

never been to seek for the emeralds yet, putting it off until circumstances prevented me, but it is my intention to do so some day.

It is not a valley to which one could direct another, as it lies amongst a thousand others in a wild, mountain-tossed country.

A few days after this incident Dick returned with the owner to thoroughly test the reef. This took us a fortnight to do, and it was proclaimed payable.

We then gave notice that we were leaving, and in a few weeks were starting on our walk back to Leydenburg.

I told Dick about the emeralds, and we came to the conclusion that we had better learn something about the method of obtaining them before going

Walking along, we noticed the slow native method of hoeing the land instead of ploughing, and an idea struck me that, if we invested in a plough, oxen, and a small wagon, we might do well in ploughing for the natives.

Dick thought so too, and we discussed the plan thoroughly, and resolved to put it into operation

Arriving at Leydenburg, we were paid over the thousand pounds for finding the reef, which swelled our banking account.

We next invested in a small twelve-foot wagon, for which we paid £40, six trained oxen, £84, one plough, £6—the latter a high price; £20 more for provisions, and we were ready.

We were obliged to take a different route, as no wagon could cross the mountain or the Devil's Bridge. We found, however, a good wagon road, taking us as far as Lake Chrissie, then by turning due east through New Scotland, we arrived once more at the mountains which surround Swaziland. Here the Komati River runs in between the two ranges. Going in advance, I found the easiest track down the side of the mountain, and led the oxen, after skidding all four

wheels. It was a fearful place to descend ; one ox broke his leg, the wagon capsized three times, and one of the plough-hurdles snapped off. We shot the ox, skinned it, and went struggling on. It took us the whole day to reach the river, where we camped for the night.

Having crossed the river the next morning, we had many difficulties to overcome in ascending the opposite mountain, with only four oxen inspanned ; but we accomplished it by dint of hard thrashing and hard work. Dick was disgusted, and regretted that he had ever returned to Swaziland. I was confident that we would be paid well in cattle for our ploughing.

We were quite exhausted when we reached the top, and glad to rest the night there.

The next morning one of the oxen was missing—whether it was stolen, or, being badly tied up, strayed, we knew not. There was no chance of following its *spoor* as

the ground was dry and hard , we searched the whole day, but without discovering a trace of it. Here was another loss, and Dick more disgusted than ever

One more day's *trek* brought us to our destination, which was a disused hut that had been bought for prospecting purposes. Our servant slept under the wagon, and we succeeded in making our grass hut quite cosy, by lining it inside with canvas and hanging a curtain before the door. We spent the next three days in calling at different kraals, telling the natives about the plough ; how we could turn over more ground in one day than they could in a fortnight, and arranging to show them how it was done on a specified day.

They were sceptical as to our ability to carry it out, and on the morning appointed they arrived in hundreds to see this wonderful *indaba* (affair), as they called it. We ploughed a piece of land lying close to our

hut, and the astonishment of the Swazis was very amusing. They kept at a respectful distance at first, as if in fear, then gradually came closer and closer, until at last they surrounded and followed us, taking up handfuls of the freshly-turned earth, and uttering exclamations such as *Au ! Alala ! Mababu ! Mame ! Yeka !* and so on.

They were both delighted and satisfied, as were we. They held a great palaver on the matter in their huts that night, and some of them came the next day to ask our terms. We told them we would plough for three days for one head of cattle. After a good deal of further discussion amongst themselves one of them agreed to let us plough three days for him. We went next day and started work. When we had finished it we asked for our payment. However then the fellow did not seem at all inclined to pay up, and expressed his doubt as to whether the land we had ploughed would grow any

crops at all ; and no one else would give us work—until they were satisfied that *it would do so!*

It being autumn, we suggested that he should sow some grain or any other crop he wished, and we could wait until the shoots came to the surface before claiming our payment. To this he agreed, after half a day's hard talking, and we saw that the mealies were sown at once.

In ten days' time the shoots were well over the surface, and we claimed our ox, which he very reluctantly paid, for we found that they now doubted whether the crops would be as good as they were from their own mode of cultivation. We were disgusted and disheartened at their incredulity, and Dick urged me to return with him to the Colony. I held out, but promised to go with him as soon as we had paid our expenses, which meant about fifteen head of cattle. It was my intention if the plan worked any

way well, to start another plough, and break in the oxen we earned from the natives as we went along.

We had now run short of meal, and were obliged to kill the young ox that had been paid to us as the price of the ploughing. We then succeeded in obtaining a fresh contract to plough about fifteen acres of unbroken soil. This was rather a risky undertaking, owing to sunken rocks and tough roots, which might damage the plough, and so place us in a fix, as there was no means of getting it repaired.

The first day's work ended satisfactorily, but on the morning of the second the plough caught in a large hard root, bent to one side, and broke the landside in half. This made all further ploughing impossible, and foreseeing further troubles ahead, we decided to leave the country, and try a more pleasant occupation — or return fortified against accidents. We saw the possibility of

making the ploughing pay well, as the Swazis were rich in cattle, and attach small value to oxen, as they will not buy wives, and they had never used them for working purposes. It was our own fault; we had been careless and mismanaged the whole affair. We ought to have had more oxen to start with, and more than one plough, and been provided with materials and tools to repair them in case of breakage.

We informed the natives of our intention. They expressed regret at our leaving them, but assured us, at the same time, that they knew our scheme for ploughing would not succeed, as the witch doctor had said so!

Their belief in their "men of magic" is simply marvellous. In some way this is justified, as these fellows are really clever in their own line. They are generally old men, with white hair, surmounted by a curious skin cap. They sling strings of bones, pieces of

wood, shells, teeth, and birds' claws in a fantastic way about their bodies, and carry a skin bag filled with various dirty-looking curiosities. A witch doctor seldom speaks, and, when he does, it is in a dogmatic tone, accompanying his remarks with dancing, gesticulating and weird shouts; this he carries on until forced to fall to the ground from sheer exhaustion, frothing at the mouth with excitement. His word is law, and the people hold him in dread. He is supposed to smell out criminals. This is generally easy enough, as the culprit's fear is mostly so apparent that he can be detected at once. But the *umtakati* takes time over it, casts many spells about the suspected person, and goes through a lot of "hocus-pocus" before denouncing him. He always finds a man or woman, whether guilty or not. He cures or attempts to cure illnesses, for which he receives a goat or two in payment, and will drive the devil out of a person's stomach, in case he has

taken temporary quarters there, for like payment—in fact, he has the monopoly of a paying business, and has only to demand food whenever he requires it.

We started off once more, with no definite idea of what we were going to take up next, reached the border the same evening, and camped at the river. It commenced to rain as night fell, and kept on steadily until noon next day, and we found the river so swollen that we decided to wait until it cleared off. No such luck ; it kept on unceasingly for several days, until finally, as the river was not very wide, we made up our minds to take the wagon to pieces and swim the top part over by the aid of logs, letting the oxen pull across the wheels. Inspanning the oxen, and stripping ourselves of our clothes, we drove down to the water's edge. There we unloaded everything, and with the aid of levers detached the upper part of the wagon without difficulty. Then, driving in the oxen, we let

them swim the lower part over. This was not very easy, as the current was unusually strong, and we landed a hundred yards lower down upon the opposite side. Recrossing with the oxen, we let them loose to feed, and started collecting dry logs to swim the remaining portions of the wagon over ; there being so much iron prevented them from floating. Lashing the logs together, I swam across with a rope attached to the raft, and tied the other end to a tree. It took us all we knew to launch our craft, but when once we had succeeded it swung over nicely, although it took us all the rest of the day to land it. Then the oxen had to be fetched and tethered. This done, we supped on bread—fearful stuff of our own making—and coffee, and flung our tired bodies down upon the ground among our scattered goods. We had been working all day under a broiling sun, and were so burnt and blistered that it was painful to come in contact with even a soft blanket. I longed

for a cool sheet to wrap myself in ; I had not slept in a properly-made bed for years.

The next morning we proceeded to swim over the rest of our things, such as had to be kept dry. This we did by holding up a parcel in one hand. We kept it up all day, and when evening came we had not half finished.

Once as I was swimming over, holding up a coat, Dick yelled out that there was a crocodile behind me, I dropped the coat and struck out for dear life. Dick seized his rifle and fired just as I landed ; he declared he struck it, and in any case we saw no further signs of the brute. He stood on the bank ready to fire, whilst I swam to and fro, expecting every moment to be seized by the leg and drawn under. I do not think I ever swam so fast before or since. The next morning we made a raft, as a quicker means of transport. I was feeling wretchedly ill that day, the burning sun scorching my

blistered body, and the want of good food was having its effect upon me. I was obliged to stop every now and then to retch, my hand shook, and I had a splitting headache ; indeed, I often suffered from the latter since I had been wounded. I stuck to the raft until we got it finished, but then had to give in and go and lie down. Dick was not affected in any way, except that his body was blistered, and we could pull the skin off in strips. I got gradually worse, and by night I was quite delirious, in a raging fever. Dick declared afterwards that I swore most horribly, and talked of emeralds. It was impossible to work the raft alone, and the Shangaan servant we had was too wretched a swimmer to be of any assistance, so he was sent off with salt and beads to buy some milk for me. Our provisions were all finished, and there was no game about. Dick had serious thoughts of killing one of the oxen to make broth for me, only that doing so would have prevented us

from getting the wagon up the hill again. He took his rifle and shot a lot of small birds with bullets, having no shot gun, boiled them into a sort of soup, and forced it down my throat for the best part of a week. We drank this and milk, whenever we could get it, eagerly.

There were quantities of a large tree growing about there, which bore a juicy berry ; these we found very good eating We also got a few wild plums and a berry called *musane*. These we practically lived on.

On the fifth day I regained consciousness, but was unable to move. I found Dick had swam most of the things over, the river being still swollen, as rain had fallen at intervals. Dick urged me to try and cross the river with his assistance, as staying in that fever-stricken place, without good food of any kind, and no human beings within ten miles of us, was too risky. Making a tremendous effort, I reached the edge of the water by resting my hands

upon his shoulders ; we succeeded in reaching the other side, although I nearly slipped away from him once or twice. Arrived at the bank, he dried me, wrapped me in a blanket, and dosed me with hot bird-broth

The weather was intensely warm, but I felt chilly and weak, and had it not been for Dick's care I am convinced I would have died. Poor old fellow! he will never read these lines or know how grateful I am still for his goodness! What befell him I will relate further on

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN all was ready for a fresh start, Dick explored the mountain side and found another *trek*, which, though longer, was far easier than the one we had descended by.

In some places we crossed the incline was so steep that we had to insert poles through the wagon rails, and use them as levers to prevent a capsize.

At Lake Chrissie we found letters awaiting us. One of Dick's was from a brother, asking the former to meet him on his arrival from England; he was coming out with the intention of shooting big game, and was anxious to form a party for the expedition.

Of course Dick and I promptly jumped at this proposal—and why not? We had no work, no home, no ties of any kind. We accordingly sold out at Newcastle with little loss, and getting into the mail-cart arrived in due course at the Royal Hotel, Durban.

There I was introduced to Dick's elder brother. He was much older than either of us, a fine specimen of the best type of English sportsman. We soon became good friends, and after dinner we sat down in what seemed to us luxuriously easy chairs, in the quadrangle near the fountain. Indian servants brought us coffee and cigars, and Dick and I felt it was not half a bad thing to taste civilization once more.

Meanwhile we discussed the trip. It turned out to be a more expensive matter than we anticipated. After buying a large tent-wagon, eighteen head of oxen, provisions, rifles, ammunition, and counting for various items of expense before we would reach the

goal, it would cost us each about £300. However, we were so keen on joining that we did not care to consider the cost. We made up our minds to make all the necessary purchases in Pietermaritzburg, and left the next day for that town.

I still had my Shangaan servant, Imbandu, who, though perhaps not very intelligent, was hardworking, honest, and very attached to me. We engaged three more to act as cook, wagon-driver, and leader.

In ten days' time we were crawling along the white dusty road I knew so well, on our way to Matabeleland. No pleasanter mode of travelling could well be found than to sit on the box of the wagon, pipe in mouth, no cares, jolly companions, good roads, plenty to eat, drink, and talk about—just letting the time slip by. We generally travelled by night, and in the early morning; before the heavens were stained with the flush that heralds the rising of the sun, we had eaten

our rusks and drunk our freshly-brewed coffee, and were rolling across the plains.

What quantities of game there were about at that period! thousands and thousands of springbok and blesbok dotted the veldt. There was no fear of running short of meat. Here and there a *pauw* could be seen, and the cracked guttural note of *koorhaan* was often heard.

One day, just before outspanning, we saw a great cloud of dust, and could just make out the forms of springbok in it. They were making straight for us. Several men were galloping on both sides of the crowd; every now and then one of them would jump off his horse and send a shot into the enormous herd of bok, then mount and gallop on with them again. I never saw such a number of bok together before or since. There must have been close on 20,000 of them. They had evidently been chased for a long distance, and fresh numbers had joined the original

flock as they went on. We filled our pockets with cartridges and waited for them. They were getting quite close to us now, and I became seriously alarmed for our safety; it seemed impossible that such an enormous herd could turn aside quickly enough to avoid running into us.

Telling the others to follow my example, I fired a couple of shots in front of the leaders, which had the effect of making them swerve slightly, but the terrified boks in the rear were pushing the foremost ones ahead. We fired again, and every bullet told. Then came the crash! I shall never forget that sight. The leaders, trying to stop or turn aside, were knocked down and trampled upon; they surged up against the wagon—a living wave of striving beasts—almost lifting it up. Hundreds of others dashed across these, and leaped over the oxen. Some got mixed up with them, until there was a struggling mass of antelope and oxen.

Several of the latter were injured, but, fortunately, not seriously.

Presently the men who were pursuing them came up and stopped to help us with our frightened beasts, which were straining and smashing the yokeskeys right and left. They turned out to be six Dutchmen, who lived near Heidelberg. They said they had chased the bok for ten miles, had shot over a hundred, and had a small wagon coming along to pick them up. I quite believed the first part of their story, as their horses were just dropping with fatigue; the sweat, too, was pouring off them, and their sides were cut to pieces with repeated spurring

On the veldt folks do not always wait to be invited to a meal. The nine of us were soon sitting round a large dish of various meats fished out of the stock-pot. The stock-pot was an institution we always kept up. A small one was used when travelling, and a giant when in camp. In it was thrown

meat of every kind—venison of many kinds, fowl, legs of mutton, beef, and birds of all sorts. In camp it was always kept simmering over the fire, and popped on at every opportunity when travelling. It was very useful, as there was always a meal ready, enough for a large party too, if required.

After leaving Pretoria we went on for a long distance without seeing any game. We had camped by the roadside, opposite the house of a Boer farmer. Noticing that he had a large number of poultry, I strolled up to the house for the purpose of purchasing a few, as the stock-pot was almost empty.

He turned out to be a morose, impertinent old fellow, refused to sell anything, and as good as warned me off. Going back to the wagon, I saw that some of his fowl were feeding close to it, and I determined to get even with him. I opened my portmanteau and got out some fishing-tackle, and handed each of the other fellows, who had witnessed

the interview, a line and fish-hook. Dropping the canvas over the side of the wagon facing the house, we decoyed some of the fowl to the other side by a few calls and some scraps of bread. Baiting our hooks, we then fished for them out of the wagon, and very soon landed half a dozen fat hens. This angling went on whilst the boys were busy inspanning the oxen, and we were off long before the—well, to give it its proper name—theft was discovered, if ever it was.

Another incident on the road is worth mentioning, if only to give some idea of the Boers' treatment of their servants. We met a Hottentot one day, who seemed ill, and in great pain. He was in rags, and in a very dirty condition. Giving him a "soupe" of Boer brandy, he told us he had run away from his master on account of the ill treatment he had received. He showed us great weals on his dirty skin, where he had been thrashed with the *sjambok* (raw

hide strip). He further stated that on the previous day they *krinked* him. This is the most dreadful punishment that can be inflicted. I had heard of the Boers doing it before. The head of the victim is tied to the off hind wheel of a wagon, and his feet to the off front wheel. The pole is then pulled over to the near side. The torture entailed by this process is somewhat similar to that of the old-fashioned rack.

This was by no means an isolated case. The Boers' general treatment of the natives is simply barbarous. They rarely pay them the wages due to them, and if the unfortunate servant attempts to run away to a better situation, he is caught, flogged unmercifully, and not infrequently shot or otherwise murdered, if any active resistance is attempted. The Transvaal Boer is a low, murderous, *incestuous* (I use the word in its most literal sense), cowardly demi-savage—I speak now of the “Dopper” or “Trek Boer”, the Free

State Boer is somewhat better, whilst those in the Old Colony, called Dutch-Africanders, are almost on a level with the English Africander

We were now ascending into the high country about Rustenburg, and wanted to strike the Crocodile River at Marico Drift, cross there, and follow the river until we came to the northern spur of Lobomba Mountains, in Gazaland

It was well into the month of May, and although the days were intensely hot, the nights were so cold that the water froze in the cask that was slung under the wagon. We had some good sport before reaching the river, with hartebeeste, oribi, and other game.

Crossing the drift one morning, we mounted our horses and rode out into Khama's country. There we were disappointed at not seeing more game, and missed everything we fired at.

The wagon had gone on by road, so we camped that night near the Notwani River. I can remember well what a still cold night it was. The silence was so deadly that it became intensely irritating; it was only broken now and then by the bark of a prowling jackal, and once or twice by the distant roar of a lion.

The next morning the leader took the oxen out to graze between the road and the river, where the grass grew best. He soon came running back to say that he had seen the *spoor* of a large animal quite fresh, on the river's bank. The two Marstons went down towards it with their rifles, and left me in charge of the wagon.

To the left was a range of hills running parallel with the road, and as I lay on the ground smoking, I saw four rheabok, of the grey species, walking down the side, and making for the river. I saw that they would cross the road about four hundred yards away,

if not disturbed. Telling the servants to keep quiet, I reached out for my Martini, and lay quietly on the ground.

They were walking in single file, stopping every now and then for a nibble. I fired at the largest, and dropped him. Later on, I shot a steinbok from the wagon, and several birds for a collection I was making.

The others returned, and reported that the *spoor* was that of a rhinoceros, which they tracked along the river to the spot where it had crossed; but as the crocodiles seemed to swarm there, they had decided to return, so I had better sport after all.

We had not yet reached good hunting grounds, so we pushed on towards Shoshong without any event of interest. Between Shoshong and the Lotsani River, a distance of 25 miles, there are some hills, at the foot of which we camped for the night, hoping to get some sport on them the next day. We heard lions again that night, and the next

forenoon three of us, leaving Dick with the wagon to push quietly on, walked over the rugged hills, thickly strewn with huge boulders.

It was about one o'clock, and I was having a rest, munching a bit of "biltong" as I sat, when I noticed the hindquarters of some large animal standing behind a rock in the shade. I concluded at once that it was an eland, and, holding my rifle in my left hand, went on quietly with my lunch, though never taking my eyes off the spot. I must have sat there for an hour, waiting for it to move, so as to get a shot at its shoulder, for it was useless to attempt to shoot at its hindquarters. Getting impatient, I crawled quietly up to the rock, which was only a hundred yards away. There I found myself in no better position than before, as he would run in a direct line from me if I showed myself, and most probably escape. Picking up a stone, I threw it over my head, so as

to let it drop just behind him, which it did , the buck sprang forward, and I fired a snap shot and pierced him through the heart.

The eland is the largest of its tribe, measuring sometimes sixteen hands in height Its horns are about two feet long, in two spiral turns, and it has a dewlap that hangs to its knees , it is generally of an ashen-grey colour. The cow eland has no dewlap, and is of slighter build than the bull. All hunters are agreed that the flesh is more delicious than that of any four-footed beast in the world. Looking down at the huge beast, I was considering how I should convey some of the meat, when I heard the crack of a wagon whip in the valley below. Walking a short distance, I saw our wagon proceeding leisurely along the road When it had reached the nearest point I hailed it, and beckoned to the driver to come to me. We skinned the eland, and carried off a hind quarter, the head, and skin. It was too hot

to go out again, so I lay on the wagon and dozed until sundown, when the others joined us, staggering under the weight of four grysbok, which we gave to some natives in exchange for some mealies for our horses.

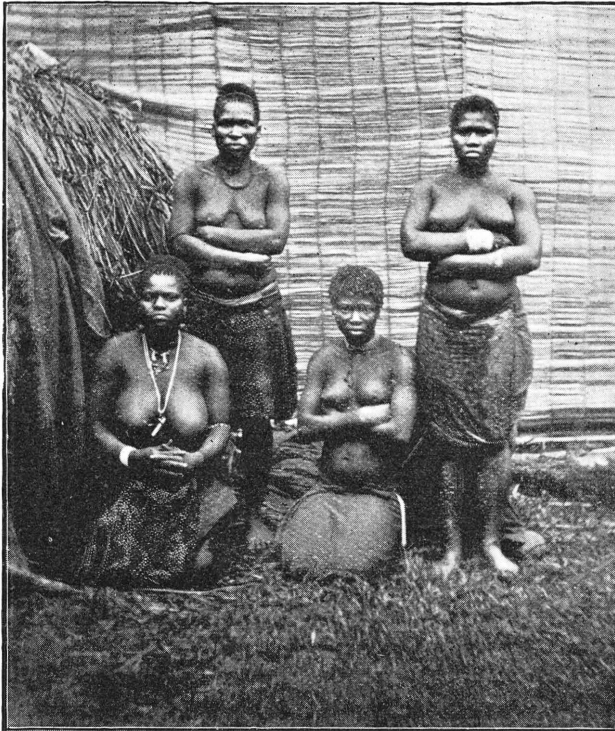
We slept that night near the Lotsani River, and heard lions again quite close to us, so we kept two large fires going in case of attack.

The following day we took two rifles each, and one servant, and started in search of them, keeping parallel with the road.

Having walked for some hours without seeing anything, except a few small antelope, which I did not molest, I came upon the fresh *spoor* of two lions. I called the others, and we proceeded to trace it for nearly a mile, only to lose it on some hard *brak* (brackish) ground.

The wind was blowing rather freshly, and I knelt down to light my pipe in the shelter of a clump of bushes. No sooner had I

struck a match than two lions bounded out of the same bushes, and made for the open. Seizing my rifle, I let fire at one of them, which was rather a foolish thing to do. The bullet struck him in the jaw. The lion stopped, roaring with pain, pawing his cheek with his huge claw. I was about to fire again, when he turned suddenly round and bounded towards me. Holding my rifle to my shoulder until he came close, I waited. Suddenly he stopped, and crouched for a spring at twelve paces, with his head on his paws, his eyes glaring, and his body quivering. I could see the blood dripping from his mouth. The whole incident only occupied a few seconds. I knew that if my shot failed, it would be all up with me. Aiming just between the eyes, and rather low, I fired and he fell over, dead. It was my first lion, and I was astonished at my own coolness as I stood looking at it, with my unlighted pipe in my mouth. It was only a little while



MATABELE WOMEN.

afterwards that I began to feel shaky with excitement, and I could not have hit a haystack if I had tried.

We skinned him, and my man wrapped the skin round his shoulders, leaving his hands free to carry my heavy elephant rifle.

We then went down towards the river, to some low-lying, marshy ground, where I expected to find a rhinoceros. We walked round the marsh, as the ground was too soft to venture crossing it. On the north side is a small *krantz* overhanging the river. Up this we climbed, and we had a fairly good view from the top of it.

At first we could see nothing, with the exception of a great crocodile basking in the sun on the opposite bank. Presently I heard a shot quite close to me, and hearing a plunge, I ran to the edge and looked over. There, in the river, I saw a noble water-buck swimming down stream. It was evi-

dently one of the Marstons who had fired ; and as the buck was bound to escape at the rate it was going, I seized the advantage of an easy shot, just as it was about to land.

It staggered, fell, and rose again, and started off at a most remarkable speed along the narrow strip of strand between the *krantz* and the river. Another shot—a most lucky one—shattered its skull between the horns. Waiting for Marston, who came running up, we found his shot had struck it in the flank. It had a fair pair of horns, about twenty-five inches with the curve. We took some of the meat with us, but found it afterwards not at all good to eat.

Dick Marston had shot a *duyker*, which we found a much more palatable substitute.

Between this and Tati we shot a few more antelope of different sorts, and found many *spoor* of rhinoceros on the banks of the Macloutsi River.

Leaving Tati a week later, we entered

Matabeleland, and passed through some beautiful country. Marston shot a sable antelope one day, which had a splendid pair of horns. We lingered in the neighbourhood for some days, hoping to get another out of the half-dozen he had seen, but they disappeared in a northerly direction.

We came across a small herd of gemsbok one afternoon, in a small valley. This was somewhat strange, as they are generally to be met with in the open country. We stationed ourselves one on each side of the triangular valley, and fired a good many shots at them. Whenever they attempted to escape we fired a hundred yards in front of them; this raised a cloud of dust, and caused them to turn in another direction. By this means we kept them running in a circle for a considerable time, and shot six out of nine of them.

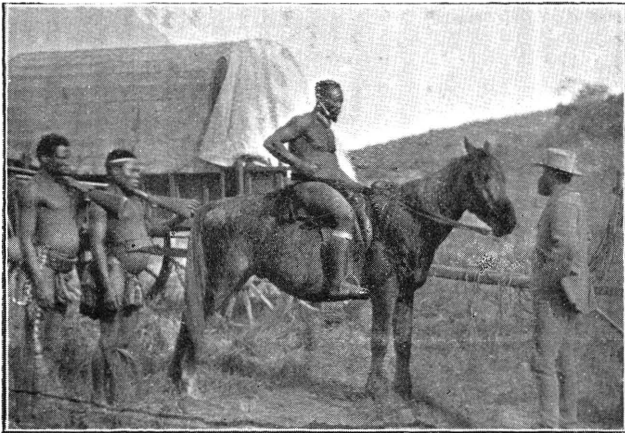
We were much disappointed at not meeting with any rhinoceri. We kept coming

across their *spoor*, and wasted a good deal of time in tracking them. We found this district pretty full of game, and heard of elephants a few miles to the north, this decided us to form camp near Mangive

The morning after we had shot the gemsbok we were busy preparing the skins with arsenical soap, when a party of Matabele came up and informed us that we had no right to shoot in their country without having the permission of the king. We held an *indaba* (palava), and discussed the matter. Dick was the only one of our party who could converse with them in their own language.

One of my horses had turned out rather a useless beast, and would not stand fire, so we agreed that Dick should return with the *indunas*, procure the needed permission, and make the king a present of the horse

They started off that day for Gubulawayo, the king's residence. Meanwhile, we spent



MATABELE ASKING FOR OUR RIGHT FOR SHOOTING.

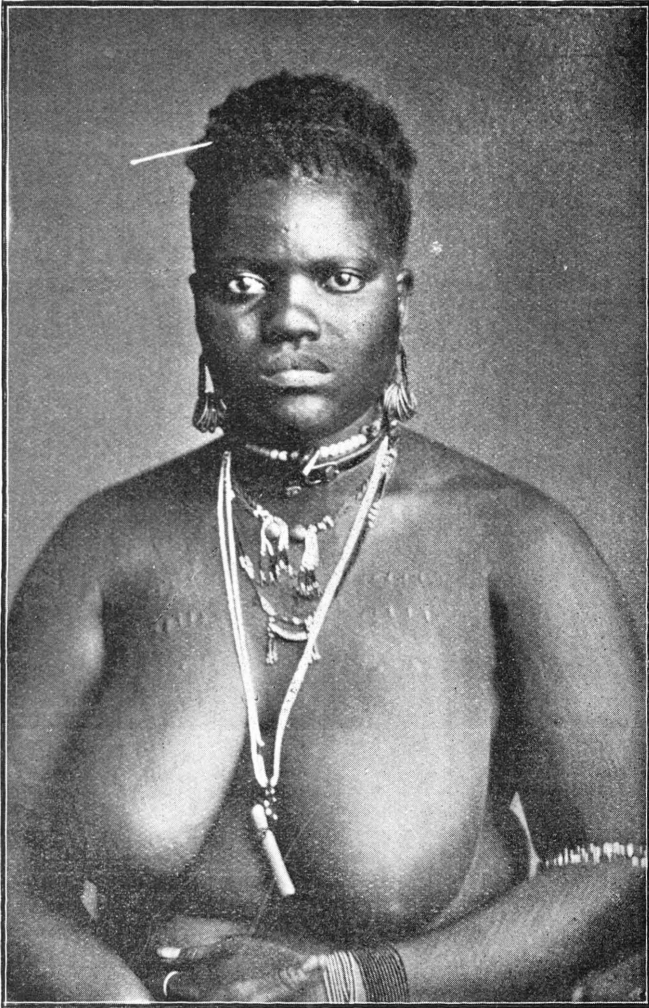
our time in reading, visiting some Matabele kraals, sewing on buttons, etc. I did a little fishing in a tributary of the Shasi River, and caught a few small fish somewhat like our dace. The Matabeles here are called "Makalakas," and are a fine race. The girls especially are very well developed, and wear only a fringe of beads or grass round their waists. They took, as usual, a great interest in our belongings, crowding round us, feeling our clothes, and touching our hands timidly. We did a little useful trading with them for beads and curiosities

Dick returned at last with permission to shoot, but we were not to go north of Mangwe. This was rather a damper, as the best shooting was that which lay between the king's kraal and the Zambesi. We *trekked* for a few days and formed camp near our boundary without seeing much game, and very few inhabitants. The country was mostly dense bush

We had just halted at the foot of an open hill, and were lying on the grass, smoking and chatting. One servant was busy unloading things off the wagon; two more were pitching the tent, whilst the "leader" had taken the oxen to the foot of the hill to graze. Leaving them, he had entered the bush for the purpose of making up a bundle of dry wood for the fires.

We were just saying what a likely-looking place it was for lions and other game. As far as the eye could see there stretched a park-like country, with here and there a tract of dense bush. Fine pasture waved over the land, which was intersected by clear flowing streams that rippled into the larger tributaries of the Limpopo.

Suddenly fearful agonizing screams pierced our ears from the bush at the foot of the hill. "By Jove! a lion has got him!" we cried, and seizing our rifles we rushed down; but the yelling had ceased by the time we reached



A MATABELE BELIE.

it, and separating a few yards apart from each other, we entered the bush. We had not gone very far when a shot was fired, and we heard Dick's voice yelling to go to him in all haste. Rushing to the spot, a dreadful sight met our eyes.

The black boy had been picking up sticks under a tree, upon a branch of which a huge boa constrictor lay. The brute had dropped upon him, taken him in his coils to the trunk of the tree, and wound himself round the boy and the tree, crushing him against it. Every bone in his body was broken, sharp ends were sticking through his skin, and his eyeballs were starting out of his head. The expression on his face was awful to look at. The snake had stopped whilst making his final coil, and was glaring at us with open mouth and quivering tongue. We all fired instantly, and fired again ; some shots missed in our haste, but one bullet had shattered the head. A few more finished him. We

uncoiled the huge thing, and the unfortunate boy fell, a lifeless pulp of gory flesh and crushed bones, to the ground.

We all felt sick it was a sight never to be forgotten, and haunted us for many a day. We never dreamt of meeting a boa in those parts. One had been shot a year or two before in the same country, and I saw the skin hanging in Davis' Boarding-House in Leydenburg, and it measured 17 feet, this one measured 16 feet

We buried the boy the same night close to the spot

The next day we mounted our horses and rode out in quest of lions, as their roaring had kept us awake all through the night. We did not feel much inclined for sport; the experience of the night before had taken all the heart out of us. We had ridden into some bush, and before emerging into the open space again, took a careful survey through the bushes. It was as well that we did, for we saw

the beautiful sight of a small herd of giraffe walking slowly along, cropping the tender shoots of grass and leaves. We each picked our animal, and fired at 200 yards; two fell to the ground, vainly striving to rise, throwing up their long necks in distress, the others galloped across the veldt. We gave chase, and saw that one, very much in the rear, was labouring in her stride.

We did not succeed in running her down until we had pursued her for nearly a mile. Then we all set to work at skinning, and placed some of the meat and skins in a tree.

There is a great difference between the flesh of the cow and the bull; that of the former being excellent, of the latter almost uneatable. Whilst we were busy at this, Marston saw a fine bustard, or *pauw*, rise from the ground and walk away at a distance of a hundred yards. He made a neat shot, shooting it through the neck, thus not spoil-

ing any of the flesh, and giving us a handsome addition to our stock-pot.

Shortly after this we saw two lions disappear between a couple of *kopjes* that stood close together, and we made a plan of attack. The elder Marston and I galloped round to the other side to intercept them, whilst Dick and his man rode to where we had seen them disappear. We soon arrived at the spot, and, dismounting, left our horses, and walked down cautiously and quietly through the stunted bushes, expecting every moment to meet the lions. All at once we saw them lying on some flat rocks. I whispered to Marston to fire. He raised his piece, and took what I thought was an absurdly long aim; before he had pulled the trigger the male had seen us and bounded to his feet. Marston fired then, and missed. The female was lying a little below the male, and as the report rang out, she jumped up and bolted with four

little cubs at her heels. The lion stood with lashing tail, as if determined to guard his family. Marston fired again and wounded him mortally, for he fell and lay gasping on the rock. I fired to make sure, and finished him off. Having seen that he lay quite still and apparently dead, we ran down in pursuit of the others, and arrived just in time to see Dick drop the lioness with an easy shot. The little ones were quite old enough to be weaned, but all the same we felt sorry for them, for they all stood in a row next the dead mother, making a purring sound, equivalent, I suppose, to a kitten's mewling. As we advanced, the little beggars put up their backs and snarled most viciously, walking backwards, then they stood close together and watched us skin their mother.

As it was getting dark we rode home, picking up our giraffe meat and skins. We had had a good day, and quite close to the camp too.

We stayed here for a fortnight, and shot over the country for miles round — lions, giraffes, koodoos, hartebeeste, wildebeeste, rhinoceri, and many other game. Hearing of some buffalo about twenty miles to the east, we *trekked* in that direction in search of some sport with them a few elephants were also reported to be about there

Two of us generally rode in front of the wagon, getting an occasional shot at something. One morning the Marstons were riding about half a mile in front, when one of them came galloping back, saying that they had distinctly heard the trumpeting of an elephant at no great distance. We seized our elephant rifles and rode in the direction from whence the sound had come. Fortunately, the wind was in our favour, and at last, after two hours' search, we caught sight of them.

There were seven in all, somewhat scattered, so we separated and dodged

them through the bush. I soon got a chance at a fine bull, with a handsome pair of tusks, and fired. At the same moment the Marstons fired we had all wounded our beasts, and gave chase. It was no easy matter to work our way through the thick bush, and I could hear several shots fired by the others, who had made better progress than I. It proved lucky that they had done so, for five of the elephants doubled back, and I saw them coming straight towards me. Dismounting next a large tree, I waited for a few minutes, and as they passed I fired at the ear of a cow, with long thin tusks, and killed her with one shot. Before I could reload, the next one had passed. The third one proved to be the wounded bull who had my 4-oz. bullet lodged in his forearm. At the same time, he managed to go at a good pace. He was making straight for the tree where I was standing ready for him.