



*The Lion Hunter of South Africa.*

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FIVE YEARS' ADVENTURES

IN THE

FAR INTERIOR

OF

SOUTH AFRICA;

WITH NOTICES OF THE NATIVE TRIBES AND SAVAGE ANIMALS.

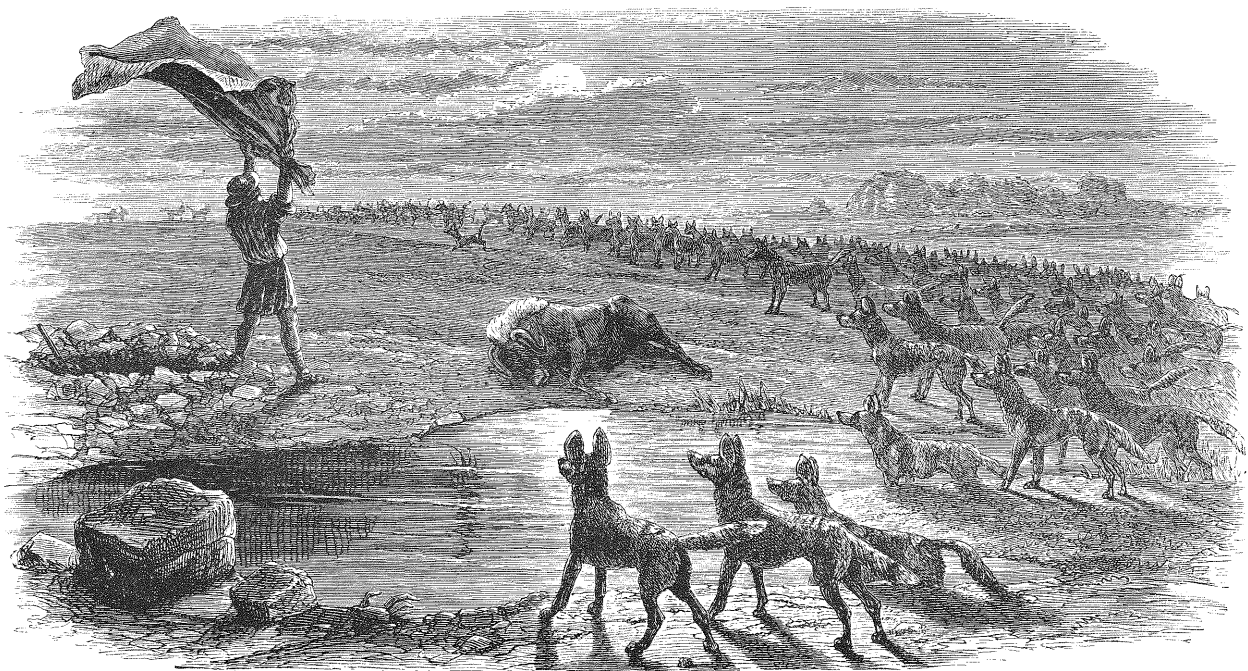
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OF ALTYRE.

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A MIDNIGHT SCENE.—ADVENTURE WITH WILD DOGS.

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## P R E F A C E.

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As the reader who purposes following me through the five adventurous years I spent in the untrodden wilds of Southern Africa might like to know something of my previous career, I may briefly state that the early portion of my life was spent in the county of Moray, where a love of sport and natural history was early engendered in my mind, and became stronger and more deeply rooted every year. Salmon-fishing and roe-stalking were my favourite amusements; and, during these early wanderings by wood and stream, this strong love of sport and admiration of Nature in her wildest and most attractive forms became with me an all-absorbing feeling, and my greatest possible enjoyment was to pass whole days and many a summer night in solitude, where, undisturbed, I might contemplate the silent grandeur of the forest and the ever-varying beauty of the scenes around. Long before I went to Eton I took pride in the goodly array of hunting trophies which hung around my room.

In 1839 I sailed for India, to join my regiment, the 4th Madras Light Cavalry. Touching at the Cape of Good Hope, I had an opportunity of hunting several of the smaller antelopes, and obtained a foretaste of the splendid sport I was in after years so abundantly to enjoy. In India

I procured a great number of specimens of natural history, and laid the foundation of a collection which has since swelled to gigantic proportions.\* Finding the climate did not agree with me, I retired from the service and returned home, where, resuming my old hunting habits, I was enabled, through the kindness of a wide circle of friends, to follow my favourite pursuit of deer-stalking so successfully that I speedily found myself in possession of a fine collection of select heads from most of the Scottish deer-forests. But growing weary of hunting in a country where the game was strictly preserved, and where the continual presence of keepers and foresters took away half the charm of the chase, and longing once more for the freedom of nature, and the life of the wild hunter—so far preferable to that of the mere sportsman—I resolved to visit the rolling prairies and rocky mountains of the Far West, where my nature would find congenial sport with the bison, the wapiti, and the elk. In the hope of realising this wish, I obtained a commission in the Royal Veteran Newfoundland Companies, but I speedily discovered that the prospect of getting from the barrack-square would be small, and that I should have little chance of playing the Nimrod whilst attached to this corps. I accordingly effected an exchange into the Cape Riflemen, and in 1843 found myself once more in the country upon whose frontiers dwelt those vast herds of game which had so often fired my imagination, and made me long to revisit it.

Immediately upon landing at the Cape I marched with my division of the army of occupation, under the command

\* Which may now be seen in my South African Museum, No. 232, Piccadilly, London.

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of Colonel Somerset, into the country of the Amaponda Caffres, where we lay for some time under canvas, and where our principal amusements were quail-shooting and throwing the assagai. Being disappointed in my expectations, and there being at that time no prospect of fighting, I made up my mind to sell out of the army, and to penetrate into the interior farther than the foot of civilised man had yet trodden—to those vast regions which would afford abundant food for the gratification of the passion of my youth—the collecting of hunting trophies and objects of interest in science and natural history : in this I ultimately succeeded to my heart's desire.

With regard to my African adventures the following pages must speak for themselves. Let me here state, however, that I was the first to penetrate into the interior of the Bamangwato country, and that my axe and spade pioneered the way which others have since followed. I should have pushed on still farther had I not been prevented by the great losses I experienced in cattle and horses.

During the many years I spent in the wilderness, my waggon was my only home. Even this I often deserted and alone, or attended only by savages, proceeded on distant hunting expeditions, leaving my few followers encamped around my baggage. Days and nights, on these occasions, have I passed in my solitary hunting-hole, near some drinking-place, watching the majestic carriage of the lion, the sagacious actions of the elephant, and the curious instincts of the countless varieties of game that have passed within a few yards of me, quite unaware of the proximity of man. Whatever on those occasions I wit-

nessed worthy of attention, I noted in my journal whilst the impression was yet fresh in my memory—from this journal the following work is almost literally transcribed. Written under such circumstances, the reader will not look for the graces of style, for the hand, wearied all day with grasping the rifle, is not the best suited for wielding the pen. If I have in simple language given pleasure to the sportsman, or added one page to the natural history of Southern Africa, or to our knowledge of its tribes, I shall think myself amply repaid for my many wanderings and watchings in a wild and savage land.

*Altyre, June, 1850.*



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