flesh. I did not like it awfully. I have always admired, theoretically, men who eat raw meat. When I saw the Abyssinians eating their meat raw I did not admire them particularly, and now when I saw the Belgians eating it raw I did not seem to admire them either. And yet when I read of Sandow and the crack boxers eating raw meat I admired them. Perhaps it is the sight of men eating raw meat which stops the admiration, or perhaps the men who can safely eat raw meat must be admirable to begin with. Anyhow, this lot revolted me, to the complete extinction of my usual robust appetite. It was only when cake was served up with syrup, and you poured wine over it, an excellent sweet, that my appetite returned.

Drinking had meantime been going steadily on. I would say that by the time the cake came on each man had absorbed two litres of 18 per cent wine. I was diligently pressed to drink, but managed to avoid more than my share. I excused myself by saying that I was not used to it. I was rather astonished to notice that already some of the diners were beginning to show unmistakable signs of deep drinking. I subsequently discovered that when there was liquor at the station the drinking of it went on more or less night and day.

Towards the end of the meal some bottles of fine wine were produced and ran their course. After the dinner beer was produced and diligently dealt with as a preliminary to the drinking of the case of whisky. The latter was regarded as serious drinking, requiring careful preparation. I have noticed the same attitude towards whisky in Frenchmen also. They affect to regard it as a frightfully potent and insidious drink. One will often see an absinthe-sodden toper take a ludicrously small tot of whisky, drowning it with a quart of water on the source of its great strength. They began to taunt me with not drinking level. Stupid remarks were made about Englishmen and their inability to drink. I helped myself to a moderately large peg of whisky—which was good—and drank. Now they took this act to be a direct challenge. Here was a miserable Englishman taking far more whisky and far less water than they themselves were

in the habit of taking. It was enough. The man to whom I passed the bottle had to go one better, taking a large peg; and so it went on progressing round the table, until about half-way the bottle was finished. More were soon brought, uncorked and placed ready. When it came to a man opposite me I could see his hand tremble as with pale determination he poured out what he believed to be the strongest liquor in the world. With shouts of defiance the second bottle was drained. From noisy drinking the affair passed into a disorderly debauch. Diner after diner fell out and was removed, until there remained seated but two men and myself. One was a Dane of fine physique, and the other was the Belgian count. We looked at each other and smiled. We thought we were strictly sober, but the Count at any rate was mistaken, for when he rose to fetch another bottle of Curacao from his boxes, he too joined the casualties. The Dane and I carried him to his bed, found his keys in his trousers pocket, unlocked his boxes, found the liquor, and solemnly drank the contents around the corpse of the fallen as the sun came blazing over the horizon, and the station sweepers got busy. That Dane was hard at work an hour afterwards.

I now had two months to while away somehow until my hunting permit should arrive. I took a flying trip down through Uganda and got together a fine lot of Wanyamwezi porters ready for the hunting when it should begin. I took sixty of these boys as I was pretty confident of getting the permit, and quite confident of getting elephant anyhow. I arrived back at Lade and was glad to hear from the Treasury man that he had the permit for me all in order. He pointed out to me that the permit stated that the hunting of elephant was not to begin until the middle of May. It was then March, and here was I with a large safari and everything ready to begin. I was wondering what to do about it when whom should I see but my friend the Treasurer. I pointed out my difficulty, which he quite saw. He said it was very unfortunate, very, shaking his head and looking thoughtfully away. The true significance of this petty gesture was lost on me at first, and he had to put it pretty broadly to me that if he were squared it would be possible to begin right away. I did not do so, and thereby made a bitter enemy. One of the

considerations dissuading me from oiling this gentleman's palm was that it seemed to me that if I squared one I should have to square all, a somewhat costly business.

Passing over to the English side of the Nile, I occupied myself as well as I could obtaining my two elephants allowed me on my Ugada licence from the sporting herd of cow elephant which then haunted the Gondokoro region. This cow herd was even then notorious for chasing travellers on the Nimule-Gondokoro road, and had killed several natives and a gunbearer of the D.C. who was trying to scare them from some native gardens. I fell in with them only a few miles from the post and managed to kill two passable herd bulls. One of these, shot in the brain, fell upon a large calf, pinning it to the ground in such a fashion that neither could the calf release itself, nor could I and my boy help it to do so.

Nothing could be done without more help, so I sent the boy off to the camp for all hands. Meanwhile I waited under some trees a hundred yards from the dead bull and living calf. The latter was crying in a distressing way, and suddenly the cow herd came rushing back. They surrounded it and crowded all about it, while some of them made short rushes here and there, trunks and ears tossing about, with plenty of angry trumpeting. Now, I thought, we shall see a proof of the wonderful intelligence of the elephant. If elephants really do help off their wounded comrades, as is so often and so affectingly described by hunters, surely they will release a trapped youngster. All they have to do is to give a lift with their powerful trunks and the trick is done. Nothing of the sort happened. After a couple of hours of commotion and stamping about all around the spot my boys arrived, and it was time to drive off the herd. I found this was not as easy as it looked. First I shouted at them, man fashion. Several short, angry rushes in my direction was the answer. The boys did not like it, and I certainly did not want to do any cow shooting, so I tried the dodge of trying to imitate hyenas or lions. Whenever I had tried these curious sounds on elephant before it had invariably made them at first uneasy, and then anxious to go away. But here was tougher material. They drew more closely around the fallen bulls and more tossing fronts were presented.

As for any moving off, there was no sign of it. I redoubled my efforts; I screeched and boomed myself hoarse, and I am certain that any other herd of elephants would have rushed shrieking from the spot, but nothing would move this Gondokoro herd. Even when I fired repeatedly over their heads nothing much happened, but when I pasted the dusty ground about their trunks with bullets they began to move quite slowly, and with much stopping and running back. It was a gallant herd of ladies; very different in its behaviour from that of a bull herd in a similar situation.

When the ground was clear we seized the head of the dead bull, and with a combined heave raised it sufficiently to release the calf, but it was too late. He was dead.

* * * *

Having entered my rifles at Lado and cleared them through the Douane, it was not necessary again to visit a Belgian post. So when the hunting season opened, I already had a herd of bull elephant located. Naturally I lost no time when the date arrived; the date, that is, according to my calculations. This matter is of some importance, as I believe I was afterwards accused of being too soon. I may have begun a day, or even two days before the date, but to the best of my knowledge it was the opening date when I found a nice little herd of bulls, several of which I killed with the brain shot. I was using at that time a very light and sweet working .256 Mannlicher Schoenauer carbine weighing only 5¼ pounds. With this tiny and beautiful little weapon I had extraordinary luck, and I should have continued to use it in preference to my other rifles had not its Austrian ammunition developed the serious fault of splitting at the neck. After this discovery I reverted to my well-tried and always trusty 7 mm. Mauser.

My luck was right in on this Safari. The time of the year was just right. All the elephant for 100 miles inland were crowded into the swamps lining the Nile banks. Hunting was difficult only on account of the high grass. To surmount this one required either a dead elephant or a tripod to stand on. From such an eminence others could generally be shot. And the best of it was the huge herds were making so much noise themselves that only a few of them could

hear the report of the small-bore. None of the elephant could be driven out of the swamp. Whenever they came to the edge and saw the burnt up country before them, they wheeled about and re-entered the swamp with such determination that nothing I could do would shake it. Later on when the rains came and the green stuff sprang up everywhere, scarcely an elephant could be found in the swamps.

After about two months of hunting it became necessary to bury the ivory. The safari could no longer carry it, so a site was chosen close to the river bank and a huge pit dug. Large as it was it barely took all our beautiful elephant teeth. Ivory has awkward shapes and different curves, and cannot be stowed closely. Consequently there was much earth left over after filling the pit to show all and sundry where excavation had taken place. Where cattle or donkeys are available, the spot is enclosed by a fence of bushes, and the animals soon obliterate all traces, but here we had nothing. So to guard the precious hoard I erected a symbol which might have been mistaken by a white man for a cross made in a hurry, while its objectless appearance conveyed to the African mind the sure impress of "medicine", I remember that to one rickety arm I suspended an empty cartridge case and the tip of a hippo's tail. That the medicine was good was shown three or four months later when I sent some boys for the ivory. They found that the soil had been washed away from the top, exposing completely one tusk and parts of others, but that otherwise the cache was untouched. In spite of my giving this boy in charge of this party one length of stick for each tusk contained in the pit, he returned with one short of the number. To convince him of this fact it was necessary to line out the ivory and then to cover each tusk with one bit of stick, when, of course, there remained one stick over. Straight away the party had a good feed and set off for the pit again, well over a hundred miles away. It never occurred to them that one tusk might have been stolen. They were right. Through just feeling that they themselves would not have touched anything, guarded as our pit was guarded, they judged correctly that no other native man would do so. At the bottom of the open pit and now exposed by the rains was found the missing tusk.

After the hot work of the dry season in the swamps, the open bush country with still short grass was ideal for the foot hunter. The country was literally swarming with game of all sorts. I remember in one day seeing six white rhino, besides elephant, buffalo and buck of various kinds.

Then happened a thing that seems incredible to most ears. I ran to a standstill, or rather to a walking pace, a herd of elephant. It happened thus. Early one morning I met with a white rhino carrying a magnificent horn, and shot him. At the shot I heard the alarm rumble of elephant. Soon I was up to a large herd of bulls, cows, half-growns and calves. They were not yet properly alarmed, and were travelling slowly along. Giving hasty instructions to my boy to find the safari and then to camp it at the water nearest to the white rhino, I tailed on to that elephant herd. The sun indicated about 8 a.m., and at sundown (6 p.m.) there we were pasing the carcase of the dead rhino at a footpace. By pure luck we had described a huge circle, and it was only by finding the dead rhino that I knew where I was.

Throughout that broiling day I had run and run, sweating out the moisture I took in at the occasional puddles in the bush, sucking it through closed teeth to keep the wriggling things out. At that time I was not familiar with the oblique shot at the brain from behind, and I worked hard for each shot by racing to a position more or less at right angles to the beast to be shot. Consequently I gave myself a great deal of unnecessary trouble. That I earned each shot will be apparent when I state that although I had the herd well in hand by about 2 p.m., the total bag for the day was but fifteen bulls. To keep behind them was easy; the difficulty was that extra burst of speed necessary to overtake and range alongside them. The curious thing was that they appeared to be genuinely distressed by the sun and the pace. In the latter part of the day, whenever I fired I produced no quickening of the herd's speed whatever. No heads turned, no flourishing of trunks, and no attempted rushes by cows as in the morning. Just a dull plodding of thoroughly beaten animals.

This day's hunting has always puzzled me. I have attempted the same thing often since, but have never been able to live with them

for more than a short distance. Although a large herd, it was not so large but that every individual of it was thoroughly alarmed by each shot. I think that perhaps they committed a fatal mistake in not killing me with a burst of speed at the start. I left them when I recognized the dead rhino, and found camp soon afterwards. The next two days I rested in camp, while the cutting-out gangs worked back along the trail of the herd, finding and de-tusking the widely separated bodies of the dead elephants.

Shortly after leaving this camp four bull elephant were seen in the distance. As I went for them, and in passing through some thick bush, we suddenly came on two white rhino. They came confusedly barging at very close range, and then headed straight for the safari. Now it is usual for all porters familiar with the black rhino to throw down their loads crash bang whenever a rhino appears to be headed in their direction. Much damage then ensues to ivory if the ground be hard, and to crockery and bottles in any case. To prevent this happening I quickly killed the rhino, hoping that the shots would not alarm the elephant. We soon saw that they were still feeding slowly along, but before reaching them we came on a lion lying down. I did not wish to disturb the elephant, but I did want the lion's skin, which had a nice brown mane. While I hesitated he jumped up and stood broadside to me. I fired a careful shot and he humped his back and subsided with a little cough, while the bullet whined away in the distance. At the shot a lioness jumped up and could have been shot, but I let her go, and then on to our main objective. This morning's work shows what a perfect game-paradise I was in.

Presently King Leopold of Belgium died, and the evacuation of the Lado began. As I mentioned before, the Belgians had six months in which to carry this out. Instead of six months, they were pretty well out of it in six weeks, and now there was started a kind of "rush" for the abandoned country. All sorts of men came. Government employees threw up their jobs. Masons, contractors, marine engineers, army men, hotel keepers and others came, attracted by the tales of fabulous quantities of ivory. More than one party was fired with the resolve to find Emin Pasha's buried store. It might almost have been a gold rush.

Into the Enclave then came this horde. At first, they were for the most part orderly law-abiding citizens, but soon this restraint was thrown off. Finding themselves in a country where even murder went unpunished, every man became a law unto himself; the Sudan had no jurisdiction for six months, and the Belgians had gone. Some of the men went utterly bad and behaved atrociously to the natives, but the majority were too decent to do anything but hunt elephants. But the few bad men made it uncomfortable for the decent ones. The natives became disturbed, suspicious, shy and treacherous. The game was shot at, missed, wounded or killed by all sorts of people who had not the rudiments of hunter-craft or rifle shooting. The Belgian posts on the new frontier saw with alarm this invasion of heavily armed safaris; in some cases I believe they thought we might be trying some kind of Jameson raid on the Kilo goldfield, or something of the sort. Whatever they thought I know that in one case their representative was in a highly dangerous state of nerves. He was at Mahagi on Lake Albert Edward. I happened to be passing down the lake in my steel canoe, my boys and gear following in a large dug-out. With the rising of the sun a breeze sprang up, and with it a lop on the water sufficient to alarm the boys in the dug-out. They happened to be passing Mahagi Port at the moment, and I was miles ahead and out of sight. They decided to wait in the sheltered waters of Port Mahagi until the breeze should die down. They did so, and on landing were promptly seized by the Belgian soldiery, made to unload my gear, and carry it up to the fort.

Some hours later I came paddling along shore searching every bay for my lost safari. Crossing the mouth of Mahagi Port, and never dreaming they would have put in there, what should I see through my glasses but my large dug-out lying on the beach. I entered to investigate, but could see none of my boys about. Some natives told me they had been marched up to the fort. Now it was my habit when canoeing in those waters to do so in bare feet. It suddenly dawned one me that I had left my shoes with my safari. I thought it would be devilish awkward walking up to a strange frontier post in bare feet, to say nothing of the discomfort of climbing four or five

hundred yeards of stony path. I sat down and wrote a note on a scrap of paper to the officer in charge of the post, explaining what had happened, and asking him to send my safari on to the English side, only a few miles away. I also mentioned that I was on my way there. I wrote this note in English, as the Belgians usually have an English-speaking officer in their frontier posts. Beckoning to a native, I sent my note up to the fort and paddled off. As I was clearing the bay I saw some soldiers issue from the fort, one of them waving a letter. I returned to the beach and waited for them to arrive, much against the advice of my boy who said there was "bad medicine" about. I took the precaution to remain a yard or two from the shore. Soon black soldiers were approaching. When a few yards from the canoe the corporal who was carrying the letter, or piece of paper, shoved it quickly into his pouch, slung his rifle to his shoulder, rushed to the bow of my canoe, saying to the others "Kamata M'zungu" in Kiswahili, which means "Catch or seize the white man".

I had been watching the whole manoeuvre carefully, paddle in hand. When he said these words I knew there was dirty work afoot. When, therefore, the leader laid hold of the canoe I hit him a terrible blow on the head with my stout ash steering paddle. At the same time my boy shoved off, and there we were almost at once ten yards from the shore gang. Their leader was not stunned by my blow—it seems almost impossible to stun black men—and he had hurriedly unslung his rifle and was loading it. His companions were likewise occupied. The first ready raised and levelled his rifle, and before he could fire I shot him, aiming for the arm. He yelled and dropped his arm, while the others let fly a volley as they ducked and ran. I fired no other shot, but was sorely tempted. My boy and I now paddled vigorously for the open water, bullets raining around us, but not very close. I could distinguish a small bore among the reports of the soldiers' guns; it was the white man at the fort taking a hand. I drew a bead on him and was again tempted, but managed to withstand it. Presently they got their cannon, a Nordenfelt I believe, into action, but what they fired I cannot conceive, for the shot came nowhere nearer than 100 yards from us. I feel that

one or two good rifle shots might have taken that post without any trouble or danger to themselves.

I wondered now what to do about it. The whole thing was an infernal nuisance. I thought the best thing I could do was to go to the nearest English port and report the matter to the authorities, which I did, and in a day or two all my boys turned up except one. They said that when the row started down on the beach all the soldiers and white men seized their rifles and rushed to the heights overlooking the bay. With them went the guards detailed to look after the prisoners. When the road was clear these latter simply walked out of the deserted post, spread out, and were quickly lost in the bush. All except one who foolishly ran down to the beach; he was shot. The others soon made their way over land and arrived safely at the English port.

After re-organizing my safari I found myself headed for a new region, the country lying around Mt. Schweinfurth. Native information said the elephant were numerous and the ivory large. This time I took all my sporting rifles. This meant that besides my two personal rifles, I had five smart boys armed with good rifles. We felt ready to take on anything at any time. A few miles back from the Nile we found an exceptionally dense and isolated patch of forest. There was no other forest for miles around, and into this stronghold were crowded all kinds of elephant. They could not be dislodged or driven out as we soon found on trying it. I never saw such vicious brutes. When you had killed a bull you could not approach it for furious elephants. I devoted some time to this patch, getting a few hard-earned bulls from it. Right in its centre there was a clear patch of an acre or two in extent. Here one day I found a few cows and one bull sunning themselves. I had an easy shot at the bull and fired, killing him. At the shot there arose the most appalling din from the surrounding forest. Elephant in great numbers appeared on all sides crowding into the little clearing until it was packed with deeply agitated animals. Those that could shoved their way up to the dead bull, alternately throwing their heads high in the air, then lowering them as though butting at the prostrate bull. They did not know my whereabouts, but they knew the danger lay in the forest, for

they presented a united front of angry heads all along the side within my view. They seemed to regard the clear spot as their citadel, to be defended at all costs. Short intimidating rushes out from the line were frequently made, sometimes in my direction, but more often not. But when I got a chance at another bull and fired, I really thought I had done it this time, and the whole lot were coming. So vicious was their appearance, and so determined did they seem as they advanced, that I hurriedly withdrew more deeply into the forest. Looking back, however, I saw that as usual it was mostly bluff, and that they had stopped at the edge of the clearing. Presently they withdrew again, leaving perhaps twenty yards between them and the forest edge. I approached again to try for another bull. Clumsy white man fashion I made some noise which they heard. A lightning rush by, a tall and haggard looking cow right into the stuff from which I was looking at them sent me off again. I now began to wonder how I was to reach the two bulls I had shot. I did not want to kill any of the cows, but thought that it might become necessary, especially as they seemed to be turning very nasty indeed. The annoying part was that I had seen several bulls right out in the sea of cows. Fitting cartridges between my left hand fingers, and with full magazine, I approached as quietly as possible, prepared to give anything headed my way a severe lesson. Looking into the brilliantly lit open space from the twilight of the forest, I saw over the backs and heads of the cows between us the towering body of a large bull well out in the centre of the herd. His tusks were hidden by the cows, but it was almost certain from his general mass that they would be satisfactory. Just a little dark spot above the ear hole was intermittedly uncovered by the heads, ears and trunks of the intervening cows, which were still much agitated. At last I got a clear shot and fired. The image was instantly blacked out by the throw-up of the heads of several cows, as they launched themselves furiously at the shot. I was immediately engaged with three of the nearest, and sufficiently angry with them to stand my ground. I hoped to hustle the herd out of their fighting mood. I had spent days of trouble in this patch of forest. My boys had been chased out and demoralized when they attempted to

drive them. I myself had been badly scared once or twice with their barging about, and it was now time to see about it. My shot caught the leading cow in the brain and dropped her slithering on her knees right in the track of the two advancing close to her. One kept on towards me, offering no decent chance at her brain, so I gave her a bullet in a non-vital place to turn her. With a shriek she stopped, slewed half round and backed a few steps. Then round came her head again facing towards me. I was on the point of making an end of her when a mass of advancing heads, trunks and ears appeared on both sides of her. From that moment onward I can give no coherent description of what followed, because the images appeared, disappeared, and changed with such rapidity as to leave no permanent impression. In time the space was clear of living elephant. So far as that goes it was my victory; but as for clearing the patch of forest—no! That was their victory. I had merely taught them not to use the cleared space as their citadel.

Passing on, and climbing all the time, we reached a truly wonderful country. High, cool and rolling hills; running streams of clear water in every hollow, the sole bush a few forest trees lining their banks. In the wet season covered with high, strong grass, it was now burned off, and the fresh green stuff was just coming up. In the far distance could be seen from some of the higher places a dark line. It was the edge of "Darkest Africa", the great primeval forest spreading for thousands of square miles. Out of that forest and elsewhere had come hundreds upon hundreds of elephants to feed upon the young green stuff. They stood around that landscape as if made of wood and stuck there. Hunting there was too easy. Beyond a few reed buck there was no other game. Soon natives flocked to our camps, and at one time there must have been 3,000 of them. They were noisy and disturbed the game, but when it came to moving out ivory they were indispensable. Without them we could not have budged.

At camp, close to the edge of the great forest, I was sitting on a little hill one evening. Along one of the innumerable elephant paths I saw a small bull coming. Suliemani, my faithful servant and cook, had for years boasted how he would kill elephant if he were given

the chance. Here it was, and I should be able to see the fun. I came down to camp, called for Suliemani, gave him a rifle and thirty rounds, pointed out to him the direction of the elephant, and sent him off. Then I reclimbed the hill from which I could see both Suliemani and the elephant. The bull, having perhaps caught a whiff of our camp, had turned and was now leisurely making towards the forest. Soon Suliemani got his tracks and went racing along behind him. The elephant now entered some long grass which had escaped the fire, and this stuff evidently hid him from Suliemani's view. At the time it was not sufficiently high to prevent my seeing what happened through my glasses. In the high grass the elephant halted and Suliemani came slap into him. With two frightful starts Suliemani turned and fled in one direction, the elephant in the other. After half a hundred yards Suliemani pulled himself together and once more took up the trail, disappearing into the forest. Soon shot after shot was heard. There was no lack of friends in camp to count the number poor Suliemani fired. When twenty-seven had been heard there was silence for a long time. Darkness fell, everyone supped. Then came Suliemani stalking empty-handed into camp. A successful hunter always cuts off the tail and brings it home. Suliemani had failed after all his blowing. The camp was filled with jeers and jibes. Not a word from Suliemani as he prepared to eat his supper. Having eaten it in silence, the whole time being ragged to death by his mates, he quietly stepped across the camp, disappeared a moment into the darkness, and reappeared with the elephant's tail. He had killed it after all! There was a shout of laughter, but all Suliemani said was, "Of course".

In my nine months in the Lado Enclave I bagged 210 head of elephant, with an average weight of tusk of 27 pounds.

9
Hunting in Liberia

IN the year 1911 the search for new hunting grounds took me to Liberia, the Black Republic. I secured a passage by tramp steamer to Sinoc Town, Greenwood County, some few hundred miles south of the capital, Monrovia. Here I landed with my little camp outfit, and a decent battery comprising a .318 Mauser and a .22 rook rifle.

Right on the threshold I was met by conditions which are unique in Africa, with the possible exception of Abyssinia; for here the white man comes under the rule of the black, and any attempt at evasion or disregard of it is quickly and forcibly resented, as I witnessed immediately on stepping ashore. Among a crowd of blacks was a white man held powerless. His appearance seemed familiar. I had a nearer look and was astonished to recognize one of the officers of the tramp steamer from which I had just landed. I asked him what the trouble was about, but he could only curse incoherently. Just then a very polite black man in blue uniform and badge cap informed me that the officer had struck a native, and that he would have to answer for it to the magistrate. He was then promptly taken before the beak, who fined him twenty-five dollars, and the ship's captain fifty dollars, although the latter had not even been on shore.

After this episode I began to wonder what I had let myself in for. I found, however, that my informant in uniform was the Customs Officer, and extremely polite and anxious to help me pass my gear through. He seemed to have absolute power in his department, and let me off very lightly indeed. In all my dealings I invariably treated the Liberians with the greatest politeness, and I was invariably received in the same way.

As soon as I was clear of the Customs I looked out for a lodging of some sort. There were no hotels, of course, but I eventually found

an Englishman who represented a rubber company, and he very kindly put me up. I found that my host was the only Englishman, and he, with a German trader, comprised the white community. My host, whom I will call R., was much interested in my expedition into the interior. He told me frankly that I would have the devil of a time as the jurisdiction of the Liberians extended inland for about ten miles only, and beyond that the country was in the hands of the original natives. These were all armed with guns and a few rifles, and were constantly at war with each other. This I found out to be true.

As I was determined to penetrate and see for myself, he advised me to call on the Governor; also that I should take suitable presents to him. On my friend's advice I bought a case of beer and a case of Kola wine, the Governor, it appeared, being very partial to these beverages mixed. He told me that if I pressed a golden sovereign into his hand I should get what I wanted, that is a permit to hunt elephant.

I had to engage servants, and R. said I could either buy them or hire them. He explained that slavery was rampant. Whenever a tribe in the interior brought off a successful raid on their neighbours the captives were generally brought to the coast and there sold to the Liberians, themselves liberated slaves from the United States of America. Alcoholism was also prevalent and widespread, and had reached such a pitch that scarcely any children are born to the Liberians proper, in which case they buy bush children and adopt them as their own.

R. was going to a dance that night, and asked me if I would care to go with him. I was anxious to see what I could of the people and agreed to go. Later on I was surprised to see R. in full evening dress. He explained that everyone dressed. Now, as I had not brought mine it was very awkward, but R. said it would be all right. As we were changing, a fine buxom black girl burst into the house and marched straight up to R.'s room, throwing wide the door. There was R. in his white shirt and nothing else. I closed the door but could hear the lady engaging R. for some of the dances. She then asked for the white man who had arrived that day, and then my

door was thrown open. I was far from dressed myself, and had something about my appearance that seemed to tickle the lady immensely, for she went into peals of joyous laughter. She spoke English with a strong American accent, as nearly all Liberians do. She made me promise to dance with her that night, in spite of my protests that I could not dance at all. She turned the place upside down and then departed. I hastened to ask R. what kind of a dance they had, and he told me they liked waltzing best.

After dinner we started off to a large barn where a musical din denoted the dance. Here we found a fine lay-out. Lavish refreshments chiefly composed of cakes, cold pork, gin and beer, were provided for all. Everybody was very jolly, and they could dance, or it seemed so to me. The girls were nearly all in white or pink dresses, but not very *decollete*. A tall coal-black gentleman in full evening dress was master of ceremonies, but introductions soon became unnecessary. Beyond the refreshments gathered the old men, some in frock coats of very ancient cut, others in more modern garments. I was hospitably pressed to drink. The musicans drank without pressing. Everybody drank, women and all. What added zest was the fact that the fines inflicted on the steamer's captain and his officer paid for the feast. German export beer and Hamburg potato spirit were then only a few pence per bottle, consequently the dance became a debauch, seasoned drinkers though they were. The din and heat became terrific. Starched collars turned to sodden rags and things indescribable happened. Thus ended my first day in the Black Republic.

As notice had been sent to the Governor of my intended visit, and I had bought the necessary beer and Kola wine, next day I set off to visit him at his residence, some little way out of town. Bush with clearings planted with coffee describes the country between town and the Governor's residence, itself situated in a large coffee plantation. The house was of lumber construction and two storeys high, well built and the largest I had seen. I marched up, followed by R.'s two boys carrying the presents, to the front door. I was met immediately by a splendid looking old black, very tall, very black, dressed in a huge black frock coat, high starched collar and black

cravat. With snow-white hair and Uncle Sam beard and accent to match, he received me in a really kind and hearty manner. I must confess I felt rather diffident with my two cases of cheap liquor in the background, while I fingered a few hot sovereigns in my pocket. However, the bluff old fellow soon put me at my ease. Seeing the stuff out there on the boys' heads, he beckoned them in, helped them to lower their loads, shouted to someone to come and open the boxes, sent the boys in to get a drink, and ushered me into his sitting-room, all in the jolliest manner possible. Here we talked a bit, and then I told him what I had come for. A permit to hunt elephant. "Ha! Ha! ha!" he roared. Of course I should have a permit to hunt elephant. He wrote it then and there. Would I stop for dinner? I said I would be delighted. Then we had beer and Kola wine mixed until lunch was announced. Then the old boy took off his coat and invited me to do likewise. I did so and followed my host into the eating room. Here was a long table laid out for about twenty people—white tablecloth, knives, forks, etc. As we seated ourselves in tramped enchanting little black girls, all neatly dressed in moderately clean print dresses, with arms, necks and legs bare. And then Mrs. Governor appeared with some larger girls. After shaking hands we sat down to a very substantial meal. It was perfectly charming; everyone was at ease. The old man was an excellent host, and the old lady just as good a hostess. Conversation never flagged. The old man was full of his brother's doings. It seemed that his brother was a lazy good-for-nothing fellow, who let his cows stray into his neighbour's plantations. My host had repeatedly remonstrated, but without effect. So that morning, having discovered some of his brother's cows meandering around the plantation, he had gone straight for his shotgun and had rendered at least one incapable of further depredations. This act had, it appeared, stirred up his brother profoundly, but in an unusual way, for he could be heard for miles bawling religious songs from his bedroom window. Whenever there was a lull during lunch we heard the monotonous chant, which appeared to amuse my host immensely.

All the little girls were called their children, but I subsequently found that the old couple were quite childless, and that these were

bush children from the interior and now adopted. My host told me that he had been a slave in the Southern States, and he said he could remember well being flogged. He said that elephant were numerous in the interior, also bush-cow (the little red buffalo), leopard and the pigmy hippo. As regards the tribes, he laughed and said that they were a rough lot, and that Liberia was almost continually at war with them. In this connection I heard afterwards that the bush men had been down on a raid to a neighbouring town. They had seized, stripped, and tarred and feathered the Governor, raided and carried off all the liquor in the trading store, and enjoyed themselves generally.

With the acquisition of the hunting permit and the hiring of some lads from the interior, I was soon ready for the road. For ten miles or so we passed through lazily-kept coffee plantations, mostly worked by slave labour. The coffee is excellent, but produced without system. After this we began to rise gradually through virgin forests with no inhabitants. Our road was a mere footpath, and there were no flies which was pleasant. Throughout the forest country there were neither flies or mosquitoes, in spite of the dampness. The first night we camped in the bush where there were three huts. In one of these huts there lived a sort of "medicine" man. I got hold of him and asked him about the prospects of finding elephant. He was the most wide awake business man I had met since leaving London, for he at once offered to make such "medicine" as would lead to my killing elephant with large tusks in great numbers. I told him to fire away, but before doing so he asked what I would give him. I promised that if I got large tusks I would give him a case of gun. He was delighted, but wanted a few heads of tobacco added. This was also agreed to. He said I might consider the whole thing arranged. Then he asked me if I would care to buy gold dust. I said yes, and he produced a tiny skin bag of the stuff. I scoffed and said that I could not be bothered with quantities so small. Turning indifferently away, I was about to leave when he said he had some more. He produced it little by little until there was perhaps £80 worth. Then I became more interested and asked him what he wanted for it. Gunpowder came the answer at once. I told him

I had none. When he had brought himself to believe this he said he would exchange it for an equal weight of gold soversigns. Had his stuff been pure this trade might have shown a small profit, but it obviously was not, so of course I refused to buy. As a matter of curiosity I bought a pinch of his dust, and subsequently found that it contained about 25 per cent of brass filings. There were certainly no flies on that magic monger.

To his business of making medicine this hoary old rascal added the perhaps more lucrative one of slave dealing; for when I had retired to my camp bed my boy came to tell me that the medicine man wished to see me. I told the boy to tell him to go now and return in the morning. The answer was that he wanted to see me very particularly, so he was let in, and came with a pleasant looking young native girl following. She carried a small calabash, which the old man took from her and gave to me, saying it was a present of honey. The girl remained kneeling and sitting on her heels. The old ruffian kept leering at her and then leering at me. He wished to sell her.

As we expected to reach the first village of the bush people that day, we were off early in the morning. As a rule in forest country it is not well to start too early. Until ten or eleven o'clock the bush bordering the narrow native trails is saturated with moisture, and remains wet even after the passage of several people. On the way we saw monkeys of several kinds, and tracks of bush buck and bush cow. Hornbills were common, and various kinds of forest birds. The country was in ridges, heavily wooded, with running streams of clear water in the hollows. Here and there could be seen scratchings where natives had been looking for gold. The whole of this country is auriferous, I believe. The gold is alluvial, and the particles widely separated by dirt; too widely for Europeans I expect.

Late in the afternoon we arrived at the village. They knew of our coming, and the headman met us with a crowd of his people, and jolly independent in manner they were. Among the crowd there was quite a sprinkling of trade guns of the percussion cap type. Almost immediately I was shown to the hut allocated to travellers, and very grateful for the shade and coolness after the long and hilly

march. Water and firewood were brought, and the cook got busy. The construction of the huts was new to me, and quite excellent. The floor of the hut was raised some 4 feet off the ground, and consisted of stout bamboo mats tightly stretched over poles. As the mats were rather loosely woven, all dirt and water simply fell through to the ground. If a bath is required you squat on the floor and dash the water over yourself; it all runs through and soon dries out again. Then the mats being springy make a most excellent bed. Vermin are absent. One is obliged to have one of the huts as the bush runs close up to the village, having no room for a tent, besides which the ground is so damp as to make a floor well off the ground desirable.

After refreshment I called the headman and told him I had come to hunt elephant. He asked to see my rifle. I showed it to him, my .318. He smiled and said it would not do, peering into the small muzzle. He called for his own to show me, a huge affair, muzzle loading and shooting a long wooden harpoon with an iron head, heavily poisoned. But he said my rifle might do for bush cow of which there were plenty near at hand. He asked me if I would go after them next morning. I did not wish to a bit, but I thought it would be as well to create a good impression by killing something, so I promised to try. He then left me, and a nice present of food, a couple of fowls and eggs, arrived.

On the morrow I left for the bush with some local guides. We soon found fresh bush cow tracks and took them up. They led through a lot of deadly thick stuff, wet and cold. The guides made such a noise that I thought any bush cow that allowed us near enough to see them would have to be both sound asleep and deaf; and so it turned out, for presently we heard them stampeding through the bush. I gave it up at once, and consoled the natives by promising to kill some monkeys for them, which I had no difficulty in doing. Arrived back at the village I gave the headman a couple of monkeys and some tobacco in return for the hospitality we had received. Then we set off forward for the hunting grounds. We had a set-back about half way, as our guides deserted us saying they were at war with the people we were going to. This is always awkward in Africa, for the paths are misleading. There was

nothing for it but to trust to luck and push on.

After some miles of chancing our way along we saw a native in the path. As soon as we saw him he saw us and dived into the bush, trailing his long gun dangerously behind him. The alarm was out, and it was imperative to arrive at the village before anything could be organized. I gave my rifle to the boy to carry and on we went. Luckily the village was handy, and we marched straight into the middle of it and sat down; the natives who had been having a pow-wow, scattering right and left. This was always a very disconcerting thing for natives; they seemed to be quite lost to see what they had regarded as an enemy an instant before sitting quietly right in the middle of their town. It is necessary on these occasions to suppress any sign of nervousness on the part of one's followers, which it is not always easy. When this is done and there is no flourishing of lethal weapons I have never known it to fail. In a short time up came the headman in an awful funk, but outwardly composed. He demanded to know what I wanted. I said "Sit down!" He continued to stand. I told one of my boys to bring a mat, and beckoned to the headman to sit down. He did. Then I told him why we were there, and that if he showed us elephant they should have the meat. He went away and had a talk with some of his men, who had returned from the bush. I noticed that almost all of them were armed with guns. Presently he came back and led me to a hut. I got the thing made habitable, and the usual procedure of peaceful travellers went on. No notice was taken by us of anyone, and presently the native women began once more to be visible, a pretty fair indication that no hostilities were intended, for the moment at any rate. In an hour or two the headman came in in most cordial mood. He had been pushing inquiries among my boys, I knew. Apparently all was well. He said I could not have come to a better spot for elephant, or to a better man than himself. He presumed that I had heard of him; he seemed to think that London must be ringing with his prowess. I did not tell him I had never heard of him; I merely smiled.

His news was most inspiring, although I knew enough of Africans to discount 75 per cent of it. He said the bush was full of elephant. I decided to try the next day for them, and told the headman so.

He laughed and said we would have to sleep some nights in the bush, and that food would have to be taken. Therefore the following day was devoted to preparing food for the journey. In the evening I warned the people I was going to fire, and showed them the penetration of a modern rifle with solid bullets. I chose for this purpose a certain white-barked tree, the wood of which I knew from former trials set up less resistance to the passage of a bullet than other trees. This particular tree was very thick, and I hoped the bullet would not fail to come out on the other side. It traversed it easily, to my relief and to the astonishment of the natives, who came in crowds to see the exit hole. Of course none of their guns would have looked at it. It was just this kind of childish little thing that impresses Africans, and when done quietly and indifferently enough is most useful. In this case the effect was doubled by the fact that in their mode of waging war the taking of cover behind trees was more than half the game. Luckily no one was sufficiently acute to ask me to fire through one of the smaller but much tougher trees. They began to think that my rifle might kill elephant after all.

On the morrow we stored our heavy loads in the headman's hut and left for the bush. I took my camp bed and a ground sheet, which could be slung on a stick over it when it rained. These, with some plain food and 200 rounds of cartridges, comprised the loads, and as we had plenty of followers, each man was lightly laden. After passing through some plantations we were almost immediately in the virgin forest. We trekked hard all that day without seeing anything more interesting than monkeys and forest pigs, but on the following day the country began to show signs of game. Bush cow tracks became common, and we crossed several elephant paths, but devoid of recent tracks. This day I saw for the first time the comparatively tiny tracks of pigmy hippo. In one place quite a herd of them had passed in the night. I gathered from the natives that they sometimes remained throughout the day in the dark pools of the smaller forest streams, but that usually they passed the daytime in the larger streams, when they would come up to breathe under the overhanging banks, only the nostrils emerging from the water. The reason for this extreme shyness appeared to be that the natives possessed firearms.

The animals were quite defenceless, and the price of meat was high in all this stockless country. There exists such a dearth of flesh food that cannibalism is practiced. Towards evening we reached a stream where we camped. While a clearing was being made someone spotted a python coiled up on a rock a few feet out of the stream. They called me to come and shoot it. I ran up with my rifle to do so, and arrived just as the great snake was beginning to uncoil itself. First its head came, more and more of its body uncoiling behind until the head reached the shore, the body bridging the space between it and the rock, where there still remained several coils. It landed in face of us, and I was waiting until enough of it had reached hard ground before firing. Meanwhile the boys who had been clearing bush, rushed in with their slashers and attacked the huge serpent vigorously. It appeared to make no attempt to defend itself, and was soon disabled by a few dozen blows on the head and neck. Although dead, the body continued to writhe with great force as it was being cut into sections. All the natives were in high glee at securing so much good food. They said it was very good to eat, and certainly the flesh looked all right. When cooked it became as white as boiled cod, and seemed to lie in layers in the same way. The python was about 16 feet long, and contained the almost digested bodies of one or more monkeys. As I had killed two or three of these monkeys for them during the day, the boys had a splendid feast with the python added. I noticed that they ate the python and roasted the monkeys whole to carry forward cold. I gathered that elephant might be expected next day.

It poured hard most of the night and was quite cold. Luckily the forest was a splendid wind break, and but little rain reached my snug camp bed. The boys made little shelters with the under-bush, kept fires going, and ate python all night. As soon as we were warmed up a bit next morning we started. Now when the bush is wet, and the cold of the early morning is still on, it is very hard to get a native to go ahead. Being naked they come in for a shower bath every time they touch a branch. They simply loathe it. With difficulty one will eventually be pushed in front, but in a very short time he will pretend to have a thorn in his foot, or some other

pressing reason for stopping, and another has to be pushed forward. This continues until things heat up with the heightening of the sun; not that you can see the sun in this kind of forest, but nevertheless its heat rays penetrate the dense roof of foliage, although quite invisible.

We soon reached a lot of fresh elephant tracks. I examined them carefully, but could find no bull tracks at all. I could not even find one moderately big cow track. I was puzzled. All the tracks appeared to have been made by calves and half-grown animals. The boys were very pleased with them, however, and when I said I was not going to follow such small stuff, they assured me that the smaller the track the bigger the teeth. This belief I have found to be common all over Africa, not only among native hunters, but also among whites. In my experience it has failed to stand the test of careful observation. But it is so widely held and so firmly believed in that it may be interesting to state the conclusion I have arrived at after very many opportunities of testing it. It is, of course, only one man's experience, but I give it for what it is worth.

Very large and bulky elephants appear to carry very small tusks. Why they appear small is this: A tusk reaches a great length and a great lip diameter in a comparatively small number of years, but it is very hollow and weighs light. At this stage the bearer is still young and slim, as with men. Therefore his tusks look enormous in proportion to his general bulk. Thereafter, however, his tusks gain but little in either length or girth, but the hollows fill up more and more with the decades, while his body continues to fill out. He stops chasing the cows, takes less and less exercise, becomes bulkier and sourer in temper, suffers from gout, and for all I know gets a liver—for I have found them diseased in very old elephant—and now his tusks look small in proportion to his general size. To bear me out I would point to the enormously heavy tusks in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is only some 9 feet long and only just over 24 inches in circumference, yet it weighs 234 pounds. I have had heaps of tusks 9 feet long and 23½ inches in circumference which weighed a mere 100 to 150 pounds.

Pointing to a track which in any other country would have

indicated a young cow, the headman said that its owner would be found to carry enormous tusks. I knew this was bunkum; all he wanted was meat. But it began to dawn on me that perhaps the elephant of Liberia were, like its hippo, a dwarf race. This decided me to go and have a look, so off we started. The herd was a fairly large one and the ground soft, consequently the tracking was easy and the speed good. What an appalling spectacle we must have been as we raced along, for wise, calm, judicious eyes not out for blood—the natives all eager, searching the ground for tracks here and there, and like hounds on the trail. Some, more enterprising, chancing ahead to find the trail. A slap on the thigh signals this to the more tardy, while the pale-skinned man rests at the checks, the better to carry on his deadly work when that should begin. Watch him peering furtively through the bush in all directions, for human eye cannot pierce the dense vegetation. Far better good ears than good eyes in this kind of country. Watch him during the check listening. He imagines that those terrific vibrations his dull ears faintly gather may be caused by his quarry. How stupid he is to continue thinking so when surrounded by living evidence that it is not so, for not one of the native men has paused even for a second; they know monkeys when they hear them.

All the same they were not ordinary "monks", they were chimpanzee, a whole colony of them. They were very busy gathering fruit, and I pointed my rifle at a huge old man "chimp". Like a flash my natives disappeared, and with such a clatter that the chimps heard and also disappeared. I had not intention of firing, but I almost began to believe I must have done it, so rapidly had the stage cleared. However, up came the headman, relieved that the chimps had gone. I asked him what was the matter. He told me that chimps when in bands will attack if fired on. I don't believe it, but I am glad to say I have never tested it. They look like such jolly old hairy people.

After this we pushed along faster than ever, for the day was getting on. The quarry led us in every conceivable direction. Had I got lost, or had my natives deserted me, I should never have found my way back to the village at all. The sun's position did not help, it being invisible. A compass would not have helped unless a kind

of rough course had been jotted down with the directions and distances travelled. Towards evening I began to think it was a rum go. I could see no reason why the elephant should travel for food appeared to be plentiful. There were no signs of man anywhere. But the fact remains that their signs showed that we had gained but little on them during our nine hours' march. We had to camp for the night.

Rain during the night obliterated the tracks to some extent and made tracking slower. We had not gone far when the unexpected happened. The natives all stopped, listening. Only monks, I thought. Wrong again, for it was elephant this time. They must have wandered around back on their tracks, and we happened along just in time to hear them crossing. Had we been a few minutes earlier we should probably have had another day's hard going for nothing. Some of them were quite close, making all the usual sounds of feeding elephant. The sighs, the intestinal rumbles, the cracks, the r-r-r-rips as they stripped branches, the little short suppressed trumpet notes, the wind noises and the thuds of flapping ears—all were there.

Now leaving the boys, I approached alone. I was certainly very close indeed to elephant, but nothing could I see. I started through some bush, came out sure of seeing something—and did so *when I lowered my eyes.* I had completely forgotten my idea about these being dwarf elephants, and had been unconsciously peering about for a sight at the elevation of an ordinary elephant's top parts; whereas here I was looking straight into the face of an elephant *on a level with mine,* and only a matter of feet between us. At first I thought it was a calf and was about to withdraw when I noticed a number of animals beyond the near one. All were the same height. None stood over 7 feet at the shoulder. Their ivory was minute. I withdrew to think it over calmly. I met the headman, much too close in, and cursed him soundly. I said there was no ivory and that I was going to look for a bull among the main body, and that he had better keep well back. I was intensely annoyed at his pressing up like that, and also with the appearance of the elephant. I was not so interested in the natural history point of view then as I would be now, and the fact that these elephant were out of proportion to the

ordinary elephant as the pigmy hippo is to the ordinary hippo merely irritated me.

Circling around the lot I had first seen, I got to the bigger herd, searching for a bull. I had now more lesiure to examine the beasts, and to compare them one with another. I soon spotted what should have been a fair herd bull, judging by the width of his forehead and the taper of his tusks, but he stood scarcely 6 inches higher than the cows about him. His tusks were minute, but yet he had lost his baby forehead and ears, and looked, what in fact he was, a full-blown blood. I shot him. But here again I was at fault. I took a calm, deliberate shot at his brain, or rather where I thought his brain ought to be, and where it would have been in any decent elephant. But it was not there. Whether or not he was a brainless elephant I cannot positively say, for I killed him with the heart shot. But I am inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt, because I subsequently found out where others of his race kept their brains, and their situation in the head was not that of an ordinary elephant's. The ears were also different, although this is a poor distinction upon which to found a pretension to difference of race, for ears differ all over Africa. Then the tail hairs were almost as fine as those of giraffe. As regards bulk, I should say it would take six of them to balance a big Lakka elephant.

I was thoroughly disgusted, but the boys were jubilant. They thought he was enormous. I said I could not think of hunting such stuff. The tusks looked about 10 pounds—when weighed afterwards they scaled 15 pounds each, being shorter in the hollow than I had guessed them. "Well", I said, "if all your elephant are like this I shall have to pull out." Then came some more surprises. They said all the "red" elephant were the size of this one I had just killed, but that the "blue" elephant were much bigger. "And where are the blue elephant to be found?" I asked sarcastically, for I thought all this was just the usual bosh. "There were not many", they said, "and they never mix with the red ones, but they were huge." "And how big are they?" I asked. "As high as that", pointing with their spears to a height of about 11 or 12 feet. After all, I thought, it might be so, more especially as I had seen a pair of tusks of about 25 pounds each

on the "beach"—as a shipping port is always called in West Africa—which were reputed to have come from this country. We then camped by the dead elephant, and the business of cutting and drying meat on fires began.

In a way the smallness of the elephant helped me, for the meat was soon cut into strips and hanging over fires, and the boys were eager for more. Therefore I had no difficulty in getting some of them to go with me the next day to look for the so-called "blue" elephant. I thought that if these were as big as the natives said they were, they were probably wanderers from the interior, where I knew normal sized elephants lived, having hunted them in the hinterland of the Ivory Coast.

We hunted all that day without success, but I saw the old tracks of an ordinary elephant. These, the boys said, were made by a blue elephant. We returned after a long day to the meat camp. The headman announced his intention of accompanying me on the morrow, as his women would arrive that evening and would take charge of the meat. Now here is a curious thing about Africans. If one acquires, say a lot of meat, he tries to get it in charge of his wives as soon as possible, While he remains in possession everybody cadges from him; friends, relations, everybody of similar age, the merest acquaintances, all seem to think he should share the meat with them. But once the meat is handed over to his wife it is all secure. That ends it, for nobody will cadge from a woman, knowing I suppose, that it would be hopeless, for if the wife were to part with any she would be severely beaten by the husband. Yet that same husband, while still in charge of the meat, cannot refuse to share it.

With this in view, the headman had sent a runner to the village to bring up his women shortly after death, and in the night of the second day they arrived. Our rather dismal little camp became quite lively. Fires were lit all over the place, and everyone was extremely animated. When natives have recovered from their first gorge of meat they become very lively indeed. If they have a large quantity of meat, requiring several days to smoke and dry it, they dance all night. The conventional morality of their village is cast off, and they thoroughly enjoy themselves.

Early on the following day we were off for the big elephant. About twenty natives attached themselves to us. We wandered about, crossing numerous streams, until someone found tracks. If they were small I flatly refused to follow them. Late in the afternoon a real big track of a single bull was found. It was quite fresh, and absurdly easy to follow. We soon heard him, and nothing untoward took place. The brain was where it ought to be and he fell. As I anticipated he was a normal elephant, about 10 feet 10 inches at the shoulder, with quite ordinary tusks weighing 31 or 32 pounds. The boys thought he was a monster, and asked me what I thought of "blue" elephant. He certainly was much more nearly blue than the little red-mud-coloured ones of the day before.

As it was too late for anyone to return to the village that night we all camped by the elephant. Being dissatisfied with the number of shootable bulls about, I decided to return to the village with the boys, so off we set across the country. We travelled and travelled, as I imagined, straight towards the village. But this was far from being the case as I discovered when we all stopped to examine a man trail. It was ours! We had been slogging along in a huge circle, and here we were back again. I had often admired and envied the Africans for their wonderful faculty of finding their way where apparently there was nothing to indicate it. I have never yet been able to exactly "place" this extraordinary faculty. They cannot explain it themselves. They simply know the direction without taking bearings or doing anything consciously. Always puzzling over this sense which we whites have to such a poor degree, I have watched closely leading natives scores of times. The only thing they do, as far as I could observe, is to look at trees. Occasionally they recognize one, *but they are not looking for landmarks.* They are quite indifferent about the matter. Something which we have probably lost, leads them straight on, *even in pitch darkness.*

The occasion of which I am writing is the exception which proves the rule, for it is the only instance of natives getting seriously lost which has come under my observation, and that is in more than twenty years of hunting. For seriously lost we were. We wandered about that forest for three days. Leader after leader was tried, only

to end up on our old tracks. Food ran out. The boys had eaten all the elephant meat they brought with them. My food was finished, but the cartridges were not, thank goodness. I remember ordering a cartridge belt from Rigby to hold fifty rounds. He asked me what on earth I wanted with so many on it. I said I liked them, and here was the time it paid to have them. For now we lived entirely on monkeys, and horrible things they are. Tasting as they smell, with burning and singeing added, they are the most revolting food it has ever been my bad luck to have eaten.

At the end of the third day I thought to myself that something would have to be done. This kind of thing would end in someone being done in with exhaustion. As it seemed to me that I should be the first to drop out, it appeared up to me to do something. I had not the faintest notion where we were, but one thing I knew: water runs downhill. Next morning I took a hand. I made the boys follow scrupulously the winding bed of the first stream we came to. It joined a larger one, and we followed that. Not a word of remonstrance would I listen to, nor would I tolerate any short cuts. At length we reached a large river, and I was relieved to see that they all recognized it. Did they "savvy" it, I asked. Yes, rather. So I sat down for a rest. The boys were having a fearful argument about something. It appeared that some held that our village lay up-stream, others that it was down-stream. They came to me to settle it. I asked the up-streamers to come out. They numbered seven. I counted the down-streamers; they numbered nine. I said, "The village lies down stream", and by the merest hazard it did.

The village from which I had done so much hunting, and where I was so profusely "feted", had acquired great riches with the meat I had given the people. In spite of this, or because of it, they showed great opposition to my going. At first I paid no attention to their protests, continuing calmly with my preparations for departure, weighing and marking my ivory, etc. When my loads were ready I announced my intention of leaving on the morrow. This was wrong. What I should have done was to keep my intention entirely to myself, then suddenly to have fallen in the boys, shouldered the loads, and marched off. All would then have been well.

As it was when the morrow came the boys did not. They could not be found. I could not move my loads without them. I found the headman, accused him of playing this mean trick, and demanded the boys. He then tried all the persuasions he could think of to get me to stay. He offered me any women I fancied. This is always the first inducement in the African mind. Slaves, food, anything I wanted if I would only stay.

I got angry and cursed him, and threatened to shoot up the town. He said quietly that the king was coming, and I could talk to him. Meanwhile I had to wait. I was simply furious. The suspicion that they were after my ivory kept poisoning my mind. I argued with myself that they knew the value of ivory; that they knew what a lot of gin and "trade" they would get if they took my tusks to the coast. And a white man, a hunter of elephants done in, what would that matter? People would say, "Served him right". Then they wanted my rifle. They had seen it kill elephants with one shot. It had wonderful medicine. Curious how near we are to the primitive. I thought of shooting someone, but that would not have helped matters. Then sense and experience came to help me out. I laughed. As soon as I laughed they laughed. I felt master of the situation. Where was the king? Drinking beer. Let me talk to him.

I sat down in front of my hut. In a short time the king arrived with an escort of some forty guns. He seated himself in front of a hut directly across the street from me. I wanted to shake hands with him, but I did not wish to take my rifle with me, nor did I wish to leave it behind me, as it was to play a part in the comedy I had thought out. No one could reach me from the back, as I leaned against the wall of the hut. Therefore I assumed a belligerent attitude from the first, demanding to know why all my boys had been taken. The old king was luckily still sober, and very calm and dignified. When I started my demand he started. He said that his people had shown me the elephant; that without them I could not have found them. He said his people had treated me well. They had offered me wives of my own choosing. Food I had never lacked. Elephant were still numerous in the bush. Why should I wish to desert them in this manner?

I admitted that all he had said was true, but begged to point out that I was not a black man. I could not live always among them. White men died when they lived too long in hot countries, and so on. Then I pointed out the fact that I had never sold the meat of the elephant I had killed, although I might have done so and bought slaves and guns with it. I had given it all freely away to him and others, and now when I wanted to go they had seized my porters. Then he tried another line. He said I could go freely if I leave him my rifle. He said I could easily get another in my country. I turned this down so emphatically that he switched to another line.

He said when black men went to the coast they had to pay custom dues on everything they took or brought away from it. As this was entirely a white man's custom, and yet they enforced it on black man, putting them in prison if they did not pay, he would be obliged to make me pay customs on my ivory. He thought that if he and I divided it equally it would be a fair thing. At this I could not help laughing. The king smiled and everyone smiled. I suppose they thought I was going to pay.

But, I said, there is a difference between your country and white man's country. When a traveller arrives at the gates of a white man's country the very first thing he sees is a long building, and on it the sign "Customs". Now on seeing this sign the traveller knows what lies before him. If he objects to paying customs, or he has not the money which to pay, he departs without entering that country. But when the traveller reaches the gates of the king's country he looks in vain for "Customs". But if, having entered the country with this understanding, the king levies customs without having a Custom House, the traveller will recall what he said about the king and will depart, cursing that king and spreading his ill-fame so that no more travellers or elephant hunters will come near him. Therefore, I ended, the whole matter resolves itself into this: Have you a Custom House or have you not? Here I peered diligently about as if searching among the huts. The whole lot, king, court, escort, and mob roared with laughter.

They were not done yet, though. The palaver ran its usual interminable length. The king accused me of disposing of the pigmy

hippo meat in an illegal manner. Pigmy hippo were royal game, and every bit of it should have been sent to him. I had him again with the same gag as the customs one: that when he made a law he should write it down for everyone to read, or if he could not write he ought to employ some boy who could, and so on.

Wearied to exhaustion, I at length decided to try what a little bluff would do. I had hoped that I would not have to use it, but it was now or never. If it came off, and the porters were forthcoming, we could just make the next village hostile to the king before dark. Suddenly, seizing my rifle, I covered the king. No one moved. The king took it very well, I must say. I said I was going to fight for my porters, and begin on the king. He said that to fight was a silly game. However well I shot I could not kill more than ten of them before someone got me. I replied that that was so, *but that no one knew if he would be among the ten or not.* I had them. They gave it up. I kept the old man covered and told him not to move until the porters arrived. He sent off runners at once. They came on the run, picked up the loads and marched. I stopped a moment to shake hands. The insatiable old rascal begged for at least some tobacco. I felt so relieved and pleased at seeing my loads on the road at last that I promised him some when he had caught up with the caravan.

I was told on my arrival at the coast that during my absence in the interior the inspector of a company had come on a visit straight from London. He had started from the coast with a caravan of porters to visit one of their depots. He had promptly been arrested, carried before the magistrate, and fined twenty-five dollars for travelling on the Sabbath. The fine had been demanded at once, and someone set off to purchase gin. The magistrate knocked the neck off a bottle, took a pull, and offered it to the prisoner! The inspector had been very haughty with the Liberians, and they were out to get their own back.

It must not be thought that they are unfriendly towards whites. If treated politely they are very nice people indeed; they will do anything to help. But they must be treated just as if they were ordinary white travellers. I liked them immensely, and regretted having to leave their country owing to the smallness of the ivory.

And so ended my dealings with the citizens of Liberia and the natives of the hinterland.

10

French Equatoria. The Ubangui River

THE year 1912 found me hunting in French Equatorial Africa, based on the French outpost of Bangui on the Ubangui River. The country is densely forested, and by mere chance I discovered that the islands in the river were frequented by many elephant at certain times in the year. So numerous were they that I made haste to equip myself for the job. I reckoned that a small steam launch was required. So I ordered it from England. It came in sections, each weighing not more than 150 pounds. Two French engineers at Bangui, whose larger river steamers were temporarily laid up for lack of sufficient water, helped me assemble it. Never have I had such a comfortable or cheap way of travel. It steamed all day on what green wood the boys could cut in an hour. It drew but a foot, and would best almost any rapid. It was 35 feet long, and had a triple expansion engine running at 1,000 r.p.m., in an oil bath.

Imagine what a gift this thing was. All transport problems solved. Fuel to be got everywhere for the cutting. Lubricating oil? A ten-gallon drum lasted six months, and if put to it you could boil down hippo fat. It was a gift straight from Heaven, and made a paradise of that mighty river with its elephant-haunted islands. We soon rigged up a grass-roofed house on a platform built over two long native dug-outs. The platform occupied two-thirds of the length, leaving a space for the launch in between the two canoe hulls.

When we first tried this house-boat affair, we nearly sank the thing. Used to motors with their failing power with the drop in revs., it came as a pleasant surprise to find the very reverse with steam. We had not thought to cover in the ends of the canoes so when we opened the throttle we nearly went bow under, shipping

a lot of water. We just got back to the sand-bank in time. Rapidly we decked in the ends of our catamaran, and shifting some weights aft, we set off for the island hunting grounds. Tying up at a lovely clean sand-bank each night, an hour's bush-cutting by all hands provided fuel for the next day's steaming. Life was reduced to its simplest elements. The meat of the elephants killed provided all our own requirements. We never touched money. When elephant failed us, there were hippo and buffalo to be had.

As our hunting tactics developed, aided by this ideal transport, we began to use hundreds of natives from either the Belgian Congo side, or from the French side, or even from both banks together, in clearing a space right across some good, heavily-frequented island. Of course they could not tackle the large trees. But they would lay low all the underbrush so that when eleehant were moved down the island they would give the rifle a chance when they came in view to cross the clearing. I had visions of mowing them down in scores. Far otherwise was the reality.

The first time we tried a drive, we had all the usual palaver with the medicine-man to go through. It is as well to exercise some patience with these gentry when trying something new, if only because the natives are more given to heed their word than that of an unknown white man. On our houseboat we could transport forty natives at a time, so we soon had a large gang whacking away at the bush. The medicine-man; encouraged by a slug of absinthe, had promised them mountains of meat.

With drums beating, and exhorted by the elders, who were comfortably installed in the shade with beer pots around them, they fell to with a will and soon had a strip of sixty yards broad right across the island. This particular island was about twelve miles long and a hundred yards broad at its narrowest point. The de-brushing lasted a day and I told the natives we would try the scheme on the morrow. This was mistake Number One. We subsequently found we should have left the place quiet for at least a week. However, it was imperative to show results at the first trial, as otherwise it would be difficult to get a labour force for any further jog.

I had two .303 10-shot rifles and of course the old round-nosed

"solid" 215 gr. bullet. The launch went off at cock-crow to put the beaters ashore at the upstream end of the island some six miles away. I took up my stance beside a large forest tree at the edge of the clearing and awaited events. In front of me lay the debrushed space littered up with the cut underbrush and with all the large trees still standing. They were mighty close to each other and I anticipated some pretty fancy shooting if they came fast.

Nothing happened for a long time. I began to fear they might have broken out and taken to the river. Actually they were bunching up in complete silence in the thick stuff at the edge of the clearing, evidently upset by the unusual look and smell of things We should not have attempted a drive until they had got used to it.

We never saw a sign or heard a sound of an elephant as we waited expectantly. Yet they were there within shot and in numbers. They had on their quiet act. Not a belch; not a sign, nor a belly rumble; not even the tale-bearing plop, plop of evacuation. No flap of ears to warn the waiting hunter.

Just as I was beginning to thing the think was a flop they came. Needless to say not as I had hoped they would come, two or three at a time, but in a solid bunch. How many? I could not say. It was impossible to count. They came at speed and for a few seconds all was just a confused mass of cascading grey heads. Had they come straight, something might have been done with two or three of the leaders, but they had to pour between the large trunks of the still standing trees. It was quite the hottest seven or eight seconds I can remember. Nothing but semi-automatic fire could have dealt with it, ordinary pushbolt fire was hopelessly out of it, no matter how expert the operator might be. I fired three shots, two brain shots and an oblique shot through the neck going away. It was all over. Although disappointed they had not come quietly and spaced out, I was thankful to have got enough meat to satisfy the horde of natives. Had nothing been killed, I doubt if I should have been able to get any further volunteers for the bush-clearing jobs.

As we gained experience we did not clear the whole cross section of an island. We merely thinned the actual field of fire, left it for a week or ten days, and then returned to it. We also learnt to move

elephant quietly with only two or three reliable old boys. In time we attained a very decent level of bags and we soon had people preparing sites for new drives, quite on their own. Once we tried bringing them back over the fire area a second time, but they came even faster. After an attempt to repeat it a third time, they left the island taking to the water and escaping into a few million acres of timber on the mainland. We gave it up and confined ourselves to one drive per island.

This was the easiest, cheapest, and most exciting hunting I had ever experienced. I would not have looked at any other, but unfortunately the elephant left the islands with the beginning of the rains. Not a single animal seemed to be left in those scores of islands. This was confirmed by all native sources, so very reluctantly I concluded I would have to do a little work and resume the endless footslogging required to come up with those cunning old rascals, which a century of dodging man had injected with uncanny powers of concealment along with bullets of every description, pieces of iron, spears and arrows. At that time I reckoned I had done about sixty thousand miles on foot in going to and returning from hunting grounds, and on the actual trail of elephant.

When our island hunting ceased from lack of elephant, I determined to ascend the Ubangui until a large enough tributary running in from the north presented itself. This I hoped would lead to some convenient point from which a portage would land us on the Shari-Chad watershed. Thus we hoped to tap some new country.

The rains were on, making all rivers raging torrents. Above the town of Bangui the rapids began. Often it became necessary to break down the catamaran into its component parts and manhandle them through the worst parts. We found there were very few places where the launch could not steam up, without the canoe, of course. Gone the comfortable grassroofed house that had been so pleasant during the island hunting. Now it was a matter of pitching camp ashore.

One evening we came to a large sand-bank at the foot of a formidable rapid. As we approached what should we see but a large river steamer tied up to our sand-bank, while a mob of boys were

unloading ivory tusks and wild vine rubber and piling it all well up the bank. We passed the active scene and camped a little above. In the morning there lay the piles of cargo but no steamer was to be seen. On asking where she was, the deep pool at the end of the rapids was indicated. Nothing was in sight. I gathered it was one of those far away insurance jobs that make our more ordinary ones come so expensive. The ship and cargo were a total loss, notwithstanding the fact that cargo was safe and sound high on the bank. The fact that a London firm of insurance brokers was involved seemed to add spice to the joke.

With some difficulty we got our gear up that rapid and came to a Poste a few miles further on. Over lunch the *Chef de Poste* asked me if I had seen the steamer. On my saying yes he waid, "What did they give you?" "Nothing", I replied, at which he roared with laughter. "You are the only white man, then, who didn't receive something." I gathered he and anyone else who might have become witnesses had been squared.

This same *Chef de Poste* was a great friend of mine. These people do not hunt themselves; if they do it is mostly birds. They give a native one of their army rifles and tell him to go kill something. Their bullet was then the balle "D"—a homogeneous copper very pointed spitzer affair—not at all a good killer except in expert hands. Consequently they were generally short of meat. One day, having made a killing of buffalo near his Poste, I had sent a runner in to tell him I had a buffalo for him if he would sent out a couple of police to take charge of the meat. Ever afterwards he introduced me as the friend who had sent him an entire buffalo for his dinner.

In this man's administrative area there was still a fairly heavy traffic in female slaves from the Belgian Congo side. The trade medium was chiefly cartridges, percussion caps and gunpowder. The girls were brought over fat and sold either as wives or for the table. In that part the diet consisted largely of cassava. Being deficient in protein the hunger for meat was appalling. Even the sex organs of bull elephant were consumed after the utmost fun had been extracted from the situation, of course. It always raised a laugh to see four or six old ladies carrying along one of those

formidable weapons in pursuit of the young girls. East of the Nile, this particular tit-bit is only used for medicine-making.

After a few judicious questions about this slave traffic, I was astounded to hear from the *Chef de Poste* that all that had been stopped. He based his assertion on no better grounds than that a law had been passed prohibiting the practice of trafficking in slaves or eating them. As on the Nile and elsewhere, it was the Government police who were the main purveyors of humans as trade goods. There are few so out of touch with the realities of Africa as those clothed with any kind of authority.

Lepards too were preying on human beings at that time. If any questions were asked about the disappearance of a certain person, always leopard took the blame, sometimes justly. I remember lying out in a village street for a leopard that had killed but not eaten a native boy. It actually came too, announcing its approach with throaty coughs. I can remember to this day how eerie it all was; creepy, by Heavens. All the sleepers who had been lying out shuffled off dragging their mats behind them; all the dogs ceased to bark. All withdrew to the huts leaving me feeling pretty scary alone. Would he come that way or this way? From behind or from the side? Supposing he appeared against the dark shaded huts, would my bullet rake the human-packed interior if I missed? Would I see him in any other position? These were the questions I asked myself as I lay prone in that moonlit street. The yellow native dogs had not shown up well when I tried sighting on them. I began to think a platform up a tree not such a bad idea after all. Slowly that infernal cat came nearer. Apparently in no hurry at all. Every now and then a throaty cough declared him master of the situation as he leisurely drew near. Or so he thought, the impudent bastard, until a .275 shattered his spine, well abaft the shoulders too. Oh! That moonlight! What is it that leads the bullet so wide off its course? I remember firing at a rhino in my mule-convoy days, and seeing sparks flying from stones twenty yards off course.

Of course he dropped to the shot and I was relieved there were no protests from the huts beyond. But he could still come by dragging his paralysed half along behind him, the gallant beast.

There is something in us that makes the owning of a human being an enchantment, especially so in the case of a young, unspoilt female. I could feel far more affection for such a one than for your equal rights "I'm-as-good-as-you" sort of creature, with her highly artificial bosom generally cocked at the wrong angle—her false face and flaccid muscles. Contrast such a one with a girl who may be eaten if she has not the luck to find someone who will cherish her. Compare the service of the two. One with her head full of her "rights" kicks you around like a piece of dirt, refuses you this, refuses you that. The other—oh well! Perhaps I had better not! No! Not even a peep at paradise.

Mind you, it is all strictly legal and above board. The chief has an adopted daughter surplus to establishment. The hoary rascal is in meat. He requires a marriage portion. All above board and not even a sniff of slavery; nothing but the actuality.

When it comes to physical condition the two will not bear comparison. I do not believe that a race that cannot breast-feed its babies can survive, or is fit to do so. When the Old Testament says, "The breath of the labouring man is sweet" it was not necessary to even mention that of the woman; automatically she was a labouring person; all women began as such. When neither man nor woman labour that is *Finis*.

Making our way slowly against the current and passing many rapids we came finally to where a large river came in from the north. It looked bank-high and much discoloured. Hoping to reach some point not too far from the Shari-Tchad watershed, we bored our way into this new country. It is always exciting, just the fact of its being new. You always hope for something to turn up. Almost as invariably you are disappointed.

Climbing steadily upwards, the water being very fast, with occasional dashes into the high grass and gallery forest country, we just managed enough buffalo meat for all hands. There are few elephant here at this time: they would be up on the watershed country we hoped. There were no native settlements on the lower reaches, only remains. We suspected the dreaded tsetse-fly borne sleeping-sickness had been at work.

One day during my absence in the bush, one of my boys bet another he could hold in the bullet of a .22 L.R. by placing his thumb over the muzzle and holding it firmly. He was soon disillusioned. The bullet pierced his thumb easily and ended up in his guts. He died next day.

Soon the river began to look like one continuous rapid, white water from bank to bank, although in flood. We were nearing hills that appeared over the prevailing gallery forest. It was evident we would not get much further by river.

One day I was out in the bush looking for elephant when I heard the twittering of honey guides. We were always on the lookout for these little birds as we used honey to make mead. We always carried an empty calabash with some seeds of the necessary fermentative properties. When the calabash was empty these seeds dried up and rattled about but did not lose their potency. If we came across or were led to a beehive we took the honey by means of smoke torches of grass, putting what we did not eat into the calabash. When mixed with water it immediately came alive and started to bubble. If left a day or two it became most refreshing and mildly intoxicating. It was often our sole resource of sugar and liquor.

On this occasion, however, the birds were not guiding us to honey but to some natives. They did not see us for a wonder. We saw them first. It does not happen so often. Generally the more primitive see the less first. We watched them take the hive. They made fire by rubbing sticks.

They had finished and had evidently left the birds nothing or at best very little, for they set up a most violent tirade at their ingratitude. In leaving the scene the natives—there were three—came straight to our hiding place. With that infinite capacity to hide emotion of the true primitive they greeted us as if they were in the habit of meeting with white men round every bush. Only a slight trembling of the youngest's spear showed any emotion at all. Sharing some honey with us their eyes could not stray from a couple of elephant tails we had lying beside us. Pointing to them we indicated we would give them meat. In return we wanted to be led to their village, indicating the fact by pantomime. Not one of that

Karamojong blowing the kudu horn

Karamojong with large nose-ornament. Lotome, 1954

Karamojong splendour. Lotome, 1954

party spoke a word intelligible to another yet they soon understood what we wanted.

First we required to know the distance. This we did by crowing as like a cock as we could manage then pointing to various positions of the sun in the sky. Then we imitated women—without whom no work gets accomplished in Africa—by holding our clenched fists to our breasts and pointing to the elephant tails. They understood perfectly, so simple are hunters' needs and wants. I have given the foregoing not as a major incident in a hunter's career but because I have been asked so often how I communicated with totally strange tribes. It never occurred to me that there could be any difficulty when wants are so simple.

In due course we reached the village and were well received. It is not every day that strangers come to town with a present of eight or nine tons of beef. Moreover, it was not far to the river, and we were soon served by a numerous tribe in running down some quite good elephant. The rains were petering out but the high grass still held the bush unviolated by fire and elephant wandered freely into the ripening corn. Hardly a day passed without some infuriated farmer sending for assistance in handling these crop destroyers. Besides all these considerations I wanted assistance in a big way to portage that steamer over the watershed that could not now be far distant.

They were a good-looking lot these Banda, particularly the girls. There was one in particular who stood out from the rest. She seemed to be one of those surplus women so rare in Africa. Mostly all girls find a husband. But now and then you meet one who does not marry. They are invariably good-lookers, in our eyes, at any rate. When you ask why they are not married the men just laugh. Pyjale of Karamojo used to say because they were married to all men. The species is not wholly unknown amongst us whites. Confirmed flirt is a feeble term. They have a truer but more indelicate name for it.

We had killed and there came a horde of natives to the meat. Quite close to the kill they had captured some baby lion. They brought them to me in our camp some hundred yards from the nearest carcass. I wanted to try to rear these cubs but had no supply of milk for them. They had goats in the village some distance

away. The cubs would have to wait until the morrow. Meanwhile they were hungry and set up a frightful din in camp in spite of abundant meat. The parents, or at any rate lion, came to the carcass that night and kicked up a fearful fuss. Everyone expected them to come right into camp looking for their cubs. Those darned young squirts of bloods dared this girl to go to the elephant carcass by herself unarmed. She went and returned without hesitation or haste.

Of course we fired up on the camp fires and the whole scene was floodlit. As the girl coolly walked towards them you could see the firelight reflected from the eyes watching her gallant figure advancing on them. They gave way reluctantly before her. Finally she seated herself on something until I went and brought her back. I did not like it and I had a rifle.

When I said to the boys, "What d'you think of that?" They said with scorn, "Who would marry that?" There are no flies on the African. If courage is required he reckons to provide it. The last person he wants to show courage is his wife. So that nut-brown Venus remained a spinster but not a virgin; a curious sidelight on the inscrutable ways of Providence.

The villagers told me of a large military fort some days distant. Surmising this to be one of those establishments one finds strung along the frontiers between British and French, I paid no further heed to it. But it is curious all the same to contrast the opposing styles; on the British side you find a single civilian official in charge of a small number of police, whereas his opposite number on the French side will be a Commandant with perhaps a dozen white officers and N.C.O.'s and numerous regular troops. Presumably "Perfidious Albion" might at any moment resume her tricks.

Once into the confidence of these people it was easy to get news of elephant and of the country ahead. This latter sounded rough but good for elephant. It would only become traversable when the high grass had been burnt off. Then would be the time to tackle for us the stupendous task of transporting that steamer over the divide. With no roads and no inhabitants *en route* it would be tough going; only meat could accomplish it or forced labour. That was the last

thing we wanted to do, even if we had had the necessary force.

We were shown some queer places while waiting for the grass-burning season. One place stands out because it seemed to be the headquarters of hyenas. Close beside a village there was a great colony of the spotted kind. The villagers were scared of them at night and warned us to sleep in huts and not in tents. They were said to seize a sleeper by the face or throat and drag him off.

At first all our energies were absorbed by elephant. They browsed on the ripening corn by night and lay up in dense bush by day quite close to the village. They were hiding from the incensed farmers and made no noise at all. If anyone came around they froze absolutely motionless. The ear-flapping that gives away unsuspicious elephant was absent; they relied on the thickest darkest patches of bush to abate the fly nuisance. Thus would they stand all day long within a few hundred yards of the village. It was the most intensely exciting form of hunting. They would let anyone come messing about within ten yards of them without moving. They were used to stick-gatherers. So it was easy to get near them. But at the shot the whole bush seemed to erupt. Every suddenly-animated tank launched itself into instant flight in whatever direction it happened to be pointing at the instant of the shot. If there happened to be eight or nine of them the fun was fast and furious. You could never see more than one or two of them before you fired, so draped and hidden were they by foliage. Here I had the second example of a shot elephant piercing a tree trunk with a tusk in its fall. The other and first had happened in the East African coastal belt of bush.

In these crazy headlong rushes of guilty-conscienced elephant, the hunter stands quite a good chance of being trodden underfoot, or of receiving quite violent blows from falling, crashing bush. You see, too, the otherwise unique sight of considerable trees broken short off while still standing, their top-hamper held by creepers and vines to their neighbours, their freshly-broken ends thumping down solidly into the damp soil. It is difficult on these occasions to make a killing as time is so short, visibility so restricted, and their speed so much greater than anything the foot-hunter

can produce. But it is exciting while it lasts.

In camp preparations were afoot to deal with the hyena menace.

In all my experience I had never seen hyenas so out of hand. They completely dominated the natives. At nightfall everyone was in the huts. These were heavily barred. No one stirred even to protect their crops from raiding elephant. They all agreed hyena would attack at night any solitary traveller; while anyone sleeping out was certain to be jumped on and would be lucky to come out of the encounter with only half his face gone. Unlike the leopard they seemed unaware of the deadly neck grip. As proof of all this they produced two men with their features badly mauled.

This all meant we would have to get out our 12-bore and buck-shot ammo. I hardly ever used this gun, preferring a .22 for bird requirements. But loaded with buck-shot—nine to the load—it was just the gun for the job.

It was a moonless night so we pegged out some fresh buck skin. On the far side we rigged up some white skulls securing them so they could not be moved. You could just see the loom of white in the starlit night. The ideas was to blast at them with the cone of buck-shot whenever one of them was obscured. The buck skin had been folded up green and was in a suitable state of stink to attract hyenas. I intended to keep the first watch. The boys had prepared grass torches in abundance.

Almost at once a skull disappeared. I let drive both barrels. A boy lit a torch. There was something crawling away. Another shot anchored it. It was a hyena. There were dozens of them around but scared now. This was something new to them evidently. We dragged the dead one in front of the white skulls and invited them to come again.

Whether we had grown careless or—more likely—dozed off, I don't know, but they actually got the carcass away. There was an unearthly row as they fought over it. They had not got it out of range when a boy lit a grass torch and the 12 lammed into them again. There must have been a good spread because several yelped and snarled and presently we could hear three distinct fights going on. They would be demolishing any wounded that might be weaken-

ing. The boys dragged the evil carcass back to the target area. I turned in, leaving the gun to them to continue the good work, hoping the shooting would not disturb any visiting elephant in the corn-fields. The boys certainly slept, for the carcass and skin were both gone in the morning. What wonders strychnine would have worked. Pretty safe too, as no other animal would touch a hyena. There was a great colony of their burrows not far from this village, and I tried smoking them out. It did not work; too deep I think. Why they should have collected here I don't quite know. Certainly they got the cadavers, but there were such from every village. They were the spotted variety.

This certainly was a hard-luck village. Elephant raided their crops while farmers were confined to their huts by hyenas. We were soon able to change the elephant portion of the infestation and I pointed out to the farmers how neatly they were getting their own back. At first they were delighted, but after a few days of meat-gorging they seemed to lose their hunger. After a daily seven or eight pounds of elephant beef they got that fashionable disease—jaundice.

As the dry season advanced there was great talk of a fire hunt. I had never seen one of these devastating affairs from start to finish. Certainly I had been called into kill fire-blitzed animals that had proved too tough for the native equipment; nearly always elephant blinded but otherwise unscathed by their ordeal. This time I would see the whole affair.

A most elaborate thing it proved to be and rather boring in the preparation.

The "medicine men" ran the whole palaver. It was they who appointed and briefed the guardians and watchers. Without the aid of maps they designated the area to be fire guarded. They commanded great obedience. The meat requirements of the whole country depended on the success or failure of this seasonal hunt.

Great was the "medicine" being made and tough the going according to the hoary old rascals. Innumerable the goats, sheep and poultry required for the reading of guts. Only thus with a lavish supply of beer could the omens be weighed.

Meanwhile a few score villagers were busy cutting by hand a fire-guard twenty-five paces wide across a triangular piece of land between two rivers. The grass was eight to 10 feet high, and rapidly drying. The ground had to be clean, otherwise the fire would jump the guarding strip.

As soon as this was accomplished the grass outside the fire-guard was lit so as to burn back and away from the guarding strip. This safely done the whole area was fired for miles around. Now watchers were appointed to see and report game entering or leaving the fire area. The "medicos" redoubled their gut-readings and omen-dodging, while relays of beer-pots replenished their energies. The game wardens' reports were highly favourable. Elephant, buffalo and antelope game were daily seen to enter the grass area. Even lion were spotted and this drew some wonderful manœuvres from the magic mongers, the gist of which crystallized in more demands for chickens. No wonder they required conditioning. Your privitive African can become a murdering devil in an instant. If the game should leave the area or aught else go wrong, he will rise as one man and slaughter the "medicine" men, no matter what excuses they may offer.

There was a huge ant-hill just outside our camp, and daily one of the brotherhood could be seen up on top of it. He would be hung about with a veritable museum of charms. With a grave and weighty air sitting heavily on him he would glance around the shining firmament. Should the tiniest cloud appear he would transfix it with a glare while pointing a charm-hung wand at it. Some gibberish that no one understood then followed, while with great deliberation he began to wave it away from the direction of the fire-area, having first adroitly chosen the probable course it would naturally take. His efforts would redouble until the sweat poured off him, until in the natural course of things the cloudlet became vapourized by the sun and so appeared to respond to the wand waving.

Just as we were all getting rather bored with these goings-on—they lasted for weeks—the word went round to warn all villages that the date was fixed. The longer this could be delayed the better

the grass would burn and the more game would be in the trap. But should an unseasonal shower fall somewhere, out would spew all the stuff in the fire trap. Game animals can scent rain miles away. Rain on parched burnt ground gives off a strong smell. Should this happen, the medicine men were for it. Generally they knew as much as the game and likewise got.

There are other snags too. A high wind will let animals through by keeping down the flames. They will be blistered but otherwise unhurt. A flat calm is considered best. The fire itself then creates its own draught upwards. This ensures that elephant will probably be blinded and so fall, after much strenuous work, to the native primitive weapons, such as spears and large knives.

Soon people from the neighbouring villages began to arrive. Most of the new arrivals already carried green bark sandals for use on the burnt ground. I began to wonder how my boots would shape on the red-hot ashes. I need not have worried because my eyes would not let me nearer than a hundred yards to the wall of flame.

Next morning we were off on the now well-stamped trail leading to the fire-site. So also were hunderds of native men, women and children. Every imaginable piece of ironmongery was borne along by the multitude. Worn-down spears retaining only the merest trace of iron at their tips, knives that consisted chiefly of handle were in the eager grasp of tiny tots willing to try their luck against the mightiest beast of the jungle. The young girls were in their element out to enjoy the occasion, while the elderly women showed their sense by carrying calabashes of water; they had been there before. Besides thirst there was blood to be caught.

Everyone now had the huge green bark sandals.

How it was all arranged I do not know. Long practice and custom and wont I suppose. For at a signal the whole area burst into flames.

I had got myself close to the chief medicine man. He seemed serene enough. I expect he had arranged his get-away should anything go wrong. Once he seemed to be perturbed by the strength of the wind. The game scouts had reported some eighty elephant and numerous buffalo in the trap that morning besides uncounted antelope.

As soon as the fire started simultaneously on all sides the natives went quite crazy. They added what they could to the roar and crackle of the fire. The flames shot up thirty-five to forty feet, while clouds of sparks rose into the billowing smoke. What a scene from hell. Every yard of flaming front had some sort of native following it up close. How they did it I don't know. I could not stick it nearer than a hundred yards back and even then my eyebrows and every hair exposed soon went. I began to wonder what I should do when it came to shooting with all these natives about.

Through watering eyes I saw a native man raise his spear and dart it into a black lump on the ground. The lump unfolded in a flash, revealing a truly devilish creature. It was jet black on the top and sides while below it revealed the untouched brilliant spots and yellow of a satanically active leopard. In one flashing bound it was on the spearman, who missed his thrust at it, had bitten him on the shoulder, and straightway sprang on another man who came to the rescue. He likewise missed with his spear and fell to the ground. Away sprang that gallant beast apparently unharmed. My bullet sped too but passed him by. I am glad now that he escaped yet he added one more missed leopard to the all-too-long list. They seem too quick, too quick for 2,000ft. p.s. bullets anyway. I wonder if a 3,500 footer would have shortened that list. I know a short-travel striker would have.

This was a bad beginning, but the uproar drowned everything. Next there was a diversion on my right. Something was coming. By heavens! Buffalo! A mass of them. Instead of being fire-stricken they were fire-stimulated. They came, with ginger under their tails, like a train. I could not shoot until they were nearly opposite me. One bright and hopeful lad thinking they were blind, laid hold of a passing tail and was busy giving its owner the works when a following buff caught him in the stern and hove him aside. He got into a sitting posture and swore at those buffalo with such indignation on his face as almost prevented me from engaging the passing target for laughing. They had found a break in the wall of fire and had come through untouched except for losing all their hair from body, ears and tail. A lucky out-crop of rock had saved their steaks from grilling.

Although there was little or no ground wind, there was a strong up-draught. The isolated trees suddenly enveloped in heat had their sap turned instantly to superheated steam, bursting asunder with reports like field guns. Following the chief medicine man we came on elephant tracks showing grey on the uniform black ground: They had evidently broken through but seemed to be cows so we did not press the matter. I was looking at something on their tracks, wondering what it was, when it suddenly took the shape of a mangled child. Hardly a recognizable item of its make-up remained. As we hesitated, some native men who had followed this bunch of cows now appeared running back to the fire. They shouted that the elephant were going hard. Evidently they had not been delayed by their fire ordeal.

Soon the fire trap became quite small. Now was when the fun should start in earnest. It was unbelievable the speed it went. On the trodden grass of the game trails the fire ran along at express speed. The major trouble was the poor visibility owing to smoke. You simply could not see what was going on. This was a pity because plenty was happening. As the fire contracted, so did the noise expand. There were now masses of infuriated natives dashing in and out of visibility on all sides. Some unrecognizable beast would burst through the throng with a milling mass of people apparently hanging on to it, spears jabbing, everything going at it until it fell. Then a large bull elephant badly burnt and deeply dejected appeared with drooping ears and blisters the size of tea-trays—a horrible sight. I quickly despatched him and examined his eyes. They were both scorched white in the eyeball. He could not have seen at all, and I doubt if he could have recovered. Just then a native plucked me by the arm and I followed him seeing his urgency. They had three great bull elephant in a bunch. Every time they moved to get away a spear would catch it in the trunk. They were completely done and showed no fight at all. Quickly felling them to the ground there burst past us a very different apparition, a bull in full possession of all his senses if minus every hair. There was no hesitation in the way he charged through the maddened throng. He must have found a weak spot in the now dying fire. I remember to this day speeding the

bullet that killed him over the heads of scores of natives and not so much above them either. A body shot would have been impossible, it would have become a head shot before it reached its intended target.

And so it went all that awful day, far into the night, a ghastly job. You could not leave those fire-blitzed animals to the fumbling native equipment. I never knew how many buffalo and elephant I despatched that day. All I knew about it was the final count of tusks, and the deadly tiredness after it was over, and the sore lungs resulting from the inhalation of smoke. The "medicine" men were in terrific form and dancing was the order of the day.

* * * * * *

One day I met a white man drifting down stream in a large native dug-out. He occupied a grass shelter in the centre of the canoe, which also contained a native woman tending a fire built in the bottom, and three native paddlers, one of them steering. Quite naturally the craft drew alongside my steamer and here was one Phelizot, a youngster whom I had last met at Kampala in Uganda. At the time of my meeting him he was working for a commercial house, but very anxious to take up elephant hunting, and he asked me how to set about it. This was several years before, and Kampala was a far cry from the Ubangui River.

As soon as we recognized each other we agreed to land at the nearest suitable camping place and exchange news. Now this Phelizot was a curious mixture. He had a French mother, an Irish father, and was a U.S.A. citizen. His profession in America had been that of an erector of high smoke stacks. He was a man of delicate constitution, and in order to counteract his lack of physique he had taken up and constantly practiced those Sandow exercises most calculated to develop his naturally meagre defensive equipment. Thus had he attained a formidable muscular development, although he continued to look like nothing on earth. He confided to me that his punch was quite devastating, and had often stood him in good stead with men twice his weight who were inclined to strong arm methods of settling a difference of opinion.

By the camp fire the news rolled out. I had advised him in

Kampala to buy himself a double .450 and a .318 Mauser, to try them out, and decide after practical experience which rifle he preferred. He had asked me how he should set about making a bag of elephants, and I had told him of my own methods, how essential it was to keep cool and to place one's shots correctly, and that the diameter of the bullet hole did not matter so much as where it was placed. Well, it appeared that he had tried out these methods. Time after time he had applied the methods, but in each case no kill had resulted. So in desperation one day he had thrown all my advice to the winds, had charged in close to the elephant, given him both barrels of the .450 anywhere in the body, seized the .318, and rushed after the fleeing animal, pumping in lead as fast as he could. Results—a kill!

From that he had continued to develop this highly individualistic technique until now, he said, it practically never failed. He had added a second .450 to his battery, but confessed that he thought it was the .318 that really killed on most occasions. Evidently my cool, calm method was not suited to his particular make-up, and he had branched out on his own. I was greatly interested in this, and longed to see it in action, so it was arranged to make a joint hunt. Phelizot stipulated that there should be only a single elephant. He explained that he never hunted anything but solitary bulls. He showed me a stick cut to the diameter of a large fore-foot. He would give this stick to a village and explain that if the elephant track corresponding to these dimensions could be found he would follow it and they could have the meat.

I thought he would not get very many this way. He agreed, "But look what I do get!" he said, uncovering some enormous tusks in the bottom of his canoe. Undoubtedly he had some beauties. He got about one a week on an average he said, in response to my query. As for price, he could ask almost anything for such ivory. Some of them would go to the Niger where the wealthy chiefs decorated their favourite wives with ivory necklets that slipped over the head. A pair of such necklets commanded a price of £40. Of course they had to be cut off a tusk of outstanding diameter, as apparently no method of squeezing the human head through a

smaller necklet had yet been devised. Then others of great diameter would command special prices as their proportions would lend themselves to the fashioning of large figures of Christ on the Cross. These were known as "Christus" pieces and went to Roman Catholic areas chiefly. Altogether Phelizot had as fine a collection of teeth as could be imagined.

He explained that when he had amassed about three thousand pounds' worth he sold out, sending five hundred pounds to his gunmaker to hold against new equipment and a return ticket. He then repaired straight to Paris, where he would contract himself a temporary wife, hand her over what was left of his money, and enjoy life to the utmost while it lasted. And last it did, he explained, much longer in the hands of an expert Parisienne than if he had the spending of it himself. They knew where to eat well and cheaply, what ought to be paid for wines, etc. And they were extremely honest and quite loyal to their temporary husbands, he said. Often he would take them into a jeweller's shop and tell them to choose something for themselves. After pricing a few trinkets they would whisper they knew where the same thing could be gotten for half the price. Money finished, back to the Bush.

Once, however, when he was in Paris, the 1914 war broke out. He and hundreds of other Americans joined the Foreign Legion. The next I heard of my friend he was dead of tetanus, contracted through a head wound sustained in a scuffle with a fellow legionary.

II

World War 1

ALTOGETHER I attained my set aim of a thousand bull elephants in Karamojo, Lado Enclave, Belgian and French Congos, the Ivory Coast, Liberia, Uganda, Abyssinia, and the East African Coast. Several times I returned home, taking with me some huge tusks as my almost sole personal baggage. Instead of suit cases, the railway porters had nine or ten foot long slippery tusks to handle. They slid off the barrows, and when they did stay put they raked the mob of baggage-seekers just about knee high, to their indignation. These tusks that I thus brought home were duly presented to my sisters, who promptly sold them and invested in diamonds.

But, when hunting in the French Congo, as described in the previous chapter, one day I had a letter from the commandant of a small military post a few days distant in which he said in a post-script: "By the way you will be interested to hear that war broke out between Great Britain, France and Germany. We are nearly all called up and I am departing forthwith".

At once I got my gear and ivory together and returned to Bangui, where I sold everything, including the steam launch, and managed to secure passage on a French steamer back to Bordeaux. On arrival in London I met a friend in the regular forces, who on hearing that I wished to join the Flying Corps, said that he could help me at the War Office.

Presently I was summoned to be interviewed by a certain eminent person whose job it was to conduct these interviews so as to form some idea as to the applicant's suitability for the role of aviator. Very little being known then about this subject, and even less, apparently, by the interviewer, after some hesitation he asked me if I could ride a bicycle, and all that. On being reassured on this

point he said he would put my name down and that in due course I would be appointed to a flying school.

Hearing nothing further about the matter, I thought I might as well see what I could pick up at a private flying school at Hendon. It was run by an enterprising gentleman who advertised a complete course in flying for the sum of seventy pounds. This seemed reasonable enough until one perused the formidable document the aspiring aviator was required to sign. It consisted of a long list of items ranging from whole wings to undercarriage wheels, and against each item was neatly displayed exactly what the pupil would have to pay should he damage it. If the whole machine was a write-off it would cost him a small fortune.

Now I had had a little previous experience, if not of flying, at least of handling an aircraft on the ground, and could visualize and judge things aeronautic a little. Here there were thirty pupils to two buses. Owing to the unfortunate habit of the instructor of taking his best girl for a flip in the early morning, after a hectic night before, neither of the two machines was ever in a robust enough state for pupils to handle. I wrote and stated the facts of the case to the Royal Flying Corps authorities with the result that I got a summons to go to their own school of flying at Brooklands, where a very different state of affairs prevailed.

For one thing the instructors had returned from France with actual war flying experience. To begin one flew with the instructor on a two-seated contraption called a "Long Horn". Of course there were far too many pupils for the number of machines. However, my chance came one day when my instructor took me up. There were no dual controls; the pupil sat behind and watched over the instructor's shoulder what he did with the controls, and kept his eyes on the rev. counter and the air-speed instrument. As it happened it was a lovely day and the instructor said: "Let's go and lunch at Richmond". We landed in the park and went to lunch, the machine being in view from our table. We suddenly noticed a lot of fallow deer collected around the airplane. "Better chivvy them off, they're no better than billy goats", said the instructor. The deer had done no damage; even fallow deer could not stomach the castor oil with

which the whole machine was drenched. It had a rotary engine; the famous, or rather infamous Gnome, and castor oil was simply laid on by turning a handle and poured through the machine in a constant stream until the supply was exhausted when you came down, or you landed voluntarily and turned off the cock.

On the way home the instructor suggested that I now knew all about it. I thought that nothing could be simpler, and said that I felt good and equal to the flying, but was not so sure about the landing. On the ground once more the instructor said "How do you feel about it?" "All right", I said. "Well", said he, "why don't you go for your ticket?" He then explained what had to be done. You had to take off solo, make so many figure-of-eight turns of the aerodrome, climb to two thousand feet, cut off the engine, and land within a hundred yards of the flag. A tallish order considering the pupil had then had one and a half hours in the air—and even that was stretched out to its limit. "You needn't worry about the flag", said the instructor. "I'll animate it with a man who'll run like hell to where you are going to land. If you don't break anything you will get your ticket. Right?" "Right, sir", I said and off I went.

The taking off was easy, so was the control in the air. But the landing—oh, Lord! Hitting the ground at much too steep an angle, the thing bounced twenty feet and hovered, then hit the ground again and bounced considerably less. Three such bounds and it came to rest at last. The instructor and the flag man raced to see if anything was broken, but not a wire was even strained. The instructor laughed with relief and said, "Off you go, and don't fly into the ground this time". The next landing was considerably better—the flag man was getting his second wind. The third time was quite passable and I got my ticket.

I was now passed over to a more advanced course in which I handled a single-seater Avros. I was given to understand that if I conducted myself well I would fly in company with my instructor to Netheraven, then to the central flying school, where I might hope to pass for my "Wings".

Before setting forth on this cross-country flight, if successfully accomplished I was invited by my new instructor to go for a flip

in a two-seater Bleriot parasol. We took off all right but the engine cut out and we landed in the middle of a sewage farm. Not that this was an unusual ending to a flight, but what interested us was the swarms of snipe we disturbed. We reckoned that we would have to get mid-boards so as to get at them. It is interesting to note that sewage farms have now become almost the last sanctuaries of these birds, and is quite likely to remain so as it is a messy business getting them out of it. As well as snipe there were partridges on Brooklands. They would squat right in front of a landing machine, yet never one was hit.

The test for "Wings" consisted in taking up a strange machine and landing it on a small field, without engine, over a high line of trees, or a cottage, three times and as close to a mark as could be contrived. The Wing Commander stood by the mark and after each attempt passed caustic remarks on the aspirant's attempts. I gave the obstruction a good safe clearance but got into the field all right. The Wing Commander waxed facetious about Brooklands as a training centre. He said the fields in France were the size of tennis lawns. "Try again", he said, "Shave it this time." I determined to do so, and cleared it by a few feet, only to overshoot the mark again by twenty yards. Remarks again from the Wing Commander. The third time I came down below the level of the cottage roof with plenty of flying speed, but was lost to sight by the Wing Commander, who scenting a crash had started towards the cottage, when I came floating over the cottage roof with just enough flying speed to clear it, and landed nearly on top of him as he was in full flight to one side. This time I was twenty yards short of the mark and the Wing Commander said he wouldn't have believed it.

I got my wings all right, although the Morse Examiner said I had scores fewer marks than anyone he had ever had through his hands.

I was now handed three so-called scout machines of types that had proved to be unmanageable, and told to do what I liked with them. The sooner they were written off the better the Commanding Officer would be pleased. I mounted wooden dummy guns on these and used them to make mock attacks on other machines, much to

Elephant drive on an island in the Ubangui River

A specially fine Karamojong head-dress

their annoyance. One of the more advanced pupils complained of these activities to the C.O. This man subsequently got his V.C. in action against Zeppelins.

Warned for France, I suddenly received orders to join a South African Squadron forming at an aerodrome to serve in East Africa under General Smuts. In due course we all embarked and sailed without escort. What course we steered no one knew, but we must have traversed some of the most unfrequented areas of the oceans. Not only did we sight no land, but we never saw a ship of any sort. At last the ship arrived in Kilindini harbour. It was like coming home again for me. Things had altered almost beyond recognition since my former days. The Uganda Railway now operated, and inland where I used to pitch my tent under a mangrove tree there were now rows of bungalows and store houses.

The squadron got itself ashore and installed at a natural aerodrome on the game plains under Kilimanjaro, whose snows looked down on what must have been a strange scene to that hoary-headed mountain. It was a magnificent mark for finding your way about in the otherwise rather featureless bush. The machines we had brought with us were B.E.2.C's and there was much speculation among the fliers whether they would get off the ground in view of the four thousand feet altitude of the flying ground. They need not have worried. They took the air, if not with the spring of partridges, at any rate like the meat-gorged vultures, with which, by the way, they often just missed colliding.

As well as B.E.2.C's there were some Henri Farmans. These later were most interesting craft in view of later developments. They were pushers, that is the engine was behind the occupants. The engine was a museum piece—a water-cooled radial with nine cylinders. The frame of the wings was constructed of steel tube, and withstood the vagaries of the tropical conditions admirably. The whole was fabric covered, of course, as all machines were in those days. You sat out in a sort of gondola in front of the wings, and had a splendid view all around. You could, and often did, fall asleep at the controls.

The amount of game you could see from the air was disappoint-

ing; they just did not show up well. Even on photographs they were invisible unless in water or swamp. Giraffes looked like donkeys with jockeys on them. Elephants in bush were difficult to find unless they kicked up a small dust storm. Hippo, of course, were easy when they showed up at all. The main trouble to seeing things on the ground was the unpredictable performance of the engines. With possible forced landing grounds so scarce in the all-prevailing thorn bush, no one liked to fly low.

For some unknown reason there raged a heated controversy about aerobatics in the tropics. Some held the view that if you got into a spin or looped the loop you would not come out of it owing to the rarified air. Others thought this was all bunk, holding that the air at five thousand feet at the equator could not be very different from the air at, say, six or seven thousand feet in the temperate zones. Aided by the hot sun and abundant liquor the arguments became a perfect pest, and eventually I was deputed to put the matter to test.

Unfortunately for me the Commanding Officer adhered to the rarified air gang, and was against settling the matter by test. However, I felt that in the role of test pilot I was well within my rights if I chose to put a machine through any of the recognized test manoeuvres. If the machine was going to develop anys trange tricks it might as well do it over the aerodromes instead of out in the blue. Not that I felt it would do so; on the contrary I felt sure the whole thing was a scare-up. So when I was told to take over the first B.E.2.C. that was assembled I took it up and put it through the usual tests, and all was well in the air. But not so on the ground. A document that must be almost unique was delivered to me by the adjutant. It was to the effect that I was confied to the ground. That being so, I applied for a job with the ground intelligence. But before doing so I had the pleasure of drawing attention to the serious loss of petrol resulting from the method of stowing the two-gallon cans. In spite of the recent calamity of Scott in the Antartic, where the stowage of the same sort of can in an upright position had resulted in the drying out of the leather washer in the cap of the can, and the consequent evaporation of the contents, here was the

same thing happening on a larger scale. Hundreds of thousands of cans were sucking in air past the shrunken washers as the tin expanded in the heat of the day, only to pump it out, laden with gas when the cool of the night contracted them. Passing to leeward of the dump one day, the stink of petrol was enough to gas anyone. "Bet you they've stowed those cans bung up", I remarked to my companion. They had. The man in charge, with major's pips up, was astonished at the news. He'd heard of Scott all right, but not of the petrol leakage that was so largely, if indirectly, the cause of the tragedy that overtook the Polar party. At once an examination was made, and most of the tins were found, some half and others two-thirds empty. What a scare! When laid on their sides the washers were kept wet and remained tight.

Another thing was the bombs. They did not explode. Only the primer went off but the main charge remained. On examination it was discovered that the T.N.T. had liquidfied and soaked into the primers so that the latter did not explode the main charge. Thereafter primers were stowed apart and only inserted just before going to the machines, with satisfactory results. Having made myself thoroughly unpopular with my C.O., I got my appointment to ground intelligence and bade my squadron *au revoir*.

Now that I was back foot-slogging among Africans in the bush I was having a very good time. One day I met Pretorious and another Dutchman on a similar lay to my own. They all worked from an advanced camp in the bush. One day Pretorious and his companion came into camp looking like nothing on earth. Clothes torn, faces, legs and arms covered with blood and bruises. "What the hell has the Hun been doing to you", I asked, full of interest. "Hun nothing", they said disgustedly, "It was a bloody rhino!"

I reported the presence on a river of native troops in brand new khaki uniforms. They were in small numbers, and I was in a position to see them quite plainly. For the life of me I could not be certain they were not King's African Rifles, although the headgear was not the usual one worn by that body of troops. I could easily have shot one from where I lay, and might have stampeded the others, and thus might have got a new uniform to show the intelligence. It was

a priceless opportunity to try out my .303 Farquharson semi-automatic that I had acquired with such difficulty from the inventor in Birmingham, Colonel Farquharson. He had but three fitters and a workbench, and was laboriously building up two or three rifles for War Office trials. He amused me by firing his rifles into a heap of ashes right in among buildings.

Well, here was a chance for it, but I was not certain enough. There might have been a new issue of uniforms to the troops. This particular item that attracted and held my attention was a khaki neck protector dangling down from the cap behind, and partly to the sides. It looked like the things that explorers of Stanley's era wore, in their pictures anyway. So I hastened to headquarters to report what I had seen.

As far as Intelligence knew, no British troops, coloured or white, fitted the description. This report, however, electrified headquarters. It was either the first indication of the Germans having got a ship through the blockade, or it confirmed some rumour to that effect. Whatever it was, it certainly caused some upheaval. The Army had apparently gone into winter quarters, quite in the old tradition. The Flying Corps had declared it impossible to function in the rainy weather. Extensive leave had been given and half the pilots were away shooting or otherwise disporting themselves.

My new chief consulted me as to what to do now. I had seen a flat open strip in the bush that only required a few ant-heaps to be levelled off and a few trees cut to make quite a decent little aerodrome. I asked that a machine be given me, together with a tender and four mechanics. I said that with this outfit I could operate over the enemy's lines. Orders came through to prepare the landing ground. The pilot, a flight commander, said: "Your name is mud. The C.O. is furious!" Everyone had been recalled from leave, with further prognostications of the awful things that would happen to 2nd Lieutenant Bell.

Presently the tender, with all the things I had asked for arrived. The Flight Commander returned whence he came, and there I was set up with my own plane, aerodrome and personnel, detached from my squadron, and attached to Intelligence. Of course I now

had the time of my life. Such a situation must be almost unique. Only with a C-in-C like Smuts could it have been brought about. From this bush aerodrome I operated all over the place. Once I was asked if I thought I could take a ground officer as passenger observer over the lines. Without much thought I said I could. Down from headquarters arrived a stout individual with general's insignia and his staff officer, a much slimmer man. Looking at the general, I asked his weight. When I heard I had some doubts of my machine clearing the tallish trees surrounding the little bush aerodrome. When the general wanted to bring along a rifle I had to turn it down. I explained the difficulty and suggested there would be a better chance if I took the staff officer. But the general would not hear of that. So I explained what would happen should we hit the trees. The general hastily discarded a hefty pack of provisions he had previously intended to take along with him, keeping only his enormous water bottle filled with brandy.

Waiting for the breeze to harden and taking the longest run possible, the machine with its double load—I was no featherweight myself—we just managed to clear. Even then the wheels grazed the tree tops. However, the general was able to see the lay of the land and seemed satisfied.

Shortly after this the whole campaign was set in motion once more, rain or no rain. The squadron came pouring through the bush to my aerodrome, very much to my annoyance, be it said. The C.-in-C. himself paid a visit. The only thing he said to me was, "For God's sake cover your head. Don't you know the danger of sun?" I was wearing my R.F.A. cap, a ridiculous headgear calculated to afford no protection from anything whatsoever. Rather to my surprise my C.O. had nothing to say to me except, "Good work, Bell". So it is always the unexpected.

The whole Army now rolled on. As it progressed bush strips were cut out for the planes. We bombed columns of the enemy winding through the eternal bush in single file, carrying their white officers in hammocks. We had no bomb sights and simply let go when we thought the right moment had come. Also we had no armour plating on the machines, nor parachutes, and the enemy

machine gunners were mighty good at flying planes. Our all-out speed was only about sixty or seventy miles per hour, so we had a healthy aversion to low flying. Consequently, we did not do much damage, especially as the bombs we had simply blew up a lot of dust into the air, with no lateral effect whatever.

Then there came a time when news arrived from the base that a Farman had broken in the air at three thousand feet, killing the test pilot. This incident, coming on top of a forced landing in the bush of another Farman, gave the pilots something to think about. For some reason or other the Farmans were not popular, the pilots said they were not fit machines for the bush work, and proposed to tell the C.O. something to that effect. When asked to join in the protest I said I liked the Farman. This machine, with its nose wheel and independent brakes on the main wheels, was the forerunner of the present tricycle undercarriage. The engine, too, was fairly reliable if let alone. Of course when the engineer thought fit to transfer the water-circulating pump drive from its proper place to that of the magneto in order to get livelier cooling, any engine was entitled to jib at such treatment. This little effect had actually been responsible for the forced landing. It was a French engine and by way of asserting its peculiarities the English engineer without a word of French had been sent to France to "learn" the engine in a week.

Unfortunately for me, my championing of the Farman was seized upon by the C.O., and I was asked to go back to the base and find out what was wrong with the Farman. Arrived there I was provided with a newly-assembled one for test. I naturally looked it over carefully, but could find nothing wrong. So I prepared to take her up. Just as I was about to leave, a mechanic asked if he might come too. "Can't be much wrong if he is willing to risk his neck", I thought. Parachutes being unknown in those days, we set off. We circled round and round, gaining confidence all the time. Nothing happened, so I thought I would take the machine over a neighbouring lake where I knew from former experience the air was very bumpy. Sure enough it was. Suddenly my companion and I saw a balloon forming on the wing. To our horror it grew bigger and bigger. Throttling down hastily and flying as gingerly as

possible, we headed for home, all the time watching that fearfu bulge in the wing covering. We both knew that if it burst we were in for it. However, it held and we landed safely. The linen fabric was rotten. I had the time of my life poking my finger through it all over the machine and bawling out the people, majors and captains and all, for not detecting the faulty covering before. They had ample stocks of good, sound Irish linen, and when the machines had been covered with this they functioned right along.

As there was no opposition in the air, the enemy having no airplanes, of course there was no fighting in the air. This, and the apparent reluctance of the staff to use airplanes for anything but reconnaissance and photography, induced me to apply for transfer to some more active front.

In due course I was sent to Egypt, and from there to the Balkan front. At Salonica I found a curious assortment of all kinds of rejected machines from France. Among them was a vicious looking bird-cage with a pushing screw, a water-cooled engine and a long beak in front in which sat the pilot, with a Lewis machine-gun (traversing) firing straight past, and very close to the head of the observer, who also had a Lewis gun. Quite a formidable machine except for the fact that it had a very poor performance. But it would dive like a streak out of hell and none of the Huns would look at it, although it was totally blind from behind, and they had quite smart Fokker monoplanes. Great fun was had with this machine. Owing to its apparent immunity from attack it was sent daily over the Hun aerodromes when the occupant would laugh to see the Hun fighters being kicked off their aerodromes by their C.O. One dive from the bird-cage with both Lewis guns roaring would send them scattering. You could not make a long dive in this crate because the plugs oiled up and you found yourself without an engine; otherwise there was nothing to prevent close ground strafing. As it was a drum or two would be poured into the hangars, at rather long range, though.

My first air fight was somewhat unexpected. I had just received a new machine and, wanting to try it, I thought I might as well combine business with pleasure. So I had the machine gun filled

up (it was belt-fed Vickers firing through the prop) and I took off two twenty-five pound bombs in the cockpit just to chuck overboard if the A.A. guns annoyed me.

I climbed to ten thousand feet—that took quite a time in those days—and crossed the lines. The enemy A.A. guns started to plaster the sky, but as usual nowhere near the machine. I threw the bombs overboard, hoping they might hit something, and the A.A. fire stopped abruptly. I was thinking I must have tickled them up by some extraordinary fluke when there flashed past me a vivid-coloured Albatross covered with the Hun black crosses, but not firing. In a matter of seconds I had him covered, sighting the machine by lining the row of tappets on the engine, the only sights I had. As he drew near I could see the enemy quite distinctly, crouching over his gun and firing over his tail like billy-o from the aft cockpit. I started my Vickers about as fast as it takes to write it, the interrupting gear was working smoothly, while brown tracers streamed from the Albatross. After about twenty rounds, to my astonishment and delight, the Albatross seemed to be out of control, turned over on her back, and out fell the two occupants. I was thrilled to realize I had shot down my first enemy, and hoped it would fall within our own lines. I did not know my exact whereabouts but just then A.A. fire opened up and left me in no doubt on that score.

Thinking I might as well celebrate a bit and lose height at the same time, as the batteries seemed to have my range, I started a few stunts and then returned to my aerodrome. I was still doubtful if this combat had been seen, but these were soon allayed, for on entering the mess I was greeted by shouts of, "What did you do to that Hun?" "Why I filled the Boche with lead", I told them, amid shouts of laughter.

Two men who had been spotting for our heavies at three thousand feet said they had seen the sight of their lives and needed a drink badly. They then related how their shoot had been going along nicely, and all was peace and quiet, when out of the blue quite suddenly two human bodies had shot past them quite close. They had seen no airplanes about. Shoot or no shoot, they were seeing things and needed refreshment, so they had just returned to

the mess. The whole incident had been seen also from the front-line trenches, the Albatross and the bodies fell in No Man's Land, and that night both sides met out there in the dark, where our fellows prevailed after quite a scrap. The pilot and observer had both been shot through the head.

One might have thought that this fight showed good shooting, but I was much puzzled in my mind about it. I was conscious that while I was firing my impromptu sights were *off* the target. The Albatross was not going straight away but in a curve, probably involuntarily caused by the pilot wanting to see his officer shoot down the enemy, and looking over his shoulder. I was conscious, too, of having to hold off so as to get my line of fire across the arc of flight, but I was constantly over-ruddering. By some miraculous combination of flukes two of those twenty bullets had found billets from that gyrating platform. With these thoughts in my mind I was not greatly surprised when I test fired my gun to find that my shots were nowhere near the point of aim.

About this time a friend of mine, an Irishman, got the tail of his machine cut off neatly behind the pilot's seat while coming up from below to attack another aircraft. It was the propeller that got him. It happened at eleven thousand feet, and what was left of his machine turned on its back and went spinning slowly down. His cockpit machine gun fell off, but luckily Pat's belt held. By the time a rescue party reached the spot Pat had disentangled himself and was sitting smoking a cigarette quite unhurt. But he was an appalling sight. Blood had invaded and completely suffused the whites of his eyes. The iris being of pale blue, the effect was quite startling, and Pat enjoyed it enormously. The medicos ordered him a fortnight's leave. As it happened I was due for a spot of leave myself, as I had done two and a half years continuous flying, so it was arranged that we two should sail together.

It is often said misfortunes never come singly. Off one of the Aegean Islands our ship, a ten-thousand tonner, got a torpedo amidship, in the engine room, in fact. Now the captain had allotted boat stations and all that, and had announced that all should assemble at their proper places and wait for the "abandon ship"

signal. This was to be a continuous blast on the ship's fog horn. Unfortunately, the explosion had made it impossible to do this, so there were some 1,100 troops all fallen in at boat stations when the ship simply sank on a level keel about five minutes after the explosion. As it happened I was on the boat deck at the time and had a good view of the bridge. I saw the first mate with the loose end of the foghorn in his hand saying something to the skipper. I spotted at once that it was all up and it was best to get into the sea. The stern suggested itself as being the best place. Meeting Pat I told him to get into the water at once. I got a rope and lowered myself gingerly into the sea so as not to wet my cigarettes and matches in the upper pockets of my tunic. Pat, fully alive to what was going on, followed suit, but unfortunately chose to go overside just where the crew were throwing over the Carley floats, great huge box-like affairs. As they swung them overboard without glancing overside, they shouted, "Stand from under" in the most unhurried and everyday manner as if discharging cargo. Well, poor Pat got one of these floats on his head. It stunned him, but someone got a hold of him and pulled him on a raft.

The scene that met my eye was this. The ship had disappeared. In the calm, warm sea the evening light disclosed innumerable black dots—human heads—with larger dots where rafts and one or two boats had got clear. In the offing round and round the scene tore the escort ship, occasionally firing at something they thought might be a periscope. While this was going on I had made my way towards a deeply-laden boat and got aboard. There were seventy men in her and she was marked for forty-five. As it happened I was the only officer on board and took charge. It seemed to me that the escort would pick us up, so we waited. We had a grandstand view and presently the escort drew near, slowed down to ten knots or so, and lowered a boat. Then she tore off again, firing away at wreckage and what-not. Her boat meanwhile filled up rapidly with floating men, and again she drew near to pick it up. Just as the boat was made fast the gunner in the bow of the escort let fly at something or other, having, one supposes, orders to shoot on sight. Forgetting the deeply-laden boat alongside, the officer on the bridge ordered full

speed ahead, and that was that. As she jumped away the boat capsized and all were in the drink again.

Realizing the way things were going I determined to get my boat moving and to go to the nearest island, only about four miles distant. Seeing some men in naval uniform, I naturally turned to them to get the oars out, only to discover to my amazement that they had had no experience whatever in small boats. The boat was fearfully overloaded and had that sickening wallow of all boats in that condition. The oars were covered with men, and whenever they moved the boat would give a sickening roll and scare everyone stiff. However, they had to be got out and were. The island was duly made only to discover another trouble; this time boots, or rather the lack of them.

The islanders were extremely hospitable—they were paid so much for rescued mariners. But the island was very rocky, and a lot of the lads had thrown away their boots—why, it is not clear—as the lifebelts were easily capable of floating a good deal more than boots. The village lay up some very stony paths, and the naked, soft feet of the troops could not face them. However, as the reward depended on good treatment of shipwrecked mariners, donkeys were soon forthcoming to carry the unshod. All assembled in the Town Hall where a spread was laid out. I felt quite ashamed when one of my men sampled a wine flask, spat out the mouthful and said, "Oh, Christ!" in front of the villagers and on to the clean Town Hall floor. Finally all the survivors of the ship were collected together at the Naval Base. I was overjoyed to see Pat again, fully recovered. All our kit had gone down with the ship, including my precious semi-automatic rifle.

Returning to the war and aviation again. When one thinks back on the *faux pas* perpetrated by reputable firms in those days, it makes one shudder to think of similar ones to come. Now, unfortunately, they have much more incalculable forces to play the ass with. As an example of those days, take the interrupter gear fitted to those war machines, to assure that the machine gun in front would shoot between the blades of the revolving propeller, and not through the blades. It consisted of a steel rod some ten feet in length

connected to the mechanism of the gun at one end and making intermittent contact with the knobs on the hub of the propeller at the other. The rod was fitted with micrometer adjustments whereby you set the gun to shoot between the revolving blades. This you did on the ground when maybe the sun was out and the rod expanded to ground temperature. When you got up to ten or twelve thousand feet it might well be freezing. Any schoolboy could have foretold that a ten foot rod would contract, and almost every shot would hit a blade. However, you usually got down to the ground before you lost a blade, and anyhow it was extraordinary how many shots those wooden props would stand before breaking.

Another unusual combat I had was when a Halberstadt single-seater engaged my machine, this time over the French front. You can't imagine a more ridiculous affair. Both machines flew all out straight at each other, to pass by a hair's breadth. Not a shot from either side. As we passed each tried to get on the other's tail. Still not a shot from either. We were both frantically trying to clear our guns, and so it went on while the French front-liners cheered and afterwards *testified that they heard the machine guns roaring at each other.* I was the first to get my gun to fire, and sailed in to give the Halber a burst. Result, one shot and the gun again jammed. What was my astonishment when I saw the Halber start diving down, not at his own lines, which he could easily have reached, but hell bent for a comfortable berth in the middle of No Man's Land between the lines. I watched him as I followed him down, and saw him flatten out, land O.K., and get out and run like hell for his own lines. Almost at once the French batteries started to pound his abandoned machine, soon shattering it to atoms.

Well, thought I, that's a queer go. Can't make a fight out of that. So I merely stated in my combat report that I had engaged an E.A. but my gun had jammed after one shot, and the E.A. too had broken off the fight. That was not the end of it, however, for presently the C.O. came in with a telegram in his hand from the French congratulating him on the result of the combat. On receipt of this he had telephoned the French battery concerned and they had said, "Yes, yes, they had seen the whole affair, and had heard the machine

guns roaring". After which they confirmed having demolished the E.A. on the ground with the superb fire of their seventy-fives.

"Well, what do you say to that", asked the C.O. Again I explained exactly what had happened, that both guns had jammed, and that anyhow the Hun was just as fed up with their dud machines as we were with ours, and that it was merely an opportunity for a write-off.

The C.O., an otherwise quite sane person, was furious and said he was not going to lose a claim, and that I should be credited with the machine whether I liked it or not. "What, with one shot, sir?" I asked. "Yes, and be damned to you!" and off he went.

Such is squadron history in the making, and such was air fighting in those days. How very different now with multiple cannon, armour plating, parachutes, and fantastic rates of speed and climb, to say nothing of radar. I collected a bar to my M.C. in this campaign.

Every day the enemy put over a very high flying reconnaissance machine to photograph the shipping in Salonica harbour. It was known as the "Iron Cross" flight, and it was said that anyone making three successful flights was awarded that distinction. Everyone tried to intercept this machine. The French had got out from France one very smart little scout—a Spad—quite the latest thing, and the apple of their eye. On it they mounted two additional Lewis guns, secured to the outer struts and fired by Bowden wire from the cockpit, this giving, together with the normal gun firing through the prop, in those days at any rate, an unheard of rate of fire. They chose their best pilot and one fine clear day they launched their attempt on the "Iron Cross" machine.

As it happened, Wynne and I were also up and bent on the same lay. We, however, were somewhat handicapped by the ceiling of their machine standing at fifteen thousand feet or so, whereas the Hun used to come over at twenty thousand feet. As we were floundering around in that floppy way of machines at their ceiling, suddenly there was a burst of fire behind me and a small machine flashed by in a dive. Without a thought I put my nose down and started my Vickers pop-popping. As luck would have it, the thing which nearly always gave up after a few rounds, continued to fire at its best rate.

Wynne, too, seeing me engaging a machine, joined in. His gun, too, operated. Presently we saw a piece of the enemy machine detach itself, and still we followed it down, down.

We thought, "We've got him at last!" We also knew what would happen to him if he came down within our lines. We had seen Hun machines stripped bare by hungry souvenir hunters in incredibly short time. So, taking no chance, we followed our victim straight down until he crash landed, the plane collapsing flat. We landed close by and rushed over to the plane. Suddenly there was a burst of fire from the crashed machine, coming from one of the wing guns. Behind it was a fierce looking little man, evidently in a state of great excitement. He was invited to come forth and explain himself. He did so—in French, "It's a ruddy Frenchman. Hell! Let's clear out quick", we said. We did so, pretending we knew nothing about it. It was the marvellous, the formidable Spad! And my only souvenir was a neat group of bullet holes in my machine.

12

The Ivory Coast, The Niger and The Benue

AFTER the war I was rather incapacitated for a time with a double infestation of malaria, the Balkan variety, plus my old African bugs. In addition, I had married!

But finally the call of Africa was irresistible again, and I organized an elephant hunt on the Ivory Coast. For four hundred years the Ivory Coast had been the greatest source of "Ivory". To begin with it was the black variety that drew the most attention. The British were very prominent in this trade as many a Bristol trading firm's books would show. Later, the white variety occupied the most prominent position in trading circles. During this era every trader employed native hunters. They themselves, apparently, did not hunt elephant to any great extent, and when you see the old muzzle loaders then current you can understand why. Just the other day I picked up one of these pieces, it was four-bore and weighed thirty-five pounds.

There must have been enormous numbers of elephant along the Ivory Coast in those days to have supported the numerous trading establishments. No wonder elephants were shy when I came along. There were as many hunters as elephant, and good hunters too. Your African is a stout fellow who believes in "medicine", and goes up close. Where he fails somewhat is in his anatomy. He used to think that the purpose of the bullet was to make a hole in the skin to let the fire in. It was the fire that killed, not the bullet at all.

When you read accounts of big-game shooting they are generally about Kenya. People living in that charming country write as if it alone was Africa. What a tiny bit of the continent it is will be readily seen at a glance of an atlas.

There seem to be other queer notions held in Kenya. One is that elephant there tend to become more savage than those elsewhere;

that the constant harrying they are subjected to drives them into denser bush, and that they resent strongly any intrusion on their retreat. I wish some of these pundits could experience some of the West Coast bush.

Another pecularity the Kenya-only hunters have is that they all start at one thousand elephants, never less, lucky beggars. After a century or two of intensive hunting the Ivory Coast lot are pretty well loaded down with the weight of metal shot into their hides. They never venture out of their dark and dense retreats by daylight. They are wise and soon find the places where they are least disturbed. If they should chance on a country where the natives have a bad reputation there they will be found.

Everyone said elephant were finished long ago in the Ivory Coast. The export of ivory was almost at the vanishing point. Trade had turned to other sources of profit such as liquor, cloth, palm oil and ground nuts. Native hunters were still employed and carried modern-made percussion guns, with steel barrels well blued and good locks. These were mostly used for getting bush meat, and being smooth bore, were generally loaded with buck shot. As they were about four-bore they were of course quite effective weapons.

On this part of the West African coast there is an inland lagoon running parallel with the coast. Everyone passes this area by train on their way into the interior. The banks of the lagoon are clothed in the densest kind of high bush. As none troubled this area a lot of wise old elephants had found a refuge there, quite close to civilization, yet no white man knew of this. The natives enjoyed a bad reputation and were extremely poor, so nobody bothered them. I was lucky enough to find this secluded game pocket and soon was on the friendliest footing with the natives through the usual medium of meat. It was not long before I was very comfortably established among them. As they are drummers, hardly a night passed without news of elephant raiding gardens coming throbbing over the air. The location of the village and the number of raiders was always relayed. Scarcely ever were they wrong.

The actual hunting was trying. The bush was of the very densest description, but the elephant were all mature bulls and this meant

a lot. The ivory, while not large, was quite satisfactory, and the cost of getting it out almost nil. Everyone was content with meat. I had no use for a large expert gang as in other parts. Generally the ivory was left to rot out, in these hot humid regions a matter of only two or three days.

I might have been still in that country if my enterprise had not contained within it the seed of its own undoing. Government became aware of my game pocket. Here were some untaxed natives and ivory too, and they determined to subjugate it.

Thus it was that one day my hunting safari collided with a large military force. The commander was very hostile and gave me to understand that my presence in the region could no longer be allowed as it was now coming under martial law. He suggested I would be murdered by the natives, which made me laugh. After a bit he said he would like very much to take part with me in an elephant hunt. "All right", I replied, but park your army and come out to my camp".

Arrived there the most elaborate precautions were taken against a night attack. I told the chap it was totally unnecessary, that the natives were as quiet as lambs. "But what about elephant?" he said. He seemed to be terrified of everything. When he saw my arrangements for sleeping he nearly had a fit. Leopards were the next things. They were all man-eaters in the commandant's estimation.

Early afoot is the hunter's adage. But it was hard to get my sportsman going. He wanted to take several of his soldiers on the party. I had to explain that the fewer people we had the better. I was ready with an old native who had seen the backs of four bull elephant in a close-by plantation. At last we got going with the old native, myself, the commandant, and one soldier.

As it happened it was some time before we made contact, but all the signs made it clear that our four raiders were quite leisurely feeding round and round in circles. In that particular kind of bush no air circulated that could be called a wind, and naturally the heat was terrific. My white companion soon began to feel it as he was in rotten condition.

About sun time, 9.30 a.m., he halted and said he considered our

native tracker was deceiving us, and that the elephant were miles away. I assured him it was not so, pointing to the droppings that were obviously fresh. I told him we might come on them any moment now. Instead of reassuring him, this seemed to have the opposite effect. He said he was now convinced the native was deceiving us. Moreover he was going straight back to camp. Concluding that elephant at close quarters was the last thing he wanted to see, I told him I was going on, and if he insisted in returning to camp to be sure to back trail our route, otherwise he would become lost. This suggestion he rejected with great scorn, giving me to understand that the Senegal soldiers never got lost. So we parted, he quite determined to cut straight back to camp rather than follow those weary miles through the tangle.

As luck would have it the old native and I came right on the party shortly after the sportsman had left. Only parts of the beasts could be discerned at a few feet range. Thanking my stars I was alone and had no nervous rifles behind me, I quickly got the business over, cut off the tails, and was soon back in camp with the aid of the old native who really knew the bush, it being in his own back yard, so to speak.

On arrival in camp, however, things did not look so bright. No commandant. He had gotten himself bushed. On hearing the news, the corporal in charge set his men on to catching the natives of the village, with the result that every man, woman, and child hit the bush like a flash. Instantly the place was deserted, even my old native disappeared. The corporal sent his men off in every direction. At my suggestion they filled their water bottles. Soon shots were being fired in all directions. No doubt my sportsman was by this time feeling pretty sorry for himself. In time they connected, and coming on the outward bound trail of the four elephant had the sense to back-track them to camp.

What a tale of woe now unwound itself? It seemed the would-be hunter and his famous soldiers had heard my shots, turned and tried to find the old native and me, thereby completing their lostness. Remarking that he had heard four or five shots, and suggesting that I had failed to get one, I told him that on the contrary I had got

all four. He was amazed when I showed him the four tails. From amazement he turned to scorn and venom. I could see it working in his system. He now accused me of having deceived him. I could not help laughing. Thinking the poor beggar was out of his head with exhaustion, I poured him another drink. But he was a nasty bit of work, and I regretted having anything to do with him. His soldiers in searching the bush had stumbled on some of those nasty little barbed iron spikes all natives place in the dust of their paths leading to their pitiful little hoards of grain against naked-footed thieves. Nothing could persuade him that they had not been placed to trap him and his soldiers. Without any reason at all he promptly fined the village an impossible amount, telling the interpreter to tell the villagers that he would take the women and old men his soldiers had managed to round up, back to his headquarters, and that he would have one of the hostages executed for every day the fine remained unpaid.

I had intended to give the fellow a pair of tusks. After all, any of us might get bushed. But when he made it evident he was going to turn dirty I said nothing, not that I took his threat against the villagers seriously. He left next day taking his miserable hostages with him, tied neck to neck.

It was with horror and amazement that I heard the news that his threat was no idle one. It was a quite impossible sum for the village to pay. They did not have the money and, as a matter of fact, they did not use money. Even if they had thrown in all their daughters and wives, all they had to sell, they could never have raised it. Searching my boxes, I could not get the sum so I had to add ivory to it. Thus a few heads were saved for the moment anyway, and the "sportsman" got his trophies after all. Is it any wonder the white man is unpopular?

Shortly after this my friend Wynne Eyton and I began our canoe journey of two or three thousand miles up the Niger River and its tributaries. We had ordered three Canadian Peterborough canoes through London several months before, and they now arrived on the boat deck of a tramp steamer, undamaged except for a few cinders from the funnel, the two smaller ones nested inside the 18-footer.

You can imagine our eagerness to get them out of the crate and afloat on the mighty Niger. We soon discovered that the smallest one was altogether too cranky for the croc-infested waters. The medium-sized one was all right, but care had to be taken with it. The large one was just about perfect, weighed 150 pounds, and could be transported slung on a pole by two carriers, with two in reserve. All the precious stuff like ammunition was entrusted to the large one. Only floating stuff like bedding went in the middle one which was in Wynne Eyton's charge.

This was just after the 1914 war and old Blighty had been drained well nigh dry of foodstuffs, so we started with practically nothing but ammunition and bedding. We would have to live on what we could shoot, supplemented by native foods and oils. Honey or sugar cane took the place of sugar. Tobacco we got in exchange for meat. One country we passed through was distinguished by the smoking of the dried flowers of the tobacco plant, not the leaves. It was frightfully potent and knocked us endwise at first, but we came to like it.

Eyton had spent five years as the adopted son of one of the native chiefs in Tahiti. He had lived there in the nude, and of course had taken part in all the native ploys. What he knew about swimming, diving, fish spearing and so on could have been learned in no other way. Among other accomplishments he had learned to kill sharks with a knife, and seemed inclined to treat the croc as no more formidable a customer. He was soon enlightened on that point.

One day, soon after we started up the river, we were sitting on the bank above a water-drawing place. I had my binoculars and was watching the motionless eyes of a croc. away over in the reflections of the opposite bank. Quite motionless except for the lazy ripples passing his submerged snout, he lay there watching the procession of water-carrying women. His eyes protruded possibly an inch and a half above the water. What gave him away was the fact that whereas all was motion around him, he alone was motionless. It was a gameless region and the odds were decidedly on his being a man-eater. Wynne could hardly believe the tiny object was a croc.

As always I had my rifle, and moreover I had it sighted properly. Wynne belonged to that class who believe that if they pay enough

to a good London gunmaker they will then have a properly-sighted rifle. And so he usually will, for the London firms of repute take infinite care to see that their wares are worthy of their reputations. They test fire them from bench rests until they group properly. I am now speaking of the days when the only sights for sporting weapons were the open "V" backsight, and the white, gold, or platinum foresight. When the test firer, a skilled man, took a bunch of rifles to the range to test and sight in he aimed at a black square 1½ x 1½ inches at 100 yards. This bull was on a white ground so naturally his white bead foresight was a handicap, so he blackened it, either with a match or candle, or a small bottle of blacking. He then proceeds to get his group by always holding his now black bead at 6 o'clock, filing and blacking his sights to bring his shots down. Seldom was any transverse motion required, but if it was he had the tools. Of course he sank the very tiniest tip of the foresight into the notch of the back sight and very tight groups would result. Some of the testers wore an orthoptic or pin point aperture over their shooting eye.

The result of all this palaver amounted to was that you got a rifle that shot from six inches to a foot high when you got it out to Africa and held your white bead on the spot you wanted to hit. They all did it, and incredible as it may seem, they still do it.

The moment I got to African bush I would construct a neutral-coloured target. On the target I drew a bull large enough to show a margin all around whatever bead I was using, generally wart-hog or elephant ivory. For forest hunting the bead foresight would be quite large. Shooting with both eyes open it does not seem to matter how large the foresight is because the left eye sees the bull through the bead. This is best demonstrated by fitting a visiting card tightly over the barrel in front of the ramp carrying the foresight, when just as good shooting can be done with it, although the aiming eye only sees the backsight and the foresight, nothing more. The whole of the target is blackened from the aiming eye by the card, but the left eye sees the target. With an outfit of gunmakers' files I would then file away until I got my group in the centre of the spot aimed at. For forest work I had the target at 80 yards, and for open country

shooting at 150 yards. As to blacking, I merely heated the foresight dull red and plunged it in oil, repeating it several times. Never did I receive a rifle from the most reputable firm that did not require this doctoring.

So, now, having warned some boys to stand by with a native canoe, Wynne and I sat staring at that croc. Wynne, I could see, did not believe it was anything more than a stick protruding from the river bed. Although it was a longish shot I had my rifle to my liking and I took rip, dropping a sizzler on the spot. There was at once a terrific commotion, and there was just a chance that if we got there smartly we would be in time to secure him. They are queer things, crocs. If, when you kill him, his controls are at flotation and your shot is fatal his controls remain at flotation. Everything is shut tight and remains so, but he has to be very, very dead. If he is only stunned he quickly recovers his grip on his controls and sinks like a ton of cement, sometimes when you have actually got a hold of him. Of course, in this case, you lose him, for if he is a large one he may actually weigh a ton even in the water.

In the case in point we reached him before he regained controls, and the boys got a rope on him. The village was mighty glad to see his end, and yet none had told us about him. As they were opening him up and gruelling about among the stones in his stomach, a girl burst through the mob, squatting around the remains. Yelling something, she snatched an object from a man, crying, "My sister, my sister!" It transpired that her sister had been taken by this croc.

Now he was dead his conduct report came to light. He was quite a notorious character. He was the length of our Peterborough—18 feet—and of enormous girth. I advised Wynne to try piercing his hide with a knife. I didn't want any South Sea Island stuff on crocs.

Our armament for this canoe venture was as follows: As Wynne had not done any previous hunting of big stuff he fancied a heavy bore, so we had picked up a very nice .450 by Rigby. As a second to this he had a .318 Mauser and a 12-bore shotgun. My battery consisted of a .318 Mauser and a .22 Long Rifle. We took a considerable amount of ammo, all in small watertight tins, and likewise

matches in tins. I don't think we had much else, as food for export had been in very short supply at home. We were both expert livers off the country, and our rifles and the shotgun provided lavishly for all hands, especially the shotgun. The duck and goose life had to be seen to be believed. The result of one shot from the 12-bore might be likened to a sudden eclipse of the sun. Often twenty or more fat teal or whistling duck could be picked up from a sandbank that had been literally covered by myriads of fowl. Guinea fowl, too, came to drink in their thousands.

The personnel consisted of any boy who fancied a trip into the interior. One of them called himself cook. Certainly he could roast fat duck on a spit as well as anyone else. Besides this he could clean and fry fish, and that was about all we asked of him. Then there were three stout roustabouts for the big canoe, making four paddlers with myself steering.* Wynne had two paddlers in the second canoe, and steered himself. Everyone worked at getting the flotilla along against the current. When it was too strong for paddlers, poling was the method. Whereas on a foot safari these boys would be loafing along doing nothing, here they paddled all day long and never seemed to mind it.

Canoe transport was certainly by far the most economical form of getting all over Africa that could then be devised. It had many advantages over the foot or motor safari, one of the greatest being that you were free as air to progress, irrespective of the seasons. Where a foot or motor safari would be held up by floods, mud, or a shortage of this or that, the canoe carried on in face of everything. Certainly there were occasions when its economy in man-power became a bore, as when you got a number of elephant a long way from your flotilla. It was impossible to chop out ivory with so few hands available. But you could always wait for putrefaction to do the work for you. It was seldom that a kill did not attract some wandering natives. Like vultures they would appear out of the blue,

* I am pretty certain that Bell is in error about the length of this, his largest canoe. It was probably a 20- or 22-foot Peterborough freight canoe. Four men would so crowd an 18-foot canoe as to leave no room to paddle, to say nothing of room for additional cargo.—T.W.

and they were always willing to do anything for meat. We hardly ever used money. Meat was the one article of commerce. If we wanted to make a portage we chose a hippo pool as near to the scene of operations as possible, and put it around that we wanted carriers to make the portage, and to be paid in meat. Hundreds would come with their women to take charge of the meat. The whole operation would be carried through with the greatest glee, the men running off with the canoes as though they were featherweights, doing prodigious quick marches so as to get back to their meat.

We often had a good laugh at natives about to make a land portage. They would approach the big canoe lying on the shore. With much doubt and fearful of the size, they would give a tentative lift on the gunwhale. The surprise on their faces at its lightness was comical. They would be split from ear to ear in grins, yet we knew the canoe weighed 150 pounds. They thought it a featherweight compared with their dug-outs, so everyone was satisfied.

Hippo were by far the most convenient source of meat in quantity. But when rivers run for long distances through dry country with but little fall, pools deep enough to give shelter and cover become scarce. In this case land animals have to be brought under tribute. In the Chari country buffalo were the main source. They were in great herds on the plains, being much more numerous than giraffe or rhino. But the rhino were even then coming into demand for their horns in the China market for aprodisiacs and the like.

Travelling by and living on water was being in an entirely different world. You made contact with a much more unsophisticated set of people than those living on centuries-old caravan routes. You were much more out of touch with Government, custom posts, post offices, telegraphs and such modern curses. If you were wise you camped on island sandbanks wherever possible, where your only neighbours were hippo, fish, and sometimes elephant. Even the ever-prevailing night pests such as mosquitoes did not often invade the delightfully clean sandbanks. In short, you were much freer and far better off than you would have been in some big infested camp on a main route, with its latrines and other stinks. Certainly you saw

more—no other travellers crossed your path, and that might seem a loss to some, but to us so recently from the milling throng of war, it seemed like paradise. Canoe travel as we did it had an even greater advantage. The fact that we paddled our own canoes just like the natives, had all the people completely at a loss as to how to receive us. Being in doubt they left us severely alone, which suited us very well indeed.

I have had considerable experience in canoe travel. Dug-out canoes took Harry Rayne and me down the Gila River, a tributary of the Sobat. From under the 10,000 foot plateau of Abyssinia they took us into the most frightful swamp country, where not a living creature but crocs and elephant could survive, and where no dry land on which to camp could be found for days, and where we filled our canoes to capacity with ivory until there was only 3½ inches of freeboard.

How my canoeing really started was when I was hunting on the west bank of the upper Nile. I had a good foot safari on that bank, but found it convenient to send my ivory over to the east bank, where it was looked after by friendly chiefs. Whenever there were sufficient tusks two or three natives would be commissioned to ferry the stuff over in a native canoe. In places the White Nile is a mile or two broad. It was in just such a place that I lost two boys and a whole cargo of tusks. One end of the canoe dropped out when in mid-stream, it having been held in position by mud only. Down went the ivory beyond salvage and crocs. took the two boys who could swim. The third clung to the now empty canoe and was saved. It was then that I ordered a galvanized boat—aluminium was not then in vogue. It was 20 feet long by 4 feet 3 inches amidships, built in three sections of 60 pounds each. It was a better affair than the Peterboroughs, though not so easily moved. But it carried my whole hunting safari with food, rifles, ammunition, tents, etc. It took me deep into the swamps where only a canoe could move, and got me elephant that I would not ever have guessed existed.

Of course I should have had two. With only one I was obliged to have a foot-carrier squad as well. Naturally they were confined to hard ground and it was inevitable that sometimes twenty or

thirty miles of swamp intervened between the hunting outfit and the main body. Thus some great swamp traverses had to be made in maintaining contact. One more steel canoe would have perfected the equipment. I remember making paddles for that canoe. A couple of draw-knives should always be carried. An adze too is very useful. Fishing tackle, with a good assortment of wire leaders and spoons of various sizes, is also an essential. You will lose much tackle for many of the fish are very heavy. Sometimes you will see floating objects that at first you mistake for crocs, but on examination with binoculars they may prove to be barbel or Nile perch sunning themselves. A judiciously delivered rifle bullet will often stun them sufficiently long for a smart crew of paddlers to secure the fish before it recovers. The biggest I ever got this way scaled 120 pounds, but they run up to 250 pounds.

Little crocs from one to two feet long show the utmost terror of deep water, and seek the refuge of dry land in the presence of man. Whether brother crocs prey on brother crocs I do not know, but certainly the big perch are great eaters of small crocs. I remember strolling along the grassy bank of Edward Nyanza with small crocs darting about my feet. Lifting one with my foot I hove it twelve or fifteen feet out into deep water. Instantly there was a boil—a barbel or perch had him. Almost instantly there was a greater commotion. I guess a large croc had the fish. So does Africa seek to maintain a balance in the enormous richness of her life.

Thus we travelled up the Niger, and then up the Benue, its eastern tributary, a paddle of some 400 miles against the current, arriving at Garua which is the head of steam navigation. Here, situated in the French sphere of influence, there was still a remarkable relic of the old slave-dealing days. The country went under the name of its despotic ruler, Buba Gida. The principal town was also so called. There were great accounts of Buba Gida, and we determined to visit him. The whole country is an example of what can be done by courage, energy, force of character and extreme cunning allied to ferocity and cruelty. The redoubtable Buba Gida, the owner, body and soul, of tens of thousands of slaves, is no scion of a kingly race. Mothered by a slave of the Lakka tribe and fathered by

a Scrub Fulani of sorts, everything he has and is he owes entirely to his own ability.

In early life he left his humble home and started out into the wild of No Man's Land with some companions of a like spirit. Slaves at all cost were what Buba Gida and company were out for. Perhaps it was mere chance that led them towards the Lakka country whence his mother had been raided, or perhaps it was information from her. However that may be, in close proximity to the Lakka country they found what they were looking for—a fine country, well watered and obviously good for cattle. Pagan Lakkas and other bush tribes were in plenty within raiding distance. Their first raid set them up in labour. Their tiny camp became a village. More raids were planned and carried out with invariable success. The village became a town.

Buba now ruled supreme. By pursuing a system of putting away all those who obstructed him, judiciously mixed with generous treatment in the matter of women, to acquire which the African will do anything, he obtained such a power over his people that none, even the white man, had been able to overcome it.

To reach this country we left our canoes at Garua, and traversed some very rich cattle districts inhabited by the Fulani, a tribe akin to the Somalis. At Buba Gida's boundary we were met by some forty or fifty of his smaller fry, for it must be understood that we were simple elephant hunters and not "big" white men. Everything about us was known to Buba Gida days before our arrival at his boundary by his wonderful system of intelligence. We remembered noticing casual horsemen about our caravan; they were Buba Gida's intelligence.

From the boundary to the king's town was a six-day march, and the headman of every village we slept at was under orders to escort us to Buba Gida. As each headman in turn was escorted by five or six men, all being mounted, it will be seen that we formed quite a little army by the time we got to the capital. At the end of the sixth day we were camped within sight of the mysterious city. And mysterious it certainly is, for surrounded as it is by well known, if somewhat distant countries, and within 120 miles of a large Govern-

ment post, nothing is known of this curious medieval city or its despotic tyrant, Buba Gida, and yet every white man wishes to know more about it.

Countless thousands of questions must have been asked about Buba Gida. He even visits the Government station Garua, and sufficiently foolish to us he appears when he does so, for he goes with thousands of followers, women and men. Special beds and tents are carried with all kinds of paraphernalia; in fact anything for show. He must even buy the whole contents of the stores he honours with a visit, much of them quite useless to him.

It was not clear to us why we had to camp so near the city, so we asked why we did not proceed. The answer was that the king had ordered us to sleep at that spot. There are very few remaining places in Africa where a white man's actions are governed by a black man's wishes. Abyssinia under Menelik was one. Liberia and Buba Gida are still among them.

On the following morning we all sallied forth in our very best paint. As all the riding horses were stallions and some of them alarmingly vicious, all of them at any time ready to bite, kick, rear-strike and prance, and indeed taught to do so, it is easy to imagine the scene as we drew near the capital. Right in the thick of it, in the middle of the prancing mêlée, on a very high rakish-looking stallion was a gentleman with a very white and anxious face. He seemed to be somewhat insecurely seated on a flat saddle and trying to do something to his horse by means of a snaffle. I know all this because I was he. My companion looked much more at ease, but I must confess I felt thoroughly alarmed lest I should fall off and disgrace the whole show. This will be better understood when I explain that all the other riders except ourselves were in saddles with great high horns in front and high cantles behind. Most of them clung openly to the horns, and besides this their mounts were bitted Arab fashion with great high spades and a ring around the lower jaw, so that they really had control over their beasts.

Luckily I did not fall off, and presently we halted about a mile from the great gates in the wall that surrounded the town. We were told we would have to wait here until the king gave the order to

enter. After waiting about two hours—done chiefly to impress the people with the greatness of the king, to see whom even the white men had to wait—a mob of mounted men about two hundred strong was seen to come forth from the city gate and to approach.

We hastily mounted, and I remember having more trouble with my infernal beast. Some very impressive speeches were now made. Luckily for us the king had lent us a speech maker, and he held up our end in a very creditable manner, judging by the amount of talking he did. I thought it would never end and my horse became more and more restive. Every time he squealed and bit one of the neighbouring horses the whole mob began playing up. I was awfully afraid he would take charge and go barging into the knights, for such they were. Genuine knights—if not in armour at any rate all clothed in arrow-proof quilted cloth—horses and all. On their heads the knights had bright iron native caskets. They carried long bamboo spears with iron heads. At their sides were Arab swords. Beneath the bright little caskets were faces of such revolting ugliness and ferocity as to be almost ludicrous.

We had the speeches of the opposition translated to us, and the gist of them was to the effect that we were about to have the honour of entering the town of the greatest king on earth—a king who was, if not immortal, next door to it, and so on. Then we were requested to count the knights. Before we had time to count more than twenty or so we were told that they numbered five hundred. An obvious lie: two hundred at the outside. Then we were told that each knight had under him five hundred other knights, armed and mounted as he was. After that our attention was drawn to a foot rabble in leopard skins and large quivers full of arrows. I had failed to notice them before owing to anxiety about my steed's capers. They looked a pretty nasty crowd. Never have I seen so many hideous men together.

After the speeches we proceeded slowly towards the gates, gallopers continued going off to report progress to the king. The wall totally encloses the town and the gates are wide enough to allow six men riding abreast. The wall itself is perhaps twenty feet high and made of sun-dried mud. The thickness at the gateway is

about fifty feet, but this is chiefly to impress the visitor and to shelter the guard. The rest of the wall is no more than perhaps six feet at the base. The buildings in the town are simply the ordinary grass, mud and wattle huts of that part of Africa, any more pretentious style of architecture not being allowed. Even pretentious or costly clothing, ornaments or style of any sort are forbidden. Music is forbidden. The drinking of intoxicants within the town is punishable with death. Outside it is allowed. No child must cry, none may laugh loudly or sing or shout. Noises of any sort are forbidden in this dismal city. The filth is indescribable. The obvious healthiness of the dwellers may be due to the fact that Buba Gida has every one of them out at hard work in his immense plantations every day and all day long, and also perhaps of the fact that everyone is well nourished. Where all belongs to the king who but he can make a ring in corn. Who but he can raise the cost of living? The only approach to a grumble that we heard from his people was the wish that they might own their own children.

Near the centre of the town a great high inner wall became visible. This, we were informed, surrounded the king and his palace. Few townsmen had ever been inside, and the king seldom comes out. Under this wall our quarters were situated, two unpretentious grass huts. In front of these huts, besides our usual ration, there were mountains of prepared foods. The things for us two white men could have fed thirty. With the food came a taster. This is a man, who by tasting everything before you, thereby guarantees it is free from poison. This is the usual thing in Africa. Usually the chief of the village does it. Everything was most comfortable, and we began to think highly of our chances of coming to some arrangement with the king about elephant hunting. We were left alone for about two hours.

When the time came for our audience we were led through streets partly around the wall, and it became evident that the inner wall encircled an enormous area. It was from forty to fifty feet high, exceedingly thick at the base and in very good repair. Arriving at the gate itself we got some idea of the immense thickness, the opening in it forming a high and very long guard room with huge doors of

black timber at each end. This guard room was filled with men—soldiers I suppose they were. Arriving at the inner door we halted, and our guide entered alone.

After some twenty minutes of waiting—again done to impress, I suppose—a slave appeared at the door and beckoned to us. He talked in a whisper and was almost nude. We entered and the great doors were closed behind us. Now we were in a courtyard with more huge doors in front of us. Another wait, but shorter, and our guide appeared. Up until now he had deemed to us to be a rather important fellow, having been decently dressed at any rate, but now he was as nude as the other slaves, another of the rules of this strange court. Everyone, barring white men, but not excepting the king's own sons, must approach the Person almost nude, *and on all fours*. They must never look at the king's face, but must keep their foreheads to the ground, and you can bet these rules are strictly observed. Even our man, who must be in and out constantly, was several shades more ashen than when outside.

Our interpreter then stripped himself, and a very trembling wretch he looked. At last everything was ready for our entry to the Presence. We passed through the door into a large and spotlessly clean courtyard. Along one side ran what was evidently the reception room, a lofty building beautifully thatched, with a low veranda. Lolling on a pile of cushions on the floor of the veranda was a huge and very black negro. We walked quickly towards him, passing two nude slaves with their heads glued to the ground, while our interpreter and the functionary crawled on all fours behind us.

This was Buba Gida, and a very impressive creature he looked. As we drew near he got up, a fine specimen indeed, seven feet tall if an inch, and wide in proportion. Soft, of course, but otherwise in fine condition. He extended a hand like a bath sponge for size and almost as flabby, swinging a string of enormous amber beads in the other. Having shaken hands white man fashion, he waved us to two European chairs while he subsided on his cushions and commenced to stoke a small charcoal fire, throwing incense on it. Silence had the stage for some moments and then the king sneezed. At once there was a wail from the two bowed slaves in the middle of the courtyard.

This was instantly taken up and drowned by a chorus of wails from the precincts. Whenever, throughout all our interviews, the king thought we were approaching the familiar or asking awkward questions, he would sneeze, cough or spit, or even clear his throat, and there would follow this uproar from his wailing chorus.

The first question he asked was about our rifles. He was very anxious to buy them. We were overjoyed to hear he would be pleased to help us to good elephant country, at the same time mentioning the fact that he was very fond of ivory. Presently the conversation drifted to fever, and here we were astounded to find that he really appeared to believe that he was immortal. He naively told us he was a great friend of God's, and that sickness of any sort never touched him. After many polite speeches on both sides we departed from our first visit to this remarkable man.

13

Buba Gida and the Lakkas

AFTER the usual interminable delays inseparable from dealing with African potentates, we were at last ready for the trek to our hunting grounds. Report had it these lay fifteen days' march to the south. The king had been most generous. He lavished upon us food, carriers, guides, horses and even milk cows to accompany us. He sent with us his most renowned elephant hunters from whom I tried to get information regarding the country we were going into. The tales of countless numbers of immense elephant told us by Buba Gida himself we frankly disbelieved, as he had shown us forest tusks from his ivory store as having come from the Lakka country, which we knew lay well to the east of the great forest belt. There is no mistaking the difference between forest ivory and that from grass or scrub bush country, and from all accounts the Lakka country was of the latter description.

For some twelve days or so we followed narrow winding native trails through good but almost totally deserted country. Only on two occasions did we come by human habitations, and these were merely outposts of Buba Gida's. The contrast between this well-watered but uninhabited country, and the miles of plantations and teeming thousands of the immediate vicinity of Buba Rei was most striking. Enquiry elicited the fact that all the former inhabitants of these rolling plains had been "gathered in" by Buba Gida, and that he was surrounded similarly on all sides by the broad uninhabited belts.

Lion we heard only once. Buba's hunters told us that at one time elephant were very numerous all over this country. One of them showed us where he had killed his last one. I asked him what reward he got from the king. He told me that the tusks were only

about so high, indicating a length of about three feet, which would correspond to a weight of about twenty to twenty-five pounds. Continuing, he said what other king would have given him so much as Baba (i.e. Father), for in spite of the smallness of the tusks Baba had given him another woman, making his fourth, and had filled his hut with corn sufficient to keep him drunk on beer for two months. Few indeed are the Sovereigns who could have rewarded their gamekeeper in such a fashion. This man was firmly loyal to his king, and it may be of interest to enquire into this loyalty to a cruel and despotic tyrant, for it is shared by all his subjects as far as we could see.

Now in this kingdom everyone and everything belongs to the king. He farms out his female slaves to all and sundry as rewards for meritorious services rendered to him. All children born as a result of these operations belong to the king, just as the parents do. It must be remembered that this is "domestic" slavery, and not at all the horrible affair commercial slavery once was. There is no export of slaves, as the coming of the white man has prevented it. Domestic slavery entails upon the master certain duties towards the slaves. Should the slave work well and faithfully for the master, the master is bound to find for him a wife. The slave may, should he choose, become a freeman after sufficiently long and good service. At any time, should he possess sufficient intelligence to embrace the Mohammedan religion, he automatically becomes a freeman, for it is forbidden to enslave one of the Faith, and Buba Gida was himself a Mohammedan. To my mind the only explanation of the undoubted devotion shown by slaves to their master is—women.

To the African a wife is everything. It is equivalent in Western life to having a living pension bestowed on you. For your wife builds your home, provides wood and water, grows your food, makes the cooking utensils, mats, beds, etc., not only for your use, but also for sale. You sell these and pocket the proceeds. Not only this, but she brews beer from the corn which she grows, and *you* drink it. She drinks it, and likes it too, but naturally you see that she does not overdo it. Then again she bears you children who also work for you, and you sell the females. It really amounts to selling, although

it is very bad manners to speak of the transaction as such. Marriage they call it, and dowry they call the price paid. Here again you are the lucky recipient of this dowry, and not the girl. True, you have to provide your daughter with certain things, such as a few mats, cloths, cooking pots, etc., most of which your wife makes. From all this it may be seen what a very desirable creature a woman is in Africa. There, as elsewhere, will be found bad wives, but while we have to grin and bear them, or divorce them, or be divorced by them, the African can send his back to her father and demand her sister in her place. This procedure is only resorted to in the case of a wife failing to bear children; any other fault such as flirting, nagging, quarelling, impudence, neglect or laziness being cured at home by means best known to themselves. It is not so surprising, after all, that a man will work for the better part of his life to serve a master who will, in the course of time, bestow upon him that priceless possession—a wife.

So far our attempts to win the confidence of our escort had always been met with great reserve on their part. In the evenings round the campfire is where the African usually unburdens himself, but our lot had evidently been warned not to open their mouths to the white men. These orders they very faithfully obeyed until we approached the boundaries of what might be called Buba Gida's sphere of influence. Gradually they became less secretive, and we began to hear of strange doings. In a moment of excitement, brought on by the death of a fine buck, one of the old elephant hunters disclosed to me that the king's people were in the habit of raiding slaves from the Lakka country. As we would enter this country in another day or two's march for the peaceful purpose of hunting elephant, and as I hoped for the usual and invaluable help from the natives, this news was rather disconcerting, accompanied as we were by fifty or sixty slaves. In reply to the question, "What will the natives do when they see us?" came the cheering reply, "Run like hell!"

When elephant frequent settled country, and especially where they are in the habit of visiting plantations, it is essential for the hunter to be on the most friendly terms with the natives. He must

at all cost avoid frightening them. The natural suspicion with which all strangers are regarded must somehow be allayed. Generally speaking the hunter's reputation precedes him from country to country, and if that reputation be a good one he is welcomed and helped. Only when tribes are at serious war with each other is there a break in this system of intelligence. On entering the Lakka country we were, therefore, severely handicapped, first, by not having previously visited it or its neighbours, and second, by having as our safari a villainous band of slave raiders, already well known as such to the Lakkas. I anticipated trouble, not so much from the natives as from our own band of thieves. I could see that it would be necessary to take the first opportunity of impressing upon the king's people in as forcible manner as possible that we white men were running the show and not them.

To my astonishment on arriving at the first Lakka village we and our raiders were received in quite a friendly way. On enquiring into this I found that this section of the Lakkas admitted allegiance to Buba Gida, and were at war with the sections further on, where we hoped to meet with elephant, hence our welcome.

A chance to assert ourselves occurred on the first day of our arrival among the Lakkas, for no sooner had camp been fixed up than our merry band had a Lakka youth caught and bound and heavily guarded. On enquiring into the affair it transpired that this youth had been taken in a previous raid, but had escaped and returned to his country. We had the lad straight away before us, asked him if he wished to get back to Buba Gida, and on his saying that this was the last thing he desired, at once released him. He did not wait to see what else might happen—he bolted. Of course the king's people were furious with us. We on our part were thoroughly disgusted with Buba Gida for having designed to carry out his dirty work under the cloak of respectability afforded by the presence of two Englishmen on a shooting trip. We had all of them before us, and explained that the very first time we found any of them attempting anything in the slaving line we would tie him up and march him straight to the nearest military post. We let them see that we were thoroughly determined to take complete command

of the expedition from now on, and had little further trouble from them. Later on it is true, we were annoyed to find that small native boys attached themselves as camp followers to our safari. They rather embarassed us by saying that they wished to go with us, but they quickly disappeared when their probable future was explained to them. I reckon that we must have spoiled Buba Gida's scheme to the extent of at least a round dozen of valuable slaves.

After all our trekking and the fussing with semi-civilized Africans, it was a great relief to find ourselves one day at the entrance to a village of the real genuine wild man. We had been passing through No Man's Land, as we called the neutral zone between tribes at war, for the last few hours. As the grass was high at this season we had not been spotted, and our arrival at the village was a complete surprise. Amid terrific excitement women and children rushed for the bush, fowls raced about, dogs barked, while the young men appeared from the hut with their shields and spears, and faces dangerously scarred. This is the moment above all others when anything but a perfectly tranquil outward appearance generally precipitates a tragedy. Either a native bloods his spear or arrow in the body of one of the visitors or some strung-up visitor fires his gun, when the situation gets out of hand at once. At these tense moments the appearance of a perfectly cool white man, for preference unarmed, acts in a most extraordinary manner. But duck or dodge, or get close to cover, or put up your rifle, and the thing is spoiled. There is no finer instance of this than when Boyd Alexander went to visit the Sudan chief who had sworn to do him in. Without rifle or escort Boyd Alexander voluntarily strolled up to this man's stronghold knowing, as he must have done, having been warned by the Sudan authorities, that his only chance was to appear perfectly unafraid or to avoid the country altogether. He visited the chief, and in due course left the village closely followed by him. In full view of the inhabitants of his village, it was certainly up to the chief to show his hand, and I am convinced that he was on the point of murdering Boyd Alexander when he turned a perfectly unmoved face upon the chief, and fixed him with a steady look. The chief slunk back to his village, while Boyd Alexander pursued his way. To those

who can read between the lines his description in *From the Niger to the Nile* of this little incident is an epic.

On the occasion of our first introduction to the Lakkas luckily nothing serious happened. After a few seconds of very nervous demonstrating with shield and spear, our friends rushed off in a panic, one fat youth getting a spear crossed between his legs and falling flat. As we required a guide, and as our only chance of getting one was to seize him we secured him before he quite recovered. He at once showed his sense by yielding quietly, although he must have been in an awful funk. This lad eventually became our voluntary guide and introducer, but for the moment we were compelled to hold him prisoner.

Keeping a sharp eye on our ruffians to see that they took nothing from the huts, we passed through and finally reached the village of a man who was supposed to be the best able to show us elephant. The village, of course, was deserted, so we pitched camp bang in the centre of it, and we got our captive to shout to his friends that all was well, that we were friendly and had come to hunt elephant only. This latter statement required some believing, judging by the time it took to get an answer to our overtures, which was not surprising, accompanied as we were by notorious slavers. But at last an old woman came, nosed about a bit and left, returning presently with the man we wanted. I have often admired the infinite capacity of the African to take things as they come with composure, but never more so than on this occasion. Here was his village in the hands of his enemies, added to this the complication and anxiety caused by the presence in their midst of two white men.

So far his dealings with white men had been anything but pleasant—a German military expedition had passed through. Yet here he was ready for anything that might turn up, unarmed and with a face of brass, for a day or so willing to please, but above all willing to speed the parting guest. Elephants! Rather! Hundreds of them all around So and So's village fifteen miles farther on. None here! Oh no! They were here but all had gone to—— And what about those tracks we saw as we neared the village! Oh? those were made by some elephant which came from——

but which returned to—— the next morning.

It was obvious that this eagerness to get rid of us would last just as long as we remained unwelcome; that is until we had killed an elephant and shared the meat with the natives. After that event relations might reasonably be expected to become more cordial, provided that meantime we could avoid fighting in any shape or form. Now this avoiding of fighting must necessarily depend largely on the natives themselves, for of course if one is attacked he must defend himself. Especially so among these Lakkas was this the case, for they had no powerful chiefs whom they obeyed. Indeed, they were what my companion and myself loosely called—Bolsheviks. Every man was out for himself, and to hell with everything else. No authority of any kind was obeyed. And to this total lack of cohesion we undoubtedly owed the fact that we were not attacked seriously before we became friendly with them. They had developed the art of running away to a fine point, of storing their grain and beer-making appliances in the thick part of the bush, the building of huts, the loss of which by fire would require the least labour to repair, by keeping all livestock, such as goats and cattle, tethered at a convenient distance from the village, and many other ways assisting their one trump card—instant flight.

Few people who have not experienced it can have any comprehension of how effective such a barrage can be. You perhaps wish to traverse the country, arrive at a village and find nobody there. You proceed along a path which seems to lead in the direction you wish to go. It lands you in another deserted village. Now you have to camp and water has to be found. Sometimes in the dry season this may be miles from camp. The drawers of water must be escorted. Then you wish to procure food for your escort, but there is no one to sell it. You think to take it and leave its value in its place, only you observe that no food of any kind is kept in the village. All this time not a soul is seen or even heard. You give it up and pass on to some actively hostile or friendly tribe as the case may be.

As we appeared to be so unwelcome in this village, we decided to move on the next day. The chief man of the village promised to provide us with a guide to the village where elephant were reported.

Anxious as he was to get rid of us, we reasoned that to attain this object he would surely provide the guide or lead us himself. We consequently liberated our captive guide, loading him with presents, and promising him mountains of meat when we could kill an elephant, if he would come to claim it. He stayed around for some time and I began to hope he would accompany us further, but he presently disappeared.

On the morrow our reasoning about the guide was completely confounded, as white men's reasoning so often is when applied to African affairs. No guide was forthcoming, nor could the village headman be found. The village was once more completely deserted. However, as we had been able to get the general direction from the headman before he went to the bush, we broke camp and took a likely looking path. After much wandering from one deserted village to another, we arrived in the afternoon at a large one on the edge of a slough. As usual there was not a soul to be seen, but no doubt our every movement was being carefully watched. On the march some kob had been shot and a good portion of the meat reserved for any native who might venture to approach us. After we had had our meal an old man came in. He was taken no notice of by anybody—by far the best way to allay suspicion. When he seemed more at his ease I gave him some buck meat. He took it and at once began to cook it, as he had seen it cut from a leg with the skin still on it. It was unlikely, therefore, to be poisoned, and besides if he took the meat away with him he would have to share it with others.

When he had fairly got the taste of meat on his palate I got the interpreter to work on him about elephant. At first he said there were none. We did not worry him, although we knew this to be a lie as we had seen recent tracks that day. After some time he volunteered the information that elephant had been in the gardens the night before. I said to him I thought I would go and kill one or two, in as indifferent tone as I could, and that if he cared to come along he would certainly get some meat. He became quite excited then, saying he would fetch me a man who would show me where elephant had been eating the corn in the night. Off he went and soon came back with several men. We were ready for them, and as they

preceded us some of them ran ahead to pick up the freshest tracks, blowing as they went their curious little signalling whistles. With these whistles they can talk over a considerable distance—a sort of long range wireless telegraph. We found this subsequently a great assistance as the notes of these whistles were familiar to elephant who did not appear to mind them in the least.

Although the sun was already half way between the vertical and the sundown, we judged from the air of suppressed excitement about our guides that the game was not far off. This surmise proved to be correct, for, about a mile from camp, we entered a large plantation literally ploughed up by elephant. Wynne, who was naturally the most stoical of men, showed signs of great interest. This was his first safari in real wild country, and he never yet had seen a wild elephant. All the tracks were those of bulls, and some of them were colossal. Plenty of 64 and 68 inch feet had been there, and one with a circumference of 70 inches. This meant that the owner had a shoulder height not far short of 12 feet. We thought that if their tusks were in proportion to their feet we had indeed struck luck.

The elephant had evidently been visiting the plantation nightly for some time, and the damage must have appeared terrible in the eyes of the owner. Bananas had been stripped, broken off, or completely uprooted, sugar cane ceased to exist, much of the millet had been eaten and more trampled down. But it was the ground nuts that had suffered most. These nuts grow in clusters on the roots of a clover-like plant, and are barely covered with soil. The shell is quite fragile and cracks on the least pressure being applied. When it is remembered that the foot of an elephant covers about two square feet of ground, and that he has four of them, and that when feeding he is seldom still for long, one begins to faintly appreciate the devastating effect that two or three dozen elephant would have on any garden.

Wasting no more time than was necessary to unravel the tracks, we were soon on the trail of a large bull. This led us among other gardens for a time, but presently we left cultivation and plunged into high bush, fairly dense in parts with long grass in the more open places. I stopped and told the crowd of natives who had tagged

themselves on to us that no one was to follow us on any account, hinting with my rifle what would happen if they did so. Then we took with us one native and followed the trail. In a very short time we heard noises ahead of us and stopped to listen. Sure enough it was the elephant. Leaving the native, we walked carefully but rapidly towards the noise. It had been arranged between us that as I had had previous experience at this game I was to do the shooting while Wynne picked up what tips he could. I was leading when I suddenly saw through the clearer ground-stems of the bush the feet and part of the legs of a motionless elephant. At the same time the noise we had been approaching appeared to come from beyond this quiet elephant. A glance through the leaves revealed nothing of his body, which was awkward. He was only a few paces distant and the wind was all over the place, as is usual in thick stuff. If we ran into him and killed him the chances were that the shot would stampede the others. And then he might have little or no ivory, although his legs and feet were massive enough.

Relying on these elephant being quite familiar with native smell, I slipped around behind him, making plenty of unavoidable noise, and got between him and the noisy bunch. We were rewarded for this manœuvre by reaching an opening in the bush which gave us not only a view of the noisy ones, but also a glance at our first friend as he moved off, which showed that he had short but thick ivory. I instantly put a shot into him, and another into what appeared to be the largest of the noisy ones. Both were heart shots, as in this type of bush the lower half of an elephant is generally more clearly disclosed than the upper half.

At the shots there was the usual terrific commotion, crashing of trees and dust. Hot on the vanishing sterns we rushed, and immediately jumped to a standstill, face to face with the first elephant I had fired at. Head-on, there he stood perfectly motionless, about ten yards away. To me of course he was merely a stricken animal, and would topple over in a few moments, but to my companion he must have appeared sufficiently grim and menacing I dropped him with the frontal brain shot, and showed Wynne the direction and elevation for this shot, and then off we raced on the trail of the others.

We soon came upon the second elephant which was down but not quite dead. As he raised his head my companion tried a shot for his brain with his .450, but failed to find it, and I finished him with my .318.

Leaving Wynne to wait for the natives I trudged on alone, and had not gone a quarter of a mile when I caught sight of a large bull elephant. He was moving towards an abandoned plantation through nice open stuff, and had I been able to reach him before he arrived at the dense bush I would have got him easily. But he reached and disappeared in the thick stuff without offering a chance. One would imagine that so massive an animal would leave behind him a passage clear enough for a man to pass along with ease and speed, but this is by no means the case, for everything rises up and closes in behind an elephant so the trail remains almost as difficult to follow as before. I plunged into the horrible stuff and was soon close up to his stern. All I could do was to keep close up and wait until either we reached an open patch, when I might be able to range up alongside, or until he turned so as to offer a glance at the brain. The rifle cartridge is not yet invented which will rake a full-grown elephant from stern to vitals.

As I stumbled and clambered and pushed and sweated along behind this fellow he suddenly stopped, stood for an instant, then threw his head up, backed sharply towards me and to my left, at the same time bringing his front end around with a swing, and then he was now facing me. This was so unexpected, done so swiftly, all in one movement as it were, as to be perfectly amazing. The transformation from that massive but rather ridiculous looking stern to the much higher head with the broad forehead, gleaming tusks and squirming trunk, was so disconcerting that I missed the brain, and had barely time to reload and fire again, this time into the body and from the hip with the muzzle only perhaps a few feet from his hide, when he rushed over the very spot I had occupied only an instant before.

Whew! But I thought I had him, although I suspected I had placed my shot too low. But I just then heard a crack and knew he was down. It was just sundown and I called up the natives, Wynne

coming with them. I was very exhausted and thirsty, having done no elephant hunting since before the war, so we demanded beer from the Lakkas who were now our bosom friends. This was soon forthcoming from the bush, and very refreshing we both found it. We had three very large elephants which would supply everyone with meat, and we expected it would bring the natives in from other parts with further news of elephant. The ivory was very disappointing—it was good quality but very short and hollow. After the death of the first elephant runners had gone in to bring the safari to a nearer village, so we had not the long and deadly trek so common after an elephant hunt. In fact we had barely gone a mile when we saw the welcome reflection of our fires on the trees, and were soon as comfortable as possible

After a substantial meal of buck meat and rice I asked Wynne what his impressions were. He told me the most vivid occurred when I fired the first shot. He said it appeared for all the world as if the elephant were motionless and the trees rushing past us.

As anticipated the Lakkas became much more friendly after enjoying such mountains of meat, to say nothing of the riddance of the marauders from their gardens. They never came of very much use to us in the capacity of carriers, and always bolted to the bush when the subject was mentioned. Even when we offered lavish payment in trade goods for the carrying of ivory from one village to another they invariably bolted. They could never quite trust our following I think.

We hunted elephant for some time in this country. There were numerous bull herds about, living chiefly upon native plantations, and we ridded the Lakkas of a fair number, although the nature of the country was against big bags. When the time came for us to return to Buba Rei we parted friends with the Lakkas. The return journey was accomplished without incident more alarming than a poor abortive attempt by some Lakkas to spear some of our following, but no one was hurt.

On our arrival at Buba Rei for the second time we again visited the king to thank him for all he had done for us. This time relations were rather frigid. To begin with the king remained lolling on his

couch when he received us. He had, of course, heard about our refusing to allow any recruiting of slaves to be carried out, and I daresay he was furious with us. He remained polite but cold, and we noticed a great falling off in the presents of food, etc., which are demanded by custom. Among other things we were distinctly annoyed to find that we were classed by the king as third-class white men. To Buba Gida there are three classes of Europeans. In the first category were French governors, administrators and military officers. For these sweet champagne was forthcoming in quantities to suit the individual importance of the visitor. Class two comprised minor French officials, important Americans, English travellers, scientific expeditions, surveys, etc. These got whisky, while ginger-beer was provided for elephant hunters, clerks and small commercial people. We were Ginger Beerites.

In spite of this we calculated what we owed the king, and paid him by presenting him with three tusks. He seemed only tolerably pleased with these. It was with a feeling of relief that we departed from Buba Rei and its atmosphere of intrigue and cruelty.

14

The Ascent of the Bahr Aouck

AFTER our visit to Buba Rei it was time to resume our canoe venture. Rainy season or dry was all the same to us, a thing that can be said of no other form of transport. I was to continue on the elephant hunt while Wynne went back to Garua for the canoes. There was no portage as Buba Rei lay on the same system. We agreed to meet at Baibakoum, and there arrange for the eighty mile portage from the Benue system flowing via the Niger into the South Atlantic, over to the Logune flowing into Lake Chad.

On this portion of the trip Wynne met with a mishap. The large canoe was caught in some overhanging branches and swinging sideways in the swift current it capsized, and the whole precious cargo was deposited on the bottom of a deepish pool. However, with the aid of Wynne's expert watermanship, most of the gear was recovered, with little damage except to the camera and films which were mostly ruined. However nothing mattered as the ammunition had not been lost, which was the main thing.

Meanwhile, I had some success with the heavy elephants frequenting these parts. They were distinguished among African elephant by the large size of their bodies and feet, and by the smallness of their ivory and ears.

Arriving on the Logune River, we followed in downstream and north to Fort Lamy at its junction with the Chari River. Here, we repeatedly heard from the natives of a large river which flows into the Chari many miles above Fort Lamy. It was known locally as the Bahr Aouck. It seemed to be rather mythical. Some accounts said it existed, some that it existed for some distance but then disappeared into the ground; some pooh-poohed its existence altogether, while others held that no one could penetrate in the face of the opposition that would be encountered. The French governor of the

country held the view that all the remnants of the Khalifa's die-hards and the riff-raff from all parts had a kind of last stronghold on this river, and that nothing short of a well-equipped military expedition could go through. Another account said that there was no river during the dry season. At last we came to the conclusion that there was nothing to do but to go see. All of these conflicting accounts proved to be wrong.

We canoed many miles up the Chari against the sluggish current before we sighted the junction of the Bahr Aouck. We had been careful to keep our destination secret so that when we actually steered our canoes into it our boys had not the slightest inkling of our intentions to ascend it. Being all strangers to this country they had never heard of it. But had they known its name, through our having mentioned that we were going there, it is almost certain they would have made inquiries among the natives we had already met with, and that from them they would have received such dreadful reports that they would have deserted rather than penetrate into the unknown. As it was the boys were merry because they did not know where we were, and Wynne and I were merry because we did know, and also because the water that bore us at that moment was that of a considerable river, and we thought that if it did not split up into many smaller streams we could go far and perhaps discover something worthwhile.

As we poled up stream I took soundings. There were eight feet of water in some places in spite of its being the dry season. For the first few days we saw very little game; a few kob, waterbucks, duiker and baboons. Once we saw some fishing natives with their traps. They sold us some excellent smoked fish and told us that there was one village ahead of us, but beyond that nothing. The next day we saw where a herd of elephant had crossed the river some days before. Hippo now became more common, and at one place where the river formed a large pool there must have been about a hundred of them bobbing up and down. A mile or two further and we came to the village mentioned by the fishermen. It was not actually on the bank, but we knew we were close to it by the canoes and paths. Here we camped, hoping to get some news of the river ahead of us.

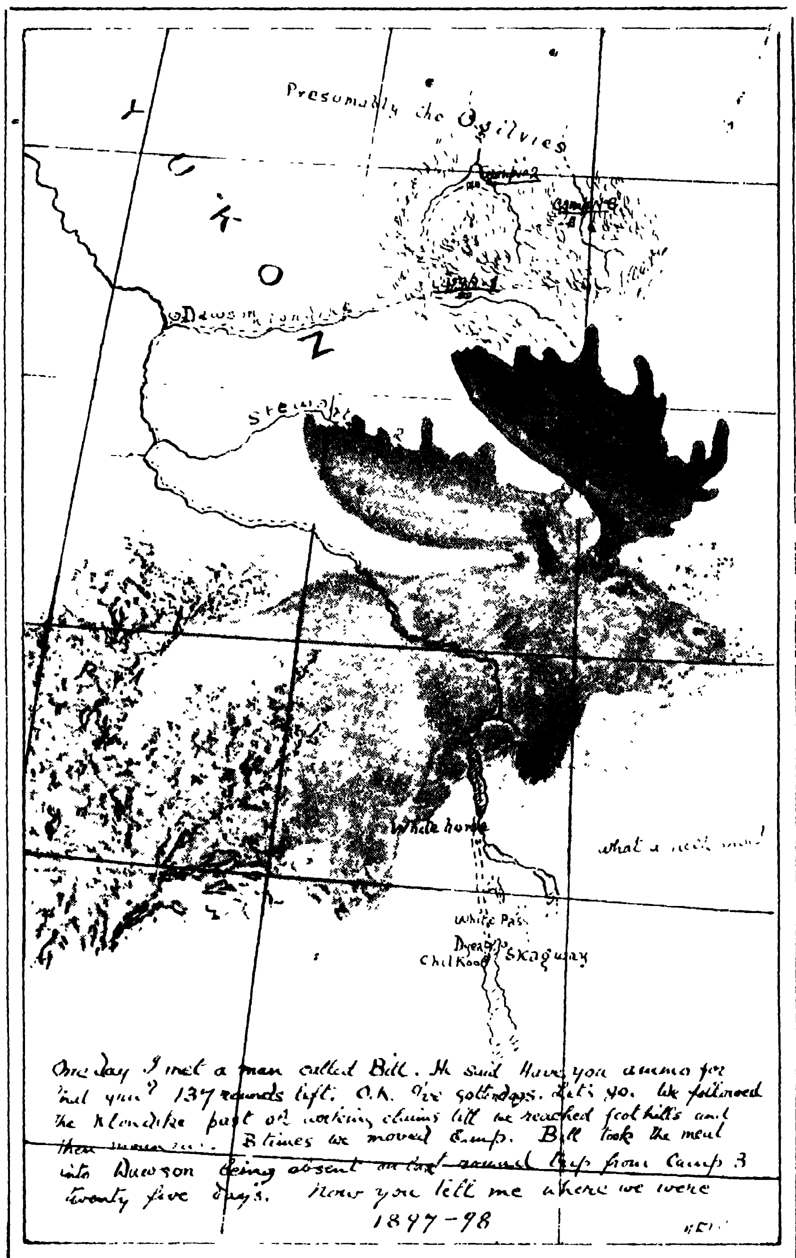
This was not forthcoming to any extent. When asked the natives generally appeared uneasy, said they had never been up stream, or muttered something vague about bad people further on. All agreed, however, that there were no more villages.

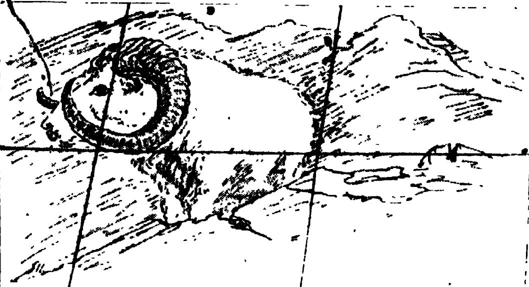
This determined us to lay in a large cargo of food-stuffs. In order to do this I dropped down stream to the hippo pool with the small Canadian canoe now empty. I paddled to a sand-spit which stuck out conveniently into the pool. It was literally covered with fowl of various kinds as we approached. From this sand-spit I proceeded to shoot hippo in the brain, and had no difficulty in killing enough to provide us with sufficient food for a month when the meat had been exchanged with the villagers for flour and other necessities.

Hippo sink to the bottom when shot in the brain, remaining there for a variable time depending on the temperature of the water, the stage of fermentation reached by the stomach contents, the inflation of the lungs at the time of death, and the state of the river bottom. Generally this period ranges from twenty minutes to one and a half hours. Shortly after the first corpse had floated to the surface the natives began to arrive. Some of these I sent off hot-footed to tell the whole village there was meat and fat for all who would bring food in exchange. Meanwhile, as soon as the carcases floated they were towed to land and rolled up. When the last had been so dealt with the cutting up commenced. There were dozens of women waiting with calabashes of meal, and so on to exchange for meat. Such a feast I dare say they had never seen before. It is seldom that more than one hippo is killed at one time by native methods except on the Upper Nile where they have a kind of grand battle in which hundreds of canoes take part.

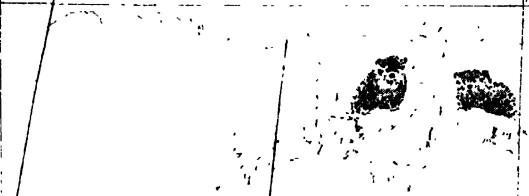
Presently our market became very big. No sooner did the natives see the size of the chunks of reeking beef given in exchange for the various commodities, than they rushed off to their homes to bring something to barter. We obtained every conceivable kind of native produce. Among the items was a canoe of smoked fish. This must have weighed 200 pounds, and was bartered for half a hippo. We also got some curious tobacco. Only the very small leaves and the

Frontal brain shot

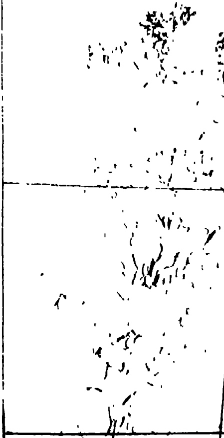

Presumably the Ogilvies
YUKON
Dawson
Stewart
White horse
White Pass
Dyea
Chilkoot
Skaguay
One day I met a man called Bill. He said Have you ammo for
that gun? 137 rounds left. O.K. I've got dogs. Let's go. We followed
the Klondike past old working claims till we reached foot hills and
then 3 times we moved Camp. Bill took the meal
into Dawson being absent on that round trip from Camp 3
twenty five days. Now you tell me where we were
1897-98

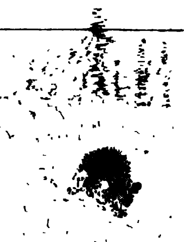


Wolves in numbers [illegible]



Sometimes [illegible] big marmot provided the only food [illegible]
Excellent.





Bear plentiful.

The brain shot at work

tobacco flowers were in this particular mixture. We both smoked it regularly and became very fond of it, but it was very potent indeed, and had a far more drug-like effect than ordinary tobacco.

The slaughter of these hippo and the subsequent bartering had brought us into touch with the natives very nicely indeed, and all were most friendly. So much so was this the case that I ventured to approach one of their canoe-men with the suggestion that he accompany us upstream. Rather to my surprise he agreed to do so. Encouraged by this I suggested that perhaps he had a friend who might like to go with him. He said he thought one of his friends would also go. We were very glad indeed to have these fellows. The first was quite a youth but a good waterman, while the second was a hard-bitten man of middle age. I thought he would make a good tracker for Wynne when we should reach elephant country. He was not a waterman at all. In fact he fell overboard from the small canoe so often that I was obliged to take him with me in the larger one.

When all was ready we pushed off very deeply laden. All was now new river before us. As we progressed day by day hippo became more and more numerous. In some places they formed almost a complete barrage across the river. Sometimes it was ticklish work steering between them. Their heads often came up quite close to the canoes, and then they stared at us goggle-eyed with astonishment. Once Wynne's canoe ran its stem onto the neck of a rising hippo, the fore part being lifted clean out of the water, canting over dangerously, and then let down with a whack as the old hippo dived. They shipped a deal of water, but there was no damage done. We soon found that if we kept on the shallow side of the pools we ran less chance of bumping into them, our only danger being from hippo asleep on the bank suddenly waking up and rushing blindly towards deep water. Had we ever had the ill-luck to have been across their way I believe they would have rushed clean into or over us.

For many days we saw no sign of elephant. Kob and waterbuck were fairly numerous on the bank, and whistling teal, guinea-fowl, Egyptian geese, spoonbill and egrets were common, while inland giraffe, rhino, buffalo, hartebeeste, topi, oribi, roan, and duiker

were numerous. Lion were frequently heard, and Wynne shot a fine male on the carcass of a hippo which was pretty far gone. This hippo must have been wounded by man somewhere, as it was full grown and quite beyond a lion's ability to kill. Fish became so unsophisticated as to take anything you liked to put on the hook, and that right alongside the canoe. So tame were they that our boys used to dangle buck gralloch in the water and spear the fish which immediately swarmed around it. Why fish were so numerous I do not rightly understand unless it may have been that there were no natives with their gigantic traps to destroy countless numbers of them.

A curious thing was that the enormous crocs. we saw appeared to prefer buck to fish. One which we shot was dragging a dead hartebeeste into the water. The hartebeeste was full grown and had evidently been kept under water for some time. We often spotted these monsters lying motionless in the grass waiting for buck to come alone, I imagine. Another large crocodile whom we here attempted to photograph was taken by Wynne at only about eight yards range. He had sustained damage to one eye, the one nearest the photographer, and probably that was why Wynne could approach him so closely.

So far we had not met with a great number of tsetse, but now we began to reach a very flat country which was evidently all under water in the wet season. Half submerged evergreen forest became more and more numerous. These cool, damp forests were full of tsetse, and in a few days we were overjoyed to find that elephant frequented them in goodly numbers. Buffalo also seemed fond of them. Had it not been for the swarms of tsetse I think we would have found these groves of overgreens full of elephant and buffalo. As it was they came to them only by night, withdrawing to the open bush and dry grass lands in the daytime. Only once did we actually see elephant from the canoes in the daytime, although we frequently did by night.

One day we saw ahead of us what appeared like pure white trees. When we drew near we saw that the white on the trees was caused by a colony of egrets sitting on their nests, the surrounding foliage being covered with their droppings. A curious fact in con-

nection with this colony was that when we repassed it on our way down stream some six weeks later, white spoonbills had taken over the nests and were busy sitting on them, while their earlier occupants, the egrets, were all over the sandbanks, teaching their half-grown progeny to catch fish.

At the time of our up stream journey the Egyptian geese were also breeding. On every sandbank there were scores of ganders, while the geese were hidden away in the vegetation sitting on their nests. These we found, but always with great difficulty, so well were they hidden. Fly and game became more and more plentiful as we journeyed on. When I speak of fly I mean tsetse, the others appearing of no importance beside the fiendish tsetse. We began to see buffalo now, and one day we saw where the river bank had been trampled down. As we approached it became clear that a very large herd of elephant had been there. The tracks were recent, having been made the night before.

We found a nice site for camp on an island where our fires would not be seen by elephant visiting their drinking place. We hoped they would come in the night, and sure enough they did so soon after sundown—such a splashing, rumbling, trumpeting and crashing. Lions were also busy, roaring on both sides of the river. It was a busy spot and one of our happiest camps. From it as a base we hunted in all directions, and what a long way the elephant used to go in daytime from the river. They would come to the river just after sundown when the flies were gone or quiet. There they would spend the night crashing the evergreen forest, plastering themselves with mud against fly on the following day, eating acres of the still green water grass, and generally enjoying themselves.

It must be remembered that at this season everything a few yards back from the river is burnt up, either by sun or fire. The dry season in these tropical parts is the winter of the Northern Hemisphere in its effect upon vegetation. Instead of drying off, the grass is burnt off. The grass fires wither the leaves on the trees and they fall off immediately after. All temporary water such as pools and puddles dry up. Fly desert the dry parts and congregate in myriads in the shade of the river forest, but they will follow man or beast for miles

into the dry country. It is astounding to look behind as one leaves the vicinity of the river. Behind each man there is a cloud of tsetse, keeping two or three feet from the ground. Each traveller keeps flicking away at flies that settle on the man in front of him. It is rather startling at first to receive a hard slap on the back when one is not expecting it. Fly generally got us under the rims of our hats and when near to the buffalo one would be bitten every thirty seconds. Luckily for us there were no natives about with sleeping sickness.

During the dry season there was not much for the elephant to eat away from the river. They pick up a fair amount of tamarind fruit, dig up roots and chew aloes and sansivera fibre, spitting out the fibre in balls. But it is on the river that they depend for the bulk of their green food and water, and were it not for the fly they would doubtless remain there day and night.

Early one morning Wynne and I separated, he taking one bank and I the other. I tracked a large herd back from the river for about five hours of fairly slow going, as the tracking was difficult. Dry season tracking is difficult because the ground becomes so hard, and also because old tracks remain, there being no rain to obliterate them.

About fifteen miles back from their drinking place there were signs of the elephant having left their huge and well-worn trails, scattering right and left into small groups, the better to find their scanty food. We saw plenty of fresh rhino spoor but this was one of the few days we did not encounter them in the flesh. We had been disentangling the trail of a large bull and had brought it through scores of other tracks, right from the river bank. Presently we were rewarded by sighting him by himself, wandering gently on. The country was altogether favourable for the rifle and he had no chance. But after the shot I was astonished to see the elephant emerge from the bushy parts, strolling aimlessly about, apparently quite unscared by the sound of a rifle. I went through crowds and crowds of them, getting a bull here and there. It was many years since I had seen elephant so unacquainted with firearms. They appeared to take the crack of the .318 for the crack of a

breaking tree stem or something of that sort.

As our hunting was all rather similar to the above, except in results, I will pass it over and merely remark on the extraordinary numbers of rhino we met. They were so stupid and so numerous as to be a perfect nuisance. On sighting one we generally tried to avoid him by making a detour, but even then they would sometimes follow us. On several occasions our boys got into trouble with them, and they had to be shot in order to avoid accidents. Once, on leaving camp for a few days tour in the bush, we startled a big cow and a bull from the river bush. They trotted away and I thought no more about them. About an hour later I heard a frantic shout from behind me, and on looking round there was my boy legging it straight towards me, with our two friends of the morning close behind him. The big cow was leading and was quite close to the boy. They were going their hardest, and really bent on mischief, so I was compelled to shoot the cow, and shortly afterwards the bull also as he went barging stupidly about. I went afterwards for the horns of these rhino when I thought they would be sufficiently rotten to disentangle easily. The boy who went for them found the bodies in the possession of three lions who refused to budge when shouted at. We had provided the boy with a rifle, which he said he fired at the lions, who took no notice of it but continued to growl at him. He then had another shot which hit one of them. They all withdrew a little distance, when the boy had another shot at the wounded one and killed it. He said the others remained about in the vicinity while he skinned the lion and pulled off the horns from the now putrid rhino.

Besides rhino there were many lions, some of immense size although with poor manes. Although I knew the Athi Plains in British East Africa in the old days, and many other parts of Africa, I have never seen such numbers of lions. I believe I am correct in saying that every carcass of elephant we shot during the entire time was found in the possession of at least one lion when visited for the purpose of drawing the tusks. The greatest number that I personally saw around a carcass was five, and when I camped a few hundred yards to windward of some dead elephant we all had a very

lively time indeed. Some boys had meat hung up and drying round huge fires too close, as it turned out, to the dead animals.

I am safe in saying that from one hour after sundown until one hour before dawn nothing could approach the carcases because of the lions about them. Hyenas and jackals were constantly trying to sneak up to them, only to be chased off with the most terrific growls and rushes by the lions. So impertinent did they become that eventually they occupied with impunity one of the carcases which lay only fifteen yards from the nearest fire. Here they were clearly visible to the boys in the meat camp, and when they first came the boys tried to drive them off by throwing burning sticks at them. This offensive was so effectually countered by the lions as to cause it to cease at once. The arrival of the first firebrand was greeted with such an appalling outburst of growls, snarling and showing of teeth as virtually to scare the throwers almost to the point of flight. The lions were not again molested and pursued their scavenging in peace. I spent some days at this spot, as it held the only water for miles around, and one could hear the lions approaching each evening. They commenced to roar about an hour after sundown and continued until they arrived. Where they all disappeared to in the daytime was a mystery, though the dogs would have shown them.

This particular camp was also remarkable for the extraordinary number of marabou storks. I had often before seen hundreds of these huge birds collect on a carcase, and I had seen large numbers assemble for the fish which were left high and dry by a receding river, but here they were literally in tens of thousands. And what digestions they have! Huge lumps of elephant offal are snapped up and swallowed. Then when the interior mechanism has received all that it can handle, the foul remainder is passed into the great flesh-red sack which depends from the neck. This sack bulges and lengthens until it nearly touches the ground. But what a weary air they have as they flap slowly and heavily away, completely gorged, to a convenient perch, there to digest the putrid mass. As scavengers I should say that five or six marabou would equal about a full-blown incinerator.

As we were so short handed we found it impossible to cut out

the tusks of the elephant we got. Consequently we were obliged to leave them until the action of putrification loosened them in the socket, when they could be drawn out. We found that four days were required before this could be done. In the third day the topmost tusk would usually come away, but the under one remained fast. It was owing to this fact that some of our little party had to visit the carcases when they were in a highly advanced state of putrification, and they were invariably found in the possession of one or more lions. Why the lions were such dirty feeders was not apparent. The whole country was seething with game; kob and hartebeeste, giraffe, buffalo, topi and smaller antelope were all numerous. Nearly all cover, such as grass, was burnt off, and it was possible that this made it more difficult for lions to kill. The skins of these lions were of a peculiar dark olive tinge for the most part, with the scanty mane of a slightly lighter tint. Some of them were of immense size, and all we shot were in good condition.

One day our Kabba boy divulged the fact that he had been up the river before. He had come at high water with some companions to gather the leaves of the Borassus palm for making mats. He said that the highest point they had reached lay about a day's travel ahead of us, and that then we should reach a country of palms. We did so. The whole country became covered with these beautiful palms. The huge fruit hung in dozens from the crowns, while the vultures were nesting among the leaves. As our food consisted chiefly of meat and grain, anything in the shape of fruit was eagerly eaten. We used to stew these palm fruits, each the size of a grape fruit. Although the flesh was almost too stringy to swallow, the juice mixed with honey was excellent.

As we plugged along upstream one day, what did we see in mid stream ahead of us but a floating hippo spear, travelling slowly along with the current. These spears are so constructed that the buoyancy of the shank is sufficient to float about one-third of the spear standing straight up out of the water. This enables the hunter to recover his spear when he misses a hippo. From this floating evidence it was clear that there were natives in the vicinity, and as we were about to pick up the spear we saw its owner watching us

from the bank. We salvaged his spear and rested easy, while we tried to talk across the river to him. We tried him in all the native languages known to any member of the safari, but not until we tried the Sango tongue of Ubangui watershed did he answer. But he was shy and frightened and we made little headway. When we offered to bring him his spear he quietly disappeared from view. However, we hoped we had sown good seed by telling him that we were come to hunt elephant, and that all who helped were welcome to the meat. Then we went on our way, our progress, as usual, impeded at every pool by the hippo. That night we camped on the bank opposite to that of the natives.

In the morning as we drew out a young waterbuck was shot for food for the boys—we whites prefer teal. While on the subject of teal I would like to say that we never tired of these birds. We ate them stewed at regular meal times, and we ate them roasted on the spit between meals, and cold. We ate them, not as we do here, a mere slice or two from the breast, but we each ate one or two whole birds at a sitting.

As the buck was being skinned we heard a shout from the opposite bank, and there were some natives. On these occasions it is best to show no haste or eagerness, so the skinning and loading of the buck went on methodically. Everything of the buck was taken as we did not want our newly-found natives to get any meat until we had come to an understanding as to their showing us elephant. When all were aboard we paddled slowly across to the natives, who were obviously shy. Anchoring the canoe by clinging to the grass, we held a kind of introduction ceremony. Among the natives we were glad to see our friend of yesterday's hippo-spear incident. We laid bare to them our object in ascending this river, and asked in return with whom we had to deal.

They said that they came from the south, and to reach their village required four days travelling without loads. Knowing the kind of thing they meant by this, I estimated the distance at about 180 to 200 miles. They disclosed also that they had originally been under Senussi at Ndele; that they still paid taxes and found labour for that post, but that since the occupation of the country by the

French, following upon the killing of the old Sultan Senussi, they now lived three or four days march to the north of the post Ndele. While Senussi reigned they had been obliged to live in the capital; so with Buba Gida, all the inhabitants of the country for 600 miles around had been "gathered in".

Meanwhile, they said, elephant were now in the neighbourhood and that they would show them to us. We were ready in a very few moments to accompany them, merely taking a mosquito net, a small packet of tea and sugar, and a kettle. Presently we joined up with some more natives, some of whom were armed with enormous elephant spears of the Arab elephant hunters, whose country lay to the north. These spears have a leaf-shaped head from seven to nine inches across, and are kept razor-edged. The system of hunting is that in the dry season, when most of the grass is burnt off and the harmatan is blowing, all the young bloods arrange an expedition. The harmatan is the north-east monsoon of the Indian Ocean, and is a hard breeze at mid-day of a velocity of about 30 miles per hour, dry and hot when it comes off the desert, and constant as to direction. At this season so dry is the air that sound carries no distance, and one may walk to within a few feet of elephant without fear of discovery.

These expeditions sometimes number eight hundred spears. All the old crocks of horses are raked up. The rich are represented on the expeditions by slaves, mostly on foot. All are armed with the huge spears, with their bamboo shanks ten to twelve feet long. Off they set to the south, poorly supplied with food as they reckon to live "tough" on what they can kill. When they set out they and the horses are in very good condition, but when they return the men are haggard and thin, leg weary and footsore, while most of the horses are bleanched and well-gnawed skeletons in the bush. Few survive the hard work, poor food and constant attacks of the tsetse fly. When they meet with a fairly recent trail of a herd of elephant they take it up with tremendous vigour, push along without stop until dark, camp, and on again the next day without a stop until eventually they sight their quarry. Then those on horses dismount, the protectors are taken off the razor-sharp spear heads, and all advance

shoulder to shoulder, spears held projecting six or seven feet in front, the flat of the spear-head lying in a horizontal direction. With the harmatan blowing its hardest it is possible for the line of spear-men to come within throwing distance of the elephants' sterns. At a signal the spears are driven in with the aim of cutting the large tendons and arteries, hence the width of the spear-head.

In the consequent commotion casualties among the spear-men are frequent, as might be expected. Off go the unwounded animals, the horses are brought, and the chase is again taken up. Now the elephants will not stop for miles and miles, so they must ridden to a standstill or nearly so, before another assault on them can be attempted. Away into desperately dry and waterless country they go, but try as they may, those human devils are always with them. The hardships these latter bear are almost incredible. They seldom have water or food with them, often they are starving, and their only hope is the death of an elephant. Kill or die miserably in the bush is not a bad system, and as might be expected leads to perfectly awful destruction of elephant life. Ivory is primarily the object, but as the hunt develops water and meat become of more importance. Water, I must explain, is obtained from the elephants' intestines, and although warm, is quite good to drink. In the average herd cows and calves predominate, and consequently they suffer most. In the case of this country the coming of the white man is the indirect cause of the destruction of elephant, and not, as in other parts of Africa, the direct cause of their protection. Natives are permitted to hunt elephant in the above manner on payment of a small fee in order that they may acquire the wherewithal to pay their taxes—a policy short sighted indeed when we remember Darwin's calculation that in nine hundred years two elephant become a million.

With our newly-found friends as guides we were soon on the trail of our game, and by their aid we ran into and killed late in the afternoon. Our friends were simply overjoyed at the sight of so much meat. They became extremely friendly, cutting grass for my bed, fetching wood and water, ready to do anything. From being rather surly and reserved, they became very communicative.

As they roasted tit-bits from the elephants on their fires, nothing but shouts and laughter and merry chatter could be heard. And when later we had all eaten and everyone was smoking, for they carried tobacco, they told me more of themselves. I found they all talked Sango. They said that every dry season they came to the Bahr Aouck to hunt hippo or elephant, but that so far they had no luck. During the rains the whole country for miles on either side is under water. No villages existed nearer the river than their's. They knew the river up to the point where it issued from Lake Mamun. This item was a complete surprise to me, for I had never found it even suggested that the Bahr Aouck issued from that lake. I pressed my inquiries among the older men, and arrived at the information that shortly after leaving the lake the Bahr Aouck was joined by another river which came from a country I knew to be within the Egyptian-Sudan border. I asked after the natives of Lake Mamun, who are supposed to live on the waters themselves, constructing for that purpose huts on piles. They told me that since the slave raids had ceased, when Senussi was shot by the French, the natives had abandoned their lake dwellings, and now lived on the shores like normal people. They said the whole country ahead was teeming with game. I had learned more in half an hour around the camp fire with bellies full than weeks of intercourse in the ordinary way would have yielded. Such is the power of meat on the African.

The system of penetrating the country by feeding the natives has the disadvantage that if you kill a large animal they dry the meat they cannot eat and take it home to their village. Therefore you have constantly to be making new acquaintances. Everything else is entirely in its favour, not the least being its economy. They will carry light loads for you for days through the bush, hunt diligently for game, chop out and carry to the base any ivory you may get. If you are within fifty miles or so of a village the women will bring food of all sorts, and it is seldom that a few eggs, more or less fresh, are not forthcoming for the white man. Then they hold dances in the camps. When there are plenty of young girls about these dances become rather loose affairs. The usual restraints of village life seem

to be relaxed in the bush, and everyone enjoys himself or herself to the utmost.

Abundance of animal food has a curious effect on natives. When they inhabit stockless country they go for months without flesh, with the exception of an occasional rat, mongoose or bird. The craving for meat becomes intense, and is, in my opinion, the cause of cannibalism. Then, when they suddenly become possessed of unlimited meat, they simply gorge themselves. A man will eat from fifteen to twenty pounds in twenty-four hours. All night long he eats and dozes, then eats again. This turns him a peculiar dull matt colour and yellow in the eyes. On the third day he has completely recovered from this and is again full of energy. In a very short time he wants his grain food again, and if he has the choice he will eat a large portion of grain to a small portion of meat. If, as with elephant, there is a good proportion of fat, natives become extremely fit on these rations. As an example of this I can cite the case of a "kilangoze" or head porter of mine. This man of slight build carried a tusk weighing 148 pounds, plus his mat, blanket and rations, another 15 pounds, for sixty-three days' consecutive marching. The shortest day was five hours, and some were very long indeed. He had as rations throughout this march two pounds of native grain each day, and as much meat as he cared for, with elephant fat. His condition was magnificent throughout.

In the morning I pushed off to look for elephant. The natives promised to cut out the tusks and bring them to the canoes, which they faithfully did. After hunting in this region for some days, during which we saw many lions and killed six, we pushed on upstream again. We were soon held up by more elephant and more natives. The news of our doings had already reached the village south of us, and we had a continuous stream of natives coming hungry to us, carrying our bush loads all over the country, to be rewarded eventually with meat, and then stopping to smoke it while their places were taken by newcomers. So prolific in game was the country that we never reached Lake Mamun as we had intended. Pretty soon our grain food was all exhausted, and the canoes were filled with as much ivory as they would safely carry, so we decided

to return to civilization, and turned our canoes around for the long journey to the coast.

15

Buffalo and Lion

I HAVE had little to relate here about antelope. Their shooting has been fully covered in other works on African sport, and to us who were always after more noble and paying game, to shoot them was merely a matter of getting pot meat. But buffalo and lion come in a different class, being much more noble game, and to some small extent their shooting was sometimes accompanied with the element of danger.

I have killed scores and scores of buffalo, chiefly because they provided a really usable quantity of excellent meat when one was feeding his safari and was also trading meat to natives for services and for grain. Why buffalo should have earned such an evil name for dreadful cunning and great ferocity has always rather puzzled me. In the hundreds that I have encountered during my hunting career I have never been charged, and yet I have constantly read of fierce encounters between hunters and this game. Once, when I came suddenly on a buffalo bull lying wounded in thick stuff he did not charge. This animal had been mauled by a lion, and according to all rules he should have charged as soon as he became aware of my approach. What we would have done had I not put a bullet through his neck, I do not know. Perhaps he might have charged. I have already related with what apprehension I approached a herd of buffalo in my early hunting efforts, and how my preconceived notions of their ferocity were dispelled.

I have shot them in West Africa where they are usually met with in thick stuff and long grass, and on the Nile and in the Congo, and invariably with small-bore rifles. The most killing bullet is the solid. In my experience, buffalo rush straight towards the shot quite frequently, and in such a case it would be quite easy to convince oneself that they were charging. But in such cases they are easily

killed with end-on-delivered solid bullets. Flesh shots are no good—the vitals must be raked. And in thick stuff the target is so close and so big that no one should miss it. For all game of this nature a magazine rifle is streets ahead of a double, for it is sometimes necessary to fire four or five shots in rapid succession. My experience with buffalo is that they are worthy game in thick stuff, but ludicrously easy things to kill in open country.

For a broadside shot on buffalo any kind of bullet is good enough, but such shots are not the rule and cannot be depended to occur, nor can you safely wait for the animal to offer such a shot. Therefore a solid bullet which will rake the vitals with an end-on shot should always be used, and it is equally good on a broadside shot. But if one carries mixed bullets sooner or later one finds himself loaded with just the wrong type, and usually with no time to change. I have always found the solid very deadly for any kind of game. With an end-on shot with this bullet the vitals are certain to be raked if the holding is as it should be. I believe that buffalo are very nasty in thick stuff with a flesh wound, although this has rather been out of my personal experience. But with modern firearms there is no earthly reason why one should miss as large a target as a buffalo's vitals. Always know where you are sending your bullet, and then, if it be a solid, you will have no trouble in securing your beast. This is for those who know how to shoot; those who do not should not shoot at any game.

Among the cases of maulings that have come under my own personal observation, or that I have heard of first hand from my friends, the maulings by buffalo have been far more frequent than the deaths. The wounds caused by buffalo horns seem to heal better than those caused by lions. The dirty teeth and claws of old lions almost always cause dangerous infection if antiseptics are not applied very promptly.

It has always seemed to me that lions may be placed in two categories—those which kill their game, and those which live largely on carrion. Carrion feeding seems to be due chiefly to old age or broken teeth. Most of those lions in robust health scarcely ever touch carrion. The former are much bolder and more

courageous than the latter. At night they will attack strong zerebas containing cattle in spite of shouts and firearms. When these take to man-eating they do so most thoroughly, as instance the well-known cases of the man-eaters of Tsavo. In those days of the construction of the railway the Government was offering a large reward for every lion killed within a mile on either side of the railway, and an old Sikh ex-soldier and his son were thus fired with the prospects of immediate wealth, and their experience would seem to indicate that not all lions were as dangerous as the Tsavo variety. The old man obtained a .275 Rigby Mauser and he and his son took to hunting lions for the bounty. There were then troops of lions in East Africa over twenty strong. The hunting of these two men consisted in the building of shelters from which to fire at night, generally situated close to reed-beds known to be frequented by lions.

At first these shelters were quite elaborate affairs, but familiarity soon taught them that no protection was necessary, and later they set up merely a low parapet over which to fire in the prone position. The old man would imitate a goat or a cow, and the lions would come to the call, as much as a matter of curiosity as in the hopes of obtaining a dinner. The young fellow shot well and straight, and lion after lion succumbed. In nine months these two men obtained bounty on over ninety lions, and so far as I know never had a close call.

As East Africa—Kenya—became better known sportsmen came in great numbers for the shooting, and many lions were killed. As might be expected these sportsmen included many who were mere novices at the game, and who had little or no skill or experience in shooting, and as a result it was attended by many casualties. In one year out of forty visiting sportsmen who devoted themselves seriously to lion hunting, twenty were mauled. Of these twenty over half were killed or died of their wounds. The lions of this period were extraordinarily bold and courageous. In early morning on those huge plains I have walked steadily towards a troupe of lions numbering over a score, and just as steadily they walked away with no fear of man.

The reason for the high mortality among those who hunted

lions in these early days was usually, I think, lack of any skill with the rifle, or simply one of not holding straight enough. Buck fever or excitement is probably another cause of much erratic shooting at lions, coupled with the anxiety that the animal might slip away. This frequently resulted in flesh or stomach wounds, which often caused the lion to make a determined charge. Great care should be taken to place the bullet right, and then the calibre does not matter so much. Speaking personally, I have killed sixteen lions with .256 and .275 solid bullets, as well as dozens with other calibres, and so far as I can recollect none of them required a second shot.

When lions have cubs and are disturbed they will sometimes show fight. I once saw a native chased in one direction by a lioness while the cubs scuttled away in the opposite direction. I have never seen a country where there were so many lions as around the head-waters of the Bahr Aouck. I have commented on this in the last chapter. Frequently we could not approach the carcases of the elephant we had shot, and were waiting for decomposition to take place to withdraw the tusks until we had shot several of the lions which had taken posession. My companion, Wynne Eyton, had never before shot lion and he was very keen on them. At first he skinned and preserved every one he shot. Then after a time he got tired of them. Their skins were bulky and a nuisance in the canoes. So one day I was amused to see him throwing overboard what had been his most cherished trophies.

As a game animal the lion affords first-class sport, and I was very glad when some protection was given to them in Kenya and Tanganyika. This, combined with the large stock in the game preserves, should ensure good sport for many years to come.

16

Latter Days

AFTER the safari on the Niger and Bahr Aouck Rivers I returned to England, and did not re-visit Africa for a considerable time. When I did so it was with American friends, Gerrit and Malcolm Forbes, and with motor cars. All-motorized, we simply rushed through the bush, and arrived at the other side of Africa before we had time or thought for hunting. The urge each day seemed to be to see how far we could get. It was found that the motor car and lorry could circulate without roads practically anywhere in the dry season. Sometimes we would crash along through light bush at thirty or forty miles an hour. As for serious hunting, it was out of the question.

Even the most formidable rivers presented no obstacle at all. The natives were anxious to get rid of the new monsters and they made the most stupendous efforts to rid themselves of the unease caused by our presence. On one occasion the lorry loaded with three tons of supplies, and itself no mean weight, was ferried over a deep-flowing river on about three thousand one-man reed rafts, propelled by one hundred and fifty swimmers pushing it. How thankful they must have been to see us safely over and the whole caravan disappearing in a dust cloud. Our route was later destined to become the great West African-Middle East supply road under the urge of World War II.

All along the edge of the Sahara it was a desolate sight to see the sand trickling relentlessly south. Trees with their bases barely covered stood alive in the foreground, while further, along just their tops stood out of the steadily advancing ocean of sand their branches white and dead, resembling the bleached bones of perished animals. Nothing was being done to stop this relentless advance. One imagines that in time the whole of Central Africa will be swallowed

up, the climate changed, and all become a waterless desert.

At the Sudan frontier we met an enterprising gentleman who wanted desperately to buy our motor transport. He did not say so directly, but tried to show that it would be impossible to traverse a certain range of hills that lay ahead. He said that even camels had to be off-loaded and their loads portaged by hand past the bad places. He recounted how a Rolls Royce armoured car had got through only by sheer manpower. A battalion of Egyptian troops had lifted it bodily up and got it through on its side. I could not but admire my young American friend's attitude to this situation. Malcolm Forbes had but recently left Harvard University, yet he saw clear through all this sales talk, and when the commandant kindly offered to buy the motors and to supply camels in their place, as if he were actuated by kindness only, he turned down the offer without hesitation. The passage of the narrow defile was successfully negotiated by building up stone ramps on either side and going over the top.

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After this expedition my wife and I settled down in the Highlands of Scotland. We called our estate Corriemoillie. It is near Garve in Ross-shire. It was here that I started to write. I sent my first article to *Country Life*. Not hearing further about it for some time I thought it had simply gone into the waste-paper basket. What was my astonishment when I not only got an acceptance, but a very polite letter from the editor to say that he was keeping the article for the Christmas number. I followed this with a series of articles, and finally *Country Life* brought out some of them in book form called *The Wanderings of an Elephant Hunter*.* An edition of this was also published by Scribner's in New York. Later on another smaller book of mine, *Karamojo Safari* was published in America. The success of these books has induced me to prepare this work of my complete memoirs.

I have never been a photographer, and so I got in the habit of illustrating my stuff with drawings. Although these efforts raised some ribaldry, still they went off all right, the commonly held assumption being that they were on a par with the efforts of cavemen

* Reprinted 1958 by Neville Spearman and The Holland Press.

and were not to be judged by ordinary standards. Finally, aided by the unfamiliar subject matter of these drawings, I actually induced a hanging committee of the Royal Academy to give a painting of mine room on the walls of that august body. I had sent in three oil paintings and the rejection slips had duly arrived as I expected. We had left for the North when my wife one day discovered that there were only two rejection numbers on the slip. I received this news without any heat, thinking that the third one had got lost or something. However, the whole matter was settled when an admission card to varnishing day arrived and we suddenly realized that one of the pictures was actually going to be hung.

Prices for the pictures had already been discussed. The family thought I would be lucky to get five guineas, but I thought fifty guineas would be nearer the mark. So we compromised on thirty-five guineas and it sold instantly, much to our subsequent regret, for never could I get another picture accepted.

It was now that there crystallized an idea that my wife and I had long had. This was to build or acquire a sizeable sailing craft aboard which we could have a fair degree of comfort. As it happened there came along a competition for just such a boat open to the designers of the world. This affair attracted a lot of interesting designs. After the prizes had been allotted, the promotors of the scheme published a book containing, not only the prizewinning designs, but also some of them that had not, in the opinion of the judges, qualified for a prize. A condition of the competition called for working drawings, the aim being to evolve a deep-sea racing boat that would at the same time fulfil the role of a comfortable cruiser.

The winner was a young American, Olin Stephens, afterwards to win a prominent place by designing so many outstanding racing yachts, including the successful defender of the America's cup *Ranger*, and the unbeaten *Baruna*. But I knew nothing of this at the time. We made up our minds that this was the design we wished, and then we proceeded to name her. My wife came across with an account of King Richard Coeur de Lion's red galley which he used in the crusades. She was always the leader of any fleet, whether by virtue of superior design or whether it was in nobody's

interest to pass her, is not known. She was named *Trenchemer*, and so we named our dream boat.

We sent round to the leading yacht yards asking for an estimate of the cost of building such a yacht. This was in 1932 when timber was abundant. The answers were daunting in the extreme, the lowest being nine thousand pounds. Then the modern shipyards of Aberdeen were considered. A letter of inquiry brought an immediate reply. They were open to build such a boat. Immediately we rushed to Aberdeen with the designs. Here we found a home of scientific shipbuilding presided over by a mathematical genius, Colin MacKay and owned by a descendant of the original firm of Hall Russell and Company whose hobby was building ships. To our great relief, after looking over the drawings they said they would build her, but only in steel. This was rather a poser for Olin Stephen's design called for wood construction. The hull was a series of most beautiful and delicate curves and I could not believe they could be produced in steel. Well, they said, we treat steel as you would paper, and they were convinced they could do it.

There are few greater pleasures in life than the watching of the building of a ship that is to be one's very own. First of all to see the thing drawn out full size in chalk on the loft floor is a thrilling experience. Then the unfolding of the lovely form in the model-making shop. The arrival of the plates as they go into the pickle to remove their scale. The innumerable quarter-inch to the foot scale drawings. All is entrancing! Especially so was it in Hall Russell's yard where everyone seemed so interested in this sailing boat. Finally the launching of the completed hull. What a joy to see it floating correctly to its light load line. What a lovely thing she looked set off by the squat and powerful figure of the attendant tug.

Then the arrival of the mast, a hollow spruce stick of just under a hundred feet in length. Standing eighty-five feet from the deck it certainly looked the devil of a height. One old salt, looking at it, said "You can't send that boat to sea with that mast. She'll capsize!" Of course he knew nothing of the Bermudian rig or of the minute calculations made by the drawing office staff, or of the lead down in the keel. One day when Mrs. Bell was on the very popular beach

watching the *Trenchemer* out at sea sail-drilling, she heard the owner of a large telescope, more usually engaged in watching the bathing belles, sing out: "See the tallest mast in the world! Penny a peep!"

As soon as she was in good working shape, and a shaking-down cruise to get the amateur crew accustomed to her, all thought turned to her first race, the six hundred mile "Fastnet". In this, through superlative navigation and good steering by the experienced racing amateurs who made up her crew, the *Trenchemer* was second in her first "Fastnet", beaten out for first place by her small sister *Stormy Weather* on time allowance. Not bad for the "fishing boat" as the Cowes people had been inclined to call her.

We continued to race and cruise in the *Trenchemer* right along until the 1939 war broke out. She then lay in the fresh water basin at Inverness where she was too far away for the Dunkirk evacuation. Then one day I got a telephone message to appear at 11 a.m. the next morning alongside her. There a document was presented to the effect that the *Trenchemer* had been requisitioned for war service.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Throughout World War II Bell remained at his Highland home, "Corriemoilie", in Garve, Ross-shire, leaving the adventures of war to younger men. He was active in the local Home Guard and also hunted regularly on the hills behind his house. His yacht, *Trenchemer*, remained in the fresh water lock of the Caledonian Canal at Inverness throughout the war. In April 1946, assisted by three friends, he towed her through the canal to Fort William and then sailed her down to the Clyde to have her refitted at Robertson's Yard in Sandbank. He sailed the boat extensively through the Western Isles all that summer and the following summer and in 1948 planned to race her from Brixham to Santander, in Spain. A mild heart attack in July of 1948 forced him to cancel this project. He cruised in Scottish waters again the following summer, but in 1950 his health forced him to give up the sea and *Trenchemer* was sold to an English buyer. The saga was almost over. Although Bell continued to hunt regularly at "Corriemoilie", his quarry was

mostly rabbits that he found close to the house. He nevertheless seemed to take as much enjoyment in this and had as much satisfaction over getting in a good shot as he did with the mighty beasts he hunted in Africa during his youth. In 1951 he had another heart attack that proved fatal. The sailor was home from the sea; the hunter home from the hill.

APPENDIX

On Rifles and Shooting

IN my opinion, and borne out by experience, there are two distinct and separate ways of killing. They require different tools and techniques in their handling. I propose to call them Nos. 1 and 2.

In No. 1 the object sought is to penetrate deeply enough to injure a vital organ sufficiently to cause death. In the case of large animals this calls for a long heavy bullet of 3½ or 4 diameters in length, moderate velocity if a jacketed one, so that the envelope will not rupture on impact with bone. If of the homogeneous type the velocity may be raised but speaking from personal experience the moderately fast bullets seem to hold a truer course than ultra fast ones. In order to excel as a killer and to be even commonly humane to one's brother animals a study of anatomy is essential. It is no use knowing where the vitals are unless you can hold your rifle steady enough to direct the bullet straight at them. This requires a considerable amount of muscle training, especially if there is much off-hand or standing shooting. In jungle or high grass most of the shots are delivered from the standing position and to be proficient in this requires training and strengthening of muscles that are not ordinarily much in use. The best way to attain this rifle control is to carry your favourite rifle yourself not only when you are hunting but whenever you go out. Dry shoot it at anything and everything. Do all the exercises you can think of with it. Hold it out at arm's length for as long as you can stick it, first in front, then sideways. Get your muscles thoroughly inured to holding it in any position you may choose. Let your will dominate your body and bring it into subjection. The reward of perseverance will be worth it.

The second method is best carried out with the later improved velocity group of cartridges belonging to the era beginning around the 1940s, and still continuing (1952). It is apparently only recently that the NECK shot has come to be recognized as the deadliest and safest shot of all. Where our forefathers were content to lam into the front part of the body anywhere "behind the shoulder" this shot has ceased to be employed by discriminating hunters. The neck shot has all the advantages over the body shot and is even

more instantaneous than a brain shot. A quite light blow in the neck is sufficient to cause death. It is not necessary to hit the spinal column. In fact the whole of the neck that is clothed in flesh is deadly area. All the nerves, arteries and veins have to pass through this channel. Besides these advantages the neck is often exposed when other parts of the body are masked by grass or bush. If you get the habit of looking for the neck only and of disregarding the body entirely it is remarkable how often the neck is presented to a vital shot even when the body is not in a suitable position. Rhino, buffalo and all the antelope and deer tribe present a large neck target. Only the elephant seems somewhat short on neck. It is very short and is much masked by the enormous ears. While on the neck shot it is interesting to note that the lashing about of legs, quivering and continuing heartbeats that follow on a brainshot are absent when the neck is hit. Perhaps it was this fact that induced the secret police of the Nazi régime and other police states to employ it in getting rid of their victims expeditiously and quietly. Whereas in reaching a deep-seated vital it is advisable to have a long parallel-sided bullet of 3½ to 4 diameters and of good sectional density such as the .318 cal. 250 grs. bullet travelling at a medium velocity, 2,300-2,500 ft.p.s. when we come to the neck shot quite a short light bullet may be employed. Here velocity counts for a lot. Penetration is not so essential. The bullet should stay in the neck, that is it should expend its whole energy on the muscular shield protecting the vital nerve channels, the arteries and of course the spinal column itself. This is best ensured by a bullet that will expand suddenly. It should not break up into fragments. The greater the velocity the better. It is not necessary to even touch the spinal column but if this is achieved so much the better. I personally have never struck an animal with a bullet travelling much over 3,800 ft. p.s. and judging by the instantaneous death produced with a neck shot at around that velocity I don't believe anything higher is required. This opens a vast new field for up-to-date hunters. Gone the old messy body shots. A quite light rifle, with perhaps a longish barrel, will be found adequate for the job with its consequential better shooting.

The neck shot is the only one where the vital area lies *near* the surface as against the brain and heart shots with their deep-seated and carefully guarded targets. So let the aspiring hunter go light-heartedly and lightly loaded into the bush with his mind's eye fixed on the neck. There will be fewer wounded beasts around and if you miss it will be a clean miss most times.

In off-hand shooting I always found that holding the barrel with the left hand as far out as was comfortable suited my style better than the close in

grip on the fore end. I know this is not in accordance with the target shooters' practice. I found, too, that shortness of stock so long as it did not blurr the open (iron) backsight by bringing it too near the eye* was a distinct aid to steady holding. As for recoil in this connection I deliberately ignore it because there is no earthly or other reason to employ a weapon that recoils violently. If a man is saddled with such an arm he has my sympathy only so long as he cannot get a decent one. A violent gun disturbs the whole lay-out of good rifle hunting. It flies up in the air because the stock is bent and it would otherwise break your shoulder, thereby wrecking any possibility of "follow through" or any other nicety of the art, it leaves you in a sort of "blast happy" state when you should be attending to other matters, it beats and bruises the air around you, it has to be heavy and that means that it becomes a burden instead of a joy, and finally it is totally unnecessary. In double form they come extremely costly.

Of course if you are going to use a scope sight you will need to be careful about shortening the stock so that the eye-relief is not interfered with. Personally I would prefer a large open aperture sight for thick stuff and so-called dangerous game. An aperture that disappears entirely when game shooting. That is, the sides of the aperture, the surroundings of the hole, disappear to the eye and you seem to be focusing on the front sight and target only. In my case at age seventy-two I find an aperture .1380 in diameter suits my eyesight but let everyone find out for himself what best suits. The surrounds of the hole are in my case .1000 thick exactly. I regret that I cannot say what the proportions for younger eyesight might be as I never used anything but the open or iron sights in my early hunting. It is true that I tried the aperture but found it slow and discarded it in favour of the open V, then later gradually drifting to the straight bar with a small notch.*

I don't know if others are afflicted with a super-critical sense of proportions as I was. Everything had to be a certain width, in back-sights. If they were too broad I felt they were wrong. As they came straight from the gun-makers everything was wrong. I find it difficult to define what exactly was wrong in so many words. They just did not satisfy the feelings. I had to tinker with everything. Generally the back-sights were too broad. They had to be of a width that corresponded to the length of the barrel I think. Then in running shots the V shape was found bothersome even when it was very open. Until finally my last open-sighted rifle was a straight bar affair. From

* This can be overcome by using an aperture sight.

* Present choice.

there I have since gone to very large apertures .1380 sloping well backwards with the hole bored out straight with line of sight. While on backsights I may mention that even the roundings of the shoulders were found to have a quite important bearing on the completely satisfying back-sight. There is no sighting device yet invented so fast and so accurate as the open back-sight for youthful eyesight anyway. So armed a man with steady nerves and fit muscles can accomplish marvels. With no idea of boasting but merely to show what can be done when so armed I will recount a little incident that happened to me. I will risk the boasting taunt. I had 6,000 rounds of .318 ammunition. Through defects this stuff was giving a lot of trouble. On an average there were three misfires in ten. I wanted to get rid of the stuff.

In this enviable state I found myself at Jinja, where the huge Lake Victoria pours over a narrow rocky ledge. Every evening cormorants, flush with fish, homed over the centre of this outflow. They are straight-flying but fast birds. I used to buzz off .318 defective ammunition at them. They were about three hundred feet above the rifle stance. One evening I was so engaged when two onlookers approached me. They were Goanese clerks from the Government offices nearby. They said: "That is a very fine shot-gun you have; it kills much better than ours. Might we examine it?" I unloaded the .318. They exclaimed when they saw it was a rifle. It once reached the evening average of eight in ten; unusually good; but the general average would come not far short of six in ten.

In my experience haste in firing and flinch are the commonest causes of spoilt or inadequate shots; I mean those requiring one or more subsequent shots to kill outright. I myself am naturally of a rather highly strung nature and I suffered greatly from the eagerness that so easily leads to abortive shots. I found that if I kept in good training bodily and forced myself to count ten *slowly* I then brought off many good shots and a few brilliant ones.

Timing is of great importance. I don't know if this can be acquired except by physical fitness. Given that I think timing follows naturally.

You would not at first think that "follow through" would find a place in rifle-shooting. But it assuredly does so. This too will be found to follow on fitness of body and mind. The sense of visualizing the bullet's flight as you continue to stare, with both eyes open, over the rifle barrel constitutes your, "follow through". This seems to give the feeling of confidence and power, of mastery of the tool that all goes to the make-up of a successful rifle-hunter It is an intoxicating thing not to be imagined except through actual experience. I don't believe it can be gained when using heavy violently recoiling rifles.

When using a telescopic sight I have found it very advantageous to rest the peak of the cap against the end of the 'scope. The peak should be the exact length of the eye-relief of your particular 'scope. Not only does this habit cut out extraneous lights, in itself a great advantage, but it steadies the head enormously besides preventing any danger of the eye becoming injured should a recoiling rifle be held rather too loosely as can easily happen in tense moments.

To sum up I would advise a newcomer to the shooting game to study and apply a good manual on rifle markmanship. Select the rifle that seems most suitable and go to practising carrying it everywhere to get the muscles in training, dry-shooting thousands of times at anything and everything, spend endless hours in every known posture and in every one peculiar to oneself until the thing becomes a third arm. Dry shooting, dry shooting, endless dry shooting will bring its reward. To shoot off rounds and rounds is largely a waste of time at the beginning. A tremendous lot can be learnt from shooting dry.

Target shooting is all very well if combined with this constant dry shooting. Alone it is but half the story.