

We held a northerly course, and on the second day reached Letlochee, a strong perpetual fountain, situated in an abrupt and rocky ravine, amongst some low hills bounded on the north and west by a wide and gently-sloping basin or hollow, diversified with extensive groves and open glades: this hollow extended to a breadth of from six to eight miles, and was much frequented by elands and giraffes, and beyond it stretched the boundless extent of the sandy Kalahari desert. Here I daily enjoyed excellent sport with these two varieties of game; but though elephants occasionally visited the water, and we followed on their tracks to an amazing distance, we never obtained a view of them.

On the forenoon of the 23rd a native informed me he had seen a white rhinoceros in thick cover to the south; I accordingly accompanied him to the spot, and, stalking in upon the vast muchocho, found him asleep beneath a shady tree. His appearance reminded me of an enormous hog, which in shape he slightly resembles, and he kept constantly flapping his ears, as a rhinoceros invariably does when sleeping. Before, however, I could get within range, several "rhinoceros-birds" warned him of his impending danger by sticking their bills into his ear, and uttering their harsh, grating cry. Thus aroused, he suddenly sprang to his feet, crashed away through the jungle at a rapid trot, and I saw no more of him. These rhinoceros-birds are constant attendants upon the hippopotamus and the four varieties of rhinoceros, and feed upon the ticks and other parasitic insects that swarm upon those animals; they are of a greyish colour, and nearly as large as a common thrush, their song being very similar to that of the mistletoe-thrush. Many a time have these ever-watchful birds disappointed me in my stalk, and tempted me to invoke an anathema upon their devoted heads: they are the best friends the rhinoceros has, and rarely fail to awaken him even in his soundest nap. Chukuroo perfectly understands their warning, and, springing to his feet, generally looks about him in every direction, after which he invariably makes off. I have often hunted a rhinoceros on horseback, which led me many miles, and received a number of shots before he fell, during which chase several of these birds remained by him to the

last; they perched on his back and sides, and as each bullet told on his shoulder, they rose about six feet in the air, uttering their harsh cry of alarm, and then resumed their position. It sometimes happened that the lower branches of trees, under which the rhinoceros passed, swept them from their perch, but they always recovered it. I have often shot these animals when drinking at the fountains at midnight; but the birds, imagining they were asleep, remained with them till morning, and on my approaching, before they took flight, I noticed that they exerted themselves to their utmost to awaken Chukuroo.

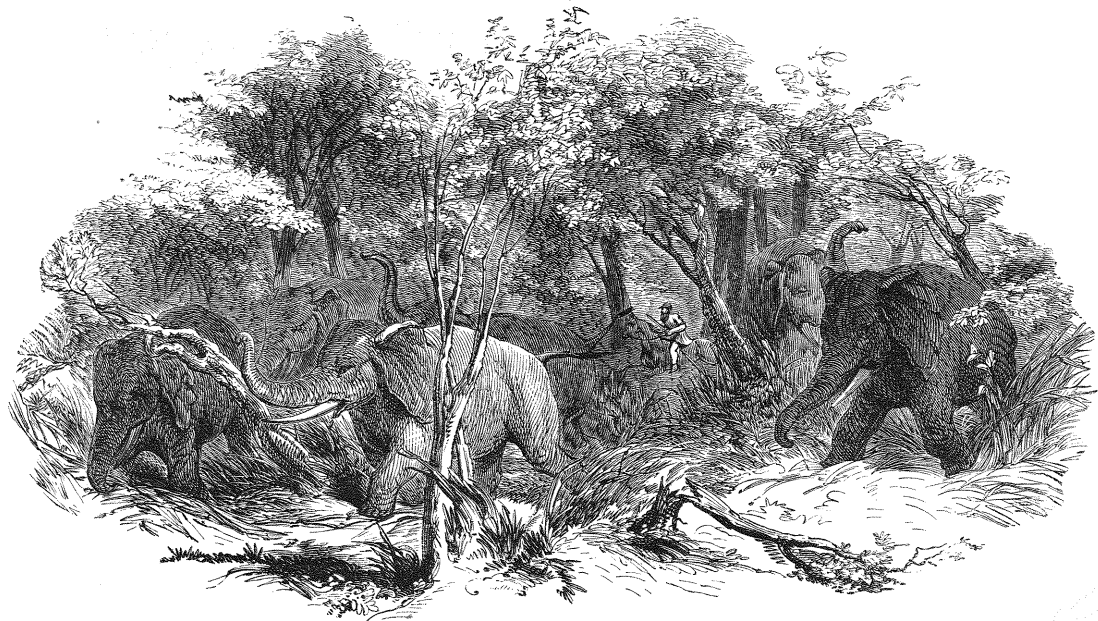
In the evening one of the parties sent out to seek for the spoor of elephants returned to camp, stating that a small tribe of Bakalahari, in a range of mountains to the east, reported these beasts to frequent the forests in the vicinity of their abode, and Mutchuisho, Sicomy's uncle, who attended me whilst hunting his country, requested me to hold myself in readiness to accompany him in quest of the elephants next day.

Accordingly, at an early hour on the 24th, I took the field with Isaac and Kleinboy as after-riders, accompanied by Mutchuisho and a hundred and fifty of his tribe. We held a north-easterly course, and having proceeded about five miles through the forest, reached a fountain, where I observed the spoor of a herd of cow elephants; here we made a short halt, the snuff was briskly circulated, but an inspection of the spoor led to the conclusion that it was two days old, and I was again disappointed.

The country now before me was a vast level forest, extending north and east for about twenty miles without a break; at that distance, however, the landscape was shut in by blue mountain-ranges of considerable height, while two bold conical hills standing close together rose conspicuous above the rest. These were once the ancient habitations of the Bamangwatos, but the cruel Matabili had driven them thence to the rocky mountains amongst which they now live. We continued our course in an easterly direction, and twice crossed the gravelly bed of a periodical river, in which were several small springs of excellent water; elephants had cleared away

the gravel with their trunks from these springs, and the spoor of rhinoceros about them was abundant. After proceeding several miles through a dry and barren tract, where wait-a-bit thorns abounded, we entered a forest adorned with very picturesque old trees in shady groups, and sped through its depths until we emerged upon a small open glade, on which brindled gnoos, two or three troops of pallahs, and a herd of about fifteen camelopards were grazing. We had proceeded about two miles farther, and it was now within two hours of sunset, when, lo! a thorny tree was seen newly smashed by an elephant. Some of the natives attentively examined the loaves of the broken branches to ascertain exactly when he had been there, while others overhauled the spoor. It was that of a first-rate bull, and it was agreed he had fed there that morning. The ground was hard and bad for spooring, but the spoorers showed great skill; and following it for a short distance, we came to where a troop of bull elephants had pastured not many hours before. Huge branches and entire trees, rent and uprooted, lay scattered across our path, the elephants having carried them several yards before they ate the leaves: the soil also was ploughed up by their tusks in quest of roots; and in these places the enormous fresh spoor—that thrilling sight to a hunter's eye—was beautifully visible.

All this was extremely interesting and gratifying; but it was now so very near sunset, that I entertained but faint hopes of finding the game that evening. Mutchuisho, however, was very anxious that I should not be disappointed; he had divested himself of his kaross, and, carrying one of the muskets which Sicomy had bought from me, led the spooring party, about fifteen cunning old hands. The main body he ordered to sit down and keep quiet until the attack commenced. Having followed the spoor for a short distance, the old man became extremely excited, and told me we were close to the elephants; a few minutes after several of the spoorers affirmed they had heard them break a tree in advance, some saying it was in front, others that it was in an opposite direction. Nevertheless, on we went, Mutchuisho extending his men to the right and left, while we continued on the spoor, and in



RIDING OUT THE BEST BULL ELEPHANT.

a few minutes one of them came running back breathless to say that he had seen the mighty game. I halted for a minute, and told Isaac, who carried the big Dutch rifle, to act independently, while Kleinboy was to assist me in the chase; but, as usual, when the row began, my followers thought only of number one. As to myself, I bared my arms to the shoulder, and, having imbibed a draught of aqua pura from the calabash of one of the spoorers, grasped my trusty two-grooved rifle, and told my guide to go ahead. This he did, and we had proceeded in silence a few hundred yards farther, when he suddenly stopped, exclaiming, "Klow!" and before us stood a herd of mighty bull elephants, packed together beneath a shady grove about a hundred and fifty yards in advance. I rode slowly towards them, but as soon as they observed me they made a loud rumbling noise, and, tossing their trunks, wheeled right about and made off in one direction, crashing through the forest and leaving a cloud of dust behind them.

The distance I had come, and the difficulties I had undergone, to behold these elephants, rose fresh before me; I determined that on this occasion at least I would do my duty, and, dashing my spurs into "Sunday's" ribs, was very soon much too close in their rear for safety. The elephants now made an inclination to my left, whereby I obtained a good view of the ivory. The herd consisted of six bulls, four of them full-grown, first-rate elephants; the other two were fine fellows, but had not yet arrived at perfect stature. Of the four old ones, two had much finer tusks than the rest, and for a few seconds I was undecided which of these two I would follow, when, suddenly, the one I fancied had the stoutest tusks broke from his comrades, and, feeling convinced he was the patriarch of the herd, I followed him accordingly. Cantering alongside, I was about to fire, when he instantly turned, and, uttering a trumpet so strong and shrill that the very earth seemed to vibrate beneath my feet, he charged furiously after me for several hundred yards in a direct line, not in the slightest degree interrupted in his course by the trees, which he snapped and overthrew like reeds in his headlong career.

At length he pulled up in his charge, and as he slowly

turned to retreat I let fly at his shoulder, Sunday capering and prancing and giving me much trouble—on receiving the ball, the elephant shrugged his shoulder, and made off at a free majestic walk. This shot brought several of the dogs to my assistance, for they had been following the herd, and on their coming up and barking, another headlong charge was the result, accompanied by the never-failing trumpet as before. In this charge he passed close to me, when I saluted him with a second bullet in the shoulder, of which he did not take the slightest notice, and I now determined not to fire again until I could make a steady shot; but although he turned repeatedly, Sunday invariably disappointed me, capering so that it was impossible to fire. At length exasperated, I became reckless of the danger, and, springing from the saddle, approached the elephant under cover of a tree, and gave him a bullet in the side of the head, when, trumpeting so shrilly that the forest trembled, he charged among the dogs, from whom he seemed to fancy the blow had come; and afterwards took up a position in a grove of thorns, with his head towards me. I now walked up close to him, and as he was again in the act of charging (being in those days under wrong impressions as to the practicability of bringing down an elephant with a shot in the forehead), stood coolly in his path until he was within fifteen paces of me, and let drive at the hollow of his forehead, in the vain expectation that by so doing I should end his career. The shot only served to increase his fury—an effect which, I have remarked, shots in the head invariably produce; and continuing his headlong course with incredible quickness and impetuosity, he all but terminated my elephant-hunting for ever. A large party of the Bechuanas who had come up yelled out simultaneously, imagining I was killed, for the elephant was at one moment almost on the top of me: however, my activity saved me, but as I dodged round the bushy trees an enormous thorn ran deep into the sole of my foot, the old Badenoch brogues, which I that day sported, being worn through; this caused me severe pain, laming me throughout the rest of the conflict.

The elephant now held on through the forest at a sweeping pace; still he was hardly out of sight when I was loaded

and in the saddle, and once more alongside. About this time I heard Isaac blazing away at another bull; but when he charged, the fellow's cowardly heart failed him, and he quickly made his appearance at a safe distance in my rear. My elephant kept crashing along at a steady pace, blood streaming from his wounds; the dogs, knocked up with fatigue and thirst, dropped astern, and it was long before I fired again, for I was afraid to dismount, and Sunday was extremely troublesome. At length I gave it him sharp right and left behind the shoulder, when he made a long charge after me, rumbling and trumpeting as before. The whole body of the Bamangwato men had now come up, and were following a short distance behind me; among these was Mollyeon, who volunteered to help; and being a very swift and active fellow, rendered me important service by holding my fidgety horse's head while I fired and loaded. I fired six broadsides in this way, the elephant charging almost every time, and pursuing us back to the main body in our rear, who fled in all directions as he approached.

The sun had now sunk behind the trees: it would very soon be dark, and, notwithstanding all he had received, the elephant did not seem much distressed. I recollected that my time was short, and therefore resolved to close with him and fire on foot. This I did, approaching very near, and sending my balls right and left in the side of the head, upon which he made a long and determined charge; but I was now thoroughly cool, for I saw he could not overtake me, and in a twinkling was loaded, and gave him both barrels behind his shoulder. Another trumpeting, which sent Sunday flying through the forest, and a terrific charge followed; this was his final one. His wounds began to tell, and he stood at bay beside a thorny tree, with the dogs, who perceived it was nearly over, barking furiously around him. Reloading, I now fired right and left at his forehead, but it was evident he could not charge again, and on receiving these shots tossed his trunk up and down, and by various signs and motions, most gratifying to the hungry natives, evinced that his end was near. My next bullet struck him behind his shoulder, and this was the last, for as I moved round the tree beside which he stood to give

him the other barrel, it was plain the mighty old monarch of the forest needed no more, and before I could clear the bushes, he fell heavily on his side, and drew his last breath. My feelings at this moment can only be understood by the few brother Nimrods who have had the good fortune to enjoy a similar encounter.

The natives, who were in high spirits, now flocked around the elephant, laughing and talking at a rapid pace; as to myself, I climbed on to him, and sat enthroned upon his side, which was on a level with my eyes when I was standing on the ground. In a few minutes night set in, when the natives, having illuminated the jungle with a score of fires, and formed a semicircle of bushes to windward, lay down to rest without partaking of a morsel of food, for Mutchuisho would not allow a man to put an assagai into the game until the morrow, and posted sentries to keep watch on either side of him. My dinner consisted of a slice from the temple of the elephant, which I broiled on the hot embers. In the conflict my shirt was reduced to streamers by the wait-a-bit thorns, and all the clothing that remained on me was a pair of buckskin knee breeches. This was scanty raiment on a very cold night, it being now the dead of the African winter; having collected dry grass, I spread it beside my fire, and lay down with no further covering than an old sheepskin, which I used for a saddle-cloth. Shortly after I had dropped asleep, Mutchuisho, commiserating my condition, spread an old jackal kaross over me, which, as all Bechuana garments are, was thickly tenanted by small transparent insects, which shall be nameless; these odious creatures, probably finding my skin more tender than that of the owner of the kaross, seemed resolved to enjoy a banquet while they could; and presently I awoke with my whole body so poisoned and inflamed that I felt as if attacked with a severe fever. All further rest that night was at an end, so I returned the kaross to Mutchuisho, with grateful acknowledgments for his polite intentions; and piling dry wood on the fire, which emitted a light as bright as day, I roused the slumbering Kleinboy to assist me in turning my buckskins outside in, when an animating "chasse" commenced, which terminated in the capture of about fourscore

of my white-currant coloured visitors. I then lit another fire, and spent the remainder of the night squatted between the two, thus imbibing caloric before and behind.

As the sun rose on the morning of the 25th, Mutchuisho gave the word to cut up the elephant, when a scene of blood, noise, and turmoil ensued, which baffles all description. Every native there, divested of his kaross and armed with an assagai, rushed to the onslaught; and in less than two hours every inch of the animal was gone, and carried by the different parties to their respective temporary locations, which they had chosen beneath the trees that grew around. This ceremony was performed in the following manner:—the rough outer skin is first removed, in large sheets, from the side of the elephant that lies uppermost, and next to it are several coats of an under skin, which being of a tough and pliant nature, is used by the natives for making water-bags, and in these they conveyed supplies of water from the nearest vley or fountain (often ten miles distant) to the elephant. This inner skin is removed with great caution, and is formed into water-bags by gathering the corners and edges, and transfixing the whole on a pointed wand. The flesh is then cut into enormous sheets from the ribs, when the hatchets come into play, with which they chop through, and remove, individually, each colossal rib. The intestines are thus laid bare; and in the removal of these the leading men take a lively interest and active part, for it is throughout and around them that the fat of the elephant is principally found.

There are few things which a Bechuana prizes so highly as fat of any description; he will go an amazing distance for a small portion of it, using it in cooking his sun-dried biltongue, and eating it with his corn. It lies in extensive layers and sheets in the elephant's inside, and the quantity obtained from a full-grown bull, in high condition, is very great. Before it can be got at, the greater part of the intestines must be removed, and to accomplish this several men eventually enter the immense cavity of his inside, where they continue excavating with their assagais, and handing the fat to their comrades outside until all is bare; while this is going on, other parties are equally active in removing the skin and flesh from the remaining

parts of the carcass. The natives have a horrid practice on these occasions of smearing their bodies, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, with the black and clotted gore; and in this anointing they assist one another, each man taking up the fill of both his hands, and spreading it over the back and shoulders of his friend. Throughout the entire proceeding there is an incessant and deafening clamour of voices and confused sounds, the crowd jostling, wrestling, and elbowing each other, in their endeavours to force their way to the venison, while the sharp and ready assagai gleams in every hand. The angry voices and gory appearance of these naked savages, combined with their excited and frantic gestures and glistening arms, presented an effect so wild and striking, that when I first beheld the scene I contemplated it in the momentary expectation of beholding one half of the gathering turn their weapons against the other.

The trunk and feet are considered delicacies, and a detachment of men are employed on these; the latter are amputated at the fetlock joint, and the trunk, which at the base is about two feet in thickness, is cut into convenient lengths. Trunk and feet are then baked, preparatory to their removal to headquarters. This is done as follows:—A party, provided with sharp pointed sticks, dig a hole in the ground for each foot and a portion of the trunk; the hole is about two feet deep, and a yard in width, and the excavated earth is embanked around the margin. This being completed, they collect an immense quantity of dry branches and trunks of trees, of which there is always a profusion scattered around, having been broken by elephants in former years; these they pile above the holes to the height of eight or nine feet, and then set fire to the heap. When these strong fires have burnt down, and the whole of the wood is reduced to ashes, the holes and the surrounding earth are heated in a high degree. Ten or twelve men then stand round the pit, and rake out the ashes with a pole about sixteen feet in length, having a hook at the end; they relieve one another in quick succession, each man running in for a few seconds, pitching the pole to his comrade and retreating, the heat being so intense that it is scarcely to be endured. When all the ashes are thus

cleared out over the bank of earth, a foot and a portion of the trunk are lifted by two athletic men, and placed in the hole. The pole is then used, and with it they shove in the heated bank of earth upon the foot, shoving and raking until it is completely buried; the hot embers are then raked into a heap above the foot, another bonfire is kindled over each, and by the time this has burnt down, the enormous foot or trunk will be found to be equally baked throughout its inmost parts. It is then taken out of the ground with pointed sticks, well beaten, and scraped with an assagai, whereby adhering particles of sand are got rid of; the outside is then pared off, and the foot transfixed with a sharp stake for convenience of carriage.

The feet thus cooked are excellent, as is also the trunk, which very much resembles buffalo's tongue. In raking the sand or earth on the foot the natives are careful not to put the red-hot embers in with it, for they would burn and destroy the meat, whereas the sand or earth protects it, imparting an even and steady heat. When the natives have cut up the elephant, and removed the large masses of flesh, &c., to their respective temporary kraals, they sit down for a little to rest and draw their breath, and for a short time smoking and snuffing are largely indulged in.

The Bechuana pipe is of a very primitive description, differing from any I had ever seen. When they wish to smoke they moisten a spot of earth, not being particular whence they obtain the water; into this earth they insert a green twig, bent into a semicircle, both ends protruding. They then knead the moist earth down with their knuckles on the twig, which they work backwards and forwards until a hole is established, when the twig is withdrawn, and one end of the aperture is enlarged with the fingers, so as to form a bowl to contain the tobacco. The pipe being thus finished and ready for immediate use, tobacco is introduced and lighted, the smoker drops on his knees, and, resting on the palms of his hands, brings his lips in contact with the mud at the small end of the hole, and inhales the grateful fumes. Large volumes of smoke are emitted through the nostrils, while a copious flow of tears from the eyes of the

smoker evinces the pleasure he enjoys. One of these pipes will serve a large party, who replenish the bowl and relieve one another in succession.

The natives, having rested, once more devote their attention to the flesh, which they make into biltongue, cutting it into thin strips from six to twenty feet in length; these strips are of the breadth and thickness of a man's two fingers. When this has been done, they sally forth with their tomahawks, and cut down a number of poles of two sorts, for uprights and cross-pieces, the former being eight feet long, and forked at one end. These are set in the ground, the cross-poles resting on the forks, adorned with endless garlands of the raw meat, which is left to hang in the sun for two or three days, at the expiration of which time it will have lost much of its weight, and be stiff and easily carried. They then remove the biltongue from the poles, and, folding it together, make it up into bundles, which are strongly lashed and secured with long strips of the tough inner bark of the thorny mimosa. Their work in the forest is now completed, and, each man placing one bundle on his head, and slinging several others across his shoulders, returns to his wife and family.

The appearance which the flesh of a single elephant exhibits when reduced to strips and suspended from the poles is truly surprising. When the skull of my elephant was ready for the axe, Mutchuisho caused a party to hew out the tusks for me—a work of great labour, and requiring considerable skill. In the present instance it was clumsily executed, the natives hacking and injuring the ivory in removing the bone with their little tomahawks; in consequence I invariably afterwards performed the task myself, using superior American hatchets, which I had provided expressly for the purpose. When the tusks had been extracted I saddled up, and started for camp, accompanied by my after-riders and a party of the natives bearing the ivory, with a supply of baked foot and trunk and a portion of the flesh; those who remained behind had appropriated all the rest, and when I left them they were quarrelling over the remnant of the skull, the marrowy bones of which were in high demand—they fought for every chip as

it flew from the axe, and chewed it raw. On our way to camp we passed through the kraal of the Bakalahari, situated in the mountain range. In the valleys they had formed considerable gardens, in which corn and water-melons were extensively grown ; I was right glad to reach my comfortable camp, and get a bowl of coffee

On the evening of the 26th men kept pouring into camp heavily laden with the flesh of the elephant, a large part of which was for Sicomy : they halted with me for the night, and resumed their march in the morning.

CHAPTER XVI.

**ELEPHANT-SPOORING WITH THE NATIVES — BULL-ELEPHANT SLAIN —
MY INTERPRETER DISMISSED — A LIONESS BAGGED AT ONE SHOT.**

On the 27th of July I resolved to move my waggons farther east, and informed the waggon-drivers of my intention: they however raised many objections, and all but gave me a direct refusal. As I was ignorant of the position of the watering-places, and knew well that Isaac would not assist me in discovering them, I deemed it prudent in the first instance to make an excursion in that direction on horseback. I accordingly stowed some ammunition and a washing-rod in my old game-bag (to the inside of which, by the by, adhered a goodly coating of the scales of grilse and salmon, along with sundry speckled and blood stained feathers of the grouse and partridge), and having made bread and ground coffee sufficient for three days' consumption, I ordered two of my men to be ready to accompany me next morning. My interpreter's countenance never lacked a scowl; and, instead of forwarding my views, he actively employed his energies in sowing dissension between me and the natives, and inciting mutiny among my Hottentots. I discovered also that he had invariably deceived me and carefully concealed from me the districts where elephants most abounded, and I began to think that, in justice to myself, it was high time that he should be ignominiously dismissed my service.

On the 28th, as I was breakfasting, natives arrived and reported fresh spoor within a mile of camp. I therefore resolved to defer for the present the trip I had determined upon; but it so happened that this spoor led me in that direction, and was the means of introducing me to a succession of fine hunting-districts, throughout which elephant and rhinoceros were abundant. Everything being ready, I proceeded

on the tracks, accompanied by after-riders and about a hundred of the Bamangwato men (fresh parties having joined me), and found the spoor was that of a small troop of cow elephants. Mutchuishi and his party took it up in a masterly manner, and went along at a rapid pace all day, with scarcely a check, until we found the elephants. At first it led us through a gorge in the mountains, which I mentioned as having rounded on the 24th; and after this we followed it in an easterly course, skirting the base of the mountain chain. The country increased in beauty as we advanced; and, having followed the spoor some hours, it led us into a new variety of country, and, as I fancied, into a new climate. Here large trees were abundant, and the grass and leaves much greener than in the country we had left behind; we crossed the gravelly beds of two periodical rivers, and in one I observed the recent spoor of a herd of bull elephants deeply imprinted in the sand. This day the wind, which had for weeks been cold and blighting, blowing off the icebergs of the Southern Ocean, shifted to the north-east, and breathed warm and balmy upon us.

As we advanced, the passage of elephants became more and more apparent on the trees and in the earth, and late in the afternoon we reached ground where a large herd of cows had fed that morning. Here we had a short check, when Mutchuishi rated the trackers for their negligence; and, having despatched parties to try back upon the spoor, and extended others to make casts on our right and left, he leisurely ensconced himself beneath a shady tree, and proceeded, along with several of his cronies, to enjoy the luxury of taking snuff. This important ceremony having been duly performed, they began with the utmost gravity to smooth a portion of the ground before them, preparatory to casting the mystic dice which most of the Bechuanas wear strung around their necks. These dice, which are of sundry indescribable shapes, are formed of ivory, and the Bechuanas invariably appeal to them before entering upon any subject of importance, to ascertain the probability of its ultimate success. Having unstrung the dice, which are four in number, they rattle them between their hands, and drop them on the ground, when the long-necked

old men carefully study the directions of the points, and decide the merits of the case accordingly.

In the present instance the dice spoke favourably, auguring the speedy capture of an elephant; and one of the trackers at this moment coming up, and stating that his comrades had regained the spoor, we sprang to our feet, and again held on. We had scarcely proceeded half a mile when we suddenly beheld a herd of about twelve old cow elephants, some of which were accompanied by little calves, feeding high on the side of the rocky mountain, about five hundred yards to our right; the intervening ground was a dense and almost impenetrable mass of wait-a-bit thorns, averaging twenty feet in height, every inch of which was to be dreaded as the hooks upon a "kill-devil." On perceiving the elephants we halted, and Mutchuisho despatched two men to windward, in the hope of driving them from the impracticable ground they occupied into the level forest where we stood; the elephants, however, were much too wide awake to leave their stronghold. On getting the wind of the men they tossed their trunks, and, wheeling about, held along the mountain side at a rapid pace, until they reached another jungle of thorns, from which all our efforts to dislodge them proved unavailing.

This jungle densely covered the sides and bottom of a wide semicircular basin or hollow in the mountains, and was throughout so close, that a man on foot could scarcely penetrate it. When the elephants started I rode hard after them, followed by my after-riders, and, not understanding the intentions of the elephants, we followed on through the mazes of the jungle in an elephant path, until we reached the centre of the thicket, when we suddenly found ourselves upon them; the dogs then ran in barking, when a general trumpeting, charging, and crashing in all directions took place, and, owing to the extremely dangerous nature of the ground, I was glad to beat a precipitate retreat.

Once more all was quiet; my dogs were jaded with the sun, and would not fight. Fancying that the elephants had gone ahead, and fearing to lose them, I again pushed on, holding the footpath as before, when crash came a second charge at our very elbows, and from opposite directions, accompanied

by a trumpeting which caused our ears to tingle;—we were actually in the very middle of them. The herd was extremely fierce, and, but for the dogs, not a man of us had escaped to tell the tale. Fortunately, the elephants seemed to think they intended to attack their calves, and this engrossed their whole attention; whereas, by reason of the colour of the horses on which we rode, they took us for gregarious creatures like themselves, and actually grazing our animals' haunches with their legs, left us scatheless and pursued the dogs. I seldom remember a more startling or dangerous position—it was a decided case of “De'il tak the hin'most;” spurs and jamboks were energetically plied; there was no time to select a path; so placing my head below my horse's neck and trusting to Providence, I charged through the thickest of the thorns, and presently found myself out of the way of the elephants. I know nothing which so effectually teaches a hunter the art of riding through “Vacht um bigé,” or “wait-a-bit” jungle, in an artistical manner, as hearing the trumpet of an enraged elephant about a spear's length in his wake; after a few such lessons he will have learnt to bring his breast in contact with the side of his horse's neck, his head being well under it, whereby his prominent feature will be secured, and, agitating his persuaders, he will dive through the most impracticable “wait-a-bits” with apparently as much facility as an Eton boy takes a header into the Thames at the Lion's Leap.

We got clear of the cover with very great difficulty, and gained the level forest on the lower side. By this time the natives had lined the side of the mountain above it, and were shouting and yelling in the hope of driving out the elephants; but not a man would venture in. Presently some of them came round to me, and I proposed to go in on foot, but they would not hear of it, saying that the elephants were extremely savage, and would kill me to a certainty. I then proposed that all the natives should enter the jungle in a line, and try to drive them out, but they said that no power could accomplish the point until night set in.

The animals now shifted their ground a little, forcing their way through the jungle to the higher side of the basin, so leaving the horses in charge of a native, I went round to the

line of men above. Here I commanded a fine view of the exasperated elephants, being high above them and distant about two hundred and fifty yards, and I observed that they displayed considerable cunning in their movements. Placing my rifle on a forked branch, and giving it the proper elevation, I let drive at the nearest cow, and wounded her severely; the shot reverberated through the dale, and the dogs once more ran into the midst of them, when a general charge and trumpeting ensued, that was truly terrific. They rushed after the dogs, following them up to a great distance, crashing through and upsetting the high bushy wait-a-bits and other trees like grass, and then turned and formed in two separate detachments, standing thick together; but two wicked old cows that had calves stood far out from the others, with their heads turned to us, ready to charge whatever might approach. I saw that it was extremely dangerous to attack them, but the sun was now fast sinking behind a shoulder of the mountains, so I resolved to defy all chances and enter the cover. I first, however, fired two shots at the elephants that formed the advanced piquets; both cows got it in the ribs, and finding themselves wounded, retreated to the main body, where they stood smashing the trees with rage, and, catching up volumes of red dust with their trunks, threw it in clouds above their backs. Mutchuisho and I now descended into the jungle, and crept stealthily along, listening for their breathing; they had moved to the lower side, and were standing thick together within one hundred yards of the outside. On ascertaining their position, we emerged from the cover, and followed along the outside until we were opposite them; I then stalked in within twenty yards, fired at the side of the head of the elephant that stood next to me, and before the smoke had cleared, was running for the outside of the cover at my utmost speed. The elephants held their ground; so, reloading, I again drew near, fired sharp right and left into another, and turning my back ran for it once more. Re-entering the cover a third time, I was listening which way they had gone, when, casting my eyes to the left, a noble elephant lay before me; the ball had penetrated her brain, and she had dropped dead upon the spot.

A little after this an old cow came charging after the dogs, and took up a position in the jungle close beside us; we heard her preparing for a second charge, when the natives beat a precipitate retreat, but I very rashly waited to receive her, and just as she cleared the cover let fly at her forehead. Regardless of my shot, she came down upon me at a tremendous pace, shrilly trumpeting; it was rather a near thing, for I was burdened with my rifle, rhinoceros-horn loading-rod, and my shooting-belt containing about forty rounds of ammunition. However, I was quick enough to escape her, and the instant she halted faced about, and gave her the other barrel behind the shoulder.

Night now set in, and I saw no more of the elephants; a number of them were wounded, and must have died; but I felt satisfied with the one I had secured; the natives made me more cautious than I should otherwise have been, and, had we found them at an earlier hour, I should probably have killed one half the troop. Weary and hungry, we formed our kraals and kindled fires, after which, having partaken of the elephant, I lay down to sleep.

On the 29th I sent Carollus to the waggons with instructions to bring the Bushman and all the horses, with bread, coffee, and ammunition. In the forenoon I ascended the neighbouring mountain-range, and on clearing the first ridge looked down upon a bold and romantic gorge, which here intersected it, connecting the forests on either side; far below me twined the gravelly bed of a periodical river, which in the rainy season flows in an easterly direction. In all other parts this channel was now dry, but just here, deep in the bosom of the mountains, it was covered with delicious spring water to a depth of several inches, and here the elephants had excavated sundry holes, about two feet deep, for the purpose of drinking; I descended to the water by a path they had made, and stood long contemplating the interesting spot. The bed of the river was deeply imprinted with the spoor of elephants, buffaloes, and rhinoceros, of various dates; the ravine was wide near the water, and its abrupt and rocky sides were adorned with a profusion of trees and shrubs. A little farther down, the gorge was more confined, the river

winding through huge perpendicular walls of rock, that raised their giant forms on both sides to a height of several hundred feet.

From the basis of these stupendous ramparts to the margin of the river on either side was a sloping bank, along which grew an avenue of picturesque acacias of enormous size and lofty stature, which stretched away in all their beauty to the sky; beneath these were the well-beaten paths of elephants, and the sides of the trees were well polished to the usual height from the ground. Leaving the river, I ascended the hills beyond, where I commanded a glorious prospect of the endless grey forests which reached as far as I could see over slightly undulating country, the faint blue outline of extensive mountain ranges bounding the landscape to the east. Descending from my elevated position, I discovered four bull buffaloes feeding in the valley far beneath me, but I left them undisturbed, and bent my steps towards the carcass of the elephant.

In the evening Carollus arrived, bringing the horses and ammunition, and accompanied by a large body of the natives. At an early hour on the 30th I started with Mutchuisho and a numerous retinue to search for elephants in an easterly direction, crossing the gravelly bed of the river Mahalapia about a mile below the gorge I had visited on the preceding day. In after years I renewed my acquaintance with the Mahalapia, when on the banks of the fair Limpopo, into which it empties itself several days' journey to the east. This was one of the loveliest spots I had seen in Southern Africa.

Here, in the bed of the river, we took up the spoor of a huge bull elephant, and having followed it a short distance through the verdant forest, started the old fellow, but no one saw him. One native heard him, but said he thought it was a rhinoceros; in half a minute, however, we discovered our mistake, and there ensued a general rush upon the spoor. Whistling to my dogs, they took up the scent and went ahead; but as I galloped after them, expecting every instant to behold the elephant, whose spoor I now saw beneath my horse's feet, an unlucky troop of camelopards dashed across

our path, and away went all the dogs, leaving me in the lurch just as I was upon the elephant. The trackers, however, soon came up, and we again held briskly on; but had not proceeded far when we entered upon ground so covered with fresh footmarks, that in their haste they overran the spoor we followed, for the natives always pressed upon the spooring party in spite of my remonstrances, and a long check was the result. Here, to add to my annoyance, another large herd of camelopards approached cantering up the wind, and dashed away before us. Old Mutchuisho now came up in a state of intense excitement, his watery eyes fixed on the ground, and his tongue in perpetual motion; he blew up the trackers right and left, who seemed to quail before his menacing aspect, and redoubled their energies in the doubtful pursuit. Presently, one of these, loudly smacking his "nether end," intimated that he had hit off the proper spoor. The Bechuanas use this peculiar signal to warn one another on various occasions. In spooring game it was invariably practised; and when a line of men were threading the mazes of the forest, each of them apprized the man behind him of any rough sticks, stones, or thorns which lay across the path, by the same friendly gesture.

We resumed the spoor at a rapid pace, with a widely extended front, and presently I heard on my left the joyous signal of the presence, "Klow;" cantering in that direction, I came full in sight of an enormous bull elephant, marching along at a free majestic pace, and in another minute was riding by his side. The horse which I bestrode on this occasion was the Cow, one of my best and steadiest shooting-horses; and the forest being tolerably suited for the sport, I was not long in finishing the elephant. I fired thirteen bullets at him, and on receiving the last two shots sharp right and left behind the shoulder, he made a rapid charge, and disappeared among the trees. Cautiously following, I found him lying in an upright position, with his two fore-legs stretched out in front of him; fancying he was still alive, I fired both barrels at his ear, but though the balls rang loudly on his venerable head, the noble elephant heeded not their force—his life had departed.

His tusks were much worn down, having been broken (probably in rocky ground) in former years. Mutchuishi appeared in the highest glee, and despatched messengers through the gorge in the mountains, the name of which is Sabié, to advise Sicomy of the death of the elephant. The chase had led me to within rifle range of the three veteran acacias I had admired in the morning; here I made a bower beneath a shady wait-a-bit thorn-tree, and encircled my fire with a hedge of the same.

I resolved to bring on my waggons to the pass of Sabié, where there was sufficient water for all my cattle, my intention being to continue hunting through the forests to the eastward, returning to Bamangwato by a different route. I however foresaw that I must give Isaac his dismissal before proposing such a measure; and accordingly rode to camp on the 1st day of August, and informed him that his valuable services could be dispensed with. I then explained to the Hottentots my future course, and having directed them to inspan and follow me to Sabié, under guidance of the natives, mounted the Old Grey, and started to return to my bower on the bank of the Mahalapia. The country between Letlochee and Sabié was almost impracticable for waggons, the forest in many parts being extremely dense, and sundry difficult ravines intervening. I did not therefore expect my people to reach their destination till the afternoon of the following day, nor did they appear until the evening of the third. The Hottentots did not seem at all to fancy the idea of following me farther, but finding there was no choice, they submitted to their fate.

At an early hour the following day I started with about sixty natives, and as we were threading the fresh spoor of two bull elephants, the dogs dashed up wind on some scent, and the forest was awakened with their music. Imagining they had found the elephants, I pressed through the thickets at my utmost speed, and as I approached heard a hoarse noise like the voice of one; but my eye sought in vain for his lofty back towering above the wait-a-bits. I then fancied it must be a buffalo, but on rounding the thick bush, behind which my dogs were barking, I came full in sight of an angry lioness,

which stood lashing her tail, and growling fiercely at the dogs. The moment I saw her I shouted to the natives, who were pressing forward, that it was "Tao,"* when a headlong retreat was the result, a number of them taking refuge in the trees; I then dismounted, and, advancing to within twenty yards of the lioness, waited till she turned her head, when I fired at the back of her neck, and stretched her lifeless on the ground: the bullet passed along the spine, and, penetrating the skull, rested in her brain. It was a long time before any of the natives would venture to approach, and, when they did, their astonishment knew no bounds at beholding their formidable enemy so easily disposed of.

At an early hour on the 3rd I again held east with a large party, and took up spoor which led us in a south-easterly course, first through a verdant forest, and then over an extremely rugged ridge that stretched into another from the mountain chain. Beyond this ridge was an extensive and almost impracticable jungle of wait-a-bit thorns, and in a few minutes the dogs, winding some elephants, ran in upon them and gave tongue; a crashing and trumpeting ensued, and all the natives shouted out "Machoa" (signifying white man). With the utmost difficulty I obtained a view of one of the elephants, but perceiving it was a small cow, and knowing that if I shot her the natives would not take up spoor again for at least a couple of days, I reserved my fire; the dogs, jaded by the sun, returned to my call, and we left the elephants to their own devices.

A few minutes afterwards we discovered the fresh spoor of two enormous bull elephants, and having followed it a short distance, came upon some dung, the outside of which the sun had not yet dried, indicating that the animals were at that moment in the same valley as ourselves. Two young men were despatched in haste to ascend the beetling crags of the adjacent mountain, from which they could obtain a bird's-eye view of the surrounding country. The main body of the natives squatted on the ground, and I sat down to eat some bread and elephant, and take a drink of water. I had scarcely

* "Tao," the native name for lion.

time to finish my luncheon when the men returned breathless with excitement to report that they had discovered the elephants browsing in a grove within a quarter of a mile of us, and on clearing a bushy tree, under cover of which I had approached, I beheld two of the finest elephants in Africa standing broadside on within fifty yards of me. The largest had one of his tusks broken short off by the lip; I therefore chose his comrade, which carried a very long and perfect pair. I had hard work with this elephant, and the sun was under before I laid him low.

On the 4th I joined my waggons, which were drawn up in the romantic gorge of Sabié, and as near as might be to the water. Here I found that drunkenness and disorder had prevailed during my absence; my chests were broken open, the cap-tents of both my waggons most seriously damaged, oxen had been lost, and horses ridden off their legs in search of them. Mr. Kleinboy had been the chief delinquent, and under the influence of the liquor, and anxious to distinguish himself, had resolved to try his hand in hunting the giraffe. Mounting Colesberg, my favourite steed, and armed with one of my 80-guinea rifles, he had sped through the forest he knew not whither, and eventually becoming bewildered, lost himself entirely. In this condition he was fortunately discovered by a party of Bakalahari, who conducted him safely to camp.

I now knew how to make myself tolerably comfortable in the field, and from this date seldom went in quest of elephants without the following impedimenta, viz., a large blanket, folded and secured before my saddle, and in two leather sacks, carried by the natives, for which service I remunerated them with beads, were packed a flannel shirt, warm trousers and a woollen nightcap, spare ammunition and washing-rod, coffee, bread, sugar, pepper and salt, dried meat, a wooden bowl, and a teaspoon. They also carried my coffee-kettle, two calabashes of water, two American axes, and two sickles to cut grass for my bed and for my horses. My after-rider carried extra ammunition and a spare rifle; my own personal appointments consisted of a wide-awake hat, secured under my chin by "rheimpys," a coarse shirt, sometimes a kilt, sometimes a

pair of buckskin knee-breeches, and a pair of "veldtschoens," or home-made shoes. I entirely discarded coat, waistcoat, and neckcloth, and always hunted with my arms bare; my heels were armed with a pair of powerful persuaders, and from my left wrist depended by a double rheimpy an equally persuasive sea-cow jambok.

Around my waist I wore two leathern girdles. The smaller of these discharged the duty of suspenders, and from it on my left side depended a plaited rheimpy, eight inches in length, forming a loop in which dangled my powerful loading-rod, made out of a solid piece of rhinoceros horn. The larger girdle was my shooting-belt; this was of broad leather, on which were fastened four separate compartments made of otter-skin, with flaps to button over of the same material; the first of these held my percussion-caps, the second a large powder-flask, the third and fourth, which had divisions in them, contained balls and patches, two sharp clasp-knives, a compass, and flint and steel. In this belt I also had a loading-mallet, of rhinoceros-horn; this and the powder-flask were each secured to the belt by long rheimpys. Last, but not least, I usually carried in my right hand my double-barrelled two-grooved rifle, my favourite weapon. This, however, I subsequently found was not the proper tool for a mounted man, especially when quick loading is necessary; for when a two-grooved rifle has been once or twice discharged, the bullet requires considerable power to drive it home, which is extremely inconvenient. Nothing can surpass a double-barrelled smooth bore for practical utility. I consider that no regiment in the service was more effectually armed than my own old corps, the Cape Mounted Rifles, who were furnished with short double-barrelled smooth-bored pieces, carrying a ball of twelve to the pound, and having stout percussion-locks; a weapon of this description is the best with which to war against the larger game of Africa. To accelerate loading, the hunter ought to have his balls stitched up in their patches, and well greased before taking the field; I found this a great convenience, and after a little practice could load and fire in the saddle, although riding in rough ground at a swingeing gallop.

On the evening of the 12th a herald from Sicomy stood up in the centre of my camp, and loudly proclaimed it was the king's orders that on the following day every man should return to head-quarters; and accordingly all hands shouldered their baggage and forsook me. I could not rightly divine the cause of this mysterious command, but attributed it to some plotting scheme of Isaac's, who I understand was living with Sicomy. I saw very plainly that Mutchuisho was against the move, and, in consideration of his services, begged his acceptance of several considerable presents, and also sent some to the king. On parting, Mutchuisho promised shortly to return, and informed me that he had instructed a party of Bakalalari to assist me in my hunting during his absence.

CHAPTER XVII.

MARCH FROM SABIÉ — GLORIOUS ELEPHANT SHOOTING — SABIÉ ANTELOPE — TWO-GROOVED RIFLE BURSTS — DEATH OF COLESBERG.

I REMAINED at Sabié, hunting elephant and rhinoceros with various success, till the morning of the 22nd of August, when I started for Mangmaluky. On the march I shot a white rhinoceros in the act of charging down a rocky face, which, pitching upon his head, described a most tremendous somersault, coming down among the stones and bushes with overwhelming violence.

On the 27th we came upon a large extent of burning grass, which the Bakalahari kindle to make the young herbage spring up with greater facility, and during the day discovered a herd of bull elephants quietly browsing on the side of a hill, two hundred yards to windward of us.

I started them with an unearthly yell, and, selecting the finest, fired both barrels behind his shoulder, when he instantly turned upon me, and in his impetuous career charged head foremost against a large bushy tree, which he sent flying before him high in the air, coming down at the same moment violently on his knees. He thus met the raging fire, and wheeled to the right-about.

I followed, loading and firing as fast as could be, sometimes at the head, sometimes behind the shoulder, until the elephant's fore-quarters were severely punished, notwithstanding which he continued to hold stoutly on, leaving the grass and branches of the forest scarlet in his wake.

On one occasion he endeavoured to escape by charging desperately amid the thickest of the flames; but this did not avail him, for I was soon alongside, and blazed away at him until I began to think he was ball-proof. Having fired thirty-five rounds with my two-grooved rifle, I opened upon him with the Dutch six-pounder; and when forty bullets

had perforated his hide, he began for the first time to show symptoms of exhaustion. Poor old fellow! it was now all over with him; so I resolved to expend no further ammunition. Throughout the chase he repeatedly cooled his body with large quantities of water, which he ejected from his trunk over his back and sides; and just as the pangs of death came over him, he stood trembling violently beside a thorny tree, and kept pouring water into his mouth until he died, when he pitched heavily forward, with the whole weight of his fore-quarters resting on the points of his tusks. He lay in this posture for several seconds, but the amazing pressure of the carcass was more than the head was able to support; he had fallen with his head so short under him that the tusks received little assistance from his legs. Something must give way. The strain on the mighty tusks was fair; they did not, therefore, yield; but the portion of his head in which the tusk was imbedded, extending a long way above the eye, yielded and burst with a muffled crash. The tusk was thus free, and turned right round in his head, so that a man could draw it out, and the carcass fell over and rested on its side. This was a very first-rate elephant, and the tusks he carried were long and perfect.

On the 28th I saddled up, and rode for the waggons, and at an early hour on the 29th, while cantering along through the forest, came suddenly in full view of one of the loveliest quadrupeds which graces this fair creation—an old buck of the sable antelope, the rarest and most beautiful animal in Africa. It is large and powerful, partaking considerably of the nature of the ibex; its back and sides are of glossy black, beautifully contrasting with the belly, which is white as driven snow. The horns are upwards of three feet in length, and bend strongly back with a bold sweep, reaching nearly to the haunches.

This animal was first discovered by Captain Harris, of the Bombay Engineers, in 1837. The one now before me was the first I had seen; and I shall never forget the sensations I experienced on beholding a sight so thrilling to the sportsman's eye; he stood with a small troop of pallahs right in our path, and had unfortunately detected us before we saw him. Shouting to my pack, I galloped after him; but the day was close and warm, and the dogs had lost their spirit.

My horse being an indifferent one, soon lost ground, and the beautiful creature, gaining a rocky ridge, was quickly beyond my reach, and vanished for ever from my view. I sought in vain to close my eyelids that night, for the image of the sable antelope was still before me.

On the 31st we held for Towannie, a strong fountain in the gravelly bed of a periodical river; and here I came full in view of the tallest and largest bull elephant I had ever seen. He stood broadside to me, at upwards of one hundred yards, and, halting my horse, I fired at his shoulder, and secured him with a single shot. The ball caught him high upon the shoulder-blade, rendering him instantly dead lame.

I resolved to devote a short time to the contemplation of this noble elephant before I should lay him low. It was, indeed, a striking sight; and as I gazed upon the stupendous veteran of the forest, I thought of the red deer which I loved to follow on my own native hills, and felt that, though the Fates had driven me to a distant land, it was a good exchange which I had made, for I was now a chief over boundless forests, which yielded unspeakably more noble and exciting sport.

Having admired the elephant for some time, I made some experiments for vulnerable points, and, approaching very near, fired several bullets at different parts of his enormous skull. These did not seem to affect him in the slightest; he only acknowledged the shots by a "salaam-like" movement of his trunk, with the point of which he gently touched the wound with a striking and peculiar action. Surprised and shocked to find that I was only tormenting and prolonging the sufferings of the noble beast, which bore his trials with such dignified composure, I resolved to finish the proceeding with all possible despatch; accordingly I opened fire upon him behind the shoulder, and fired six shots with the two-grooved, which must eventually have proved mortal, but as yet he evinced no visible distress; after this I fired three shots at the same part with the Dutch six-pounder. Large tears now trickled from his eyes, which he slowly shut and opened; his colossal frame quivered convulsively, and, falling on his side, he expired. The tusks of this elephant were beautifully arched, and the heaviest I had yet met with, averaging 90 lbs. weight apiece.

In case any fair reader may misinterpret my motive for making experiments to find out the most vulnerable points, I beg them to remark that my object was *not* to torture the animal, but to put an end to its life and pain in the quickest manner possible—I had often lamented having to inflict so many wounds on the noble animals before they fell.

On the 1st of September we saddled our steeds and steered our course for Mangmaluky. Cantering along the base of a mountain range, I started two klipspringers, which went bounding up the hill-side with the elasticity of an India-rubber ball, selecting for their path the most prominent points of the large fragments of rock. I shot one of these, being the first of the species I had killed, though in subsequent years, while hunting the sable antelope, I secured a number of fine specimens. This darling little antelope frequents precipitous rocky hills and mountains, and bounds along over the broken masses of rock with the most extraordinary ease and agility. It may often be seen perched, like a chamois, on the sharp pinnacle of some rock or stone, with its four feet drawn close up together. Its hoofs are different from those of other antelopes, being suited solely for rocky ground, and are so formed that the weight of the animal rests upon their tips. On looking down a precipice I have often seen two or three of this interesting quadruped lying together on a large flat mass of rock, and sheltered from the power of the noonday sun by the friendly shade of some sandal-wood or other mountain-tree. They are about half the size of the Scottish roebuck, whose winter coat the texture of their hair very much resembles, but it is stiffer, and of a yellower colour.

On the afternoon of the 2nd, as I was sitting in my waggon writing up my journal, a koodoo charged past me, closely followed by a pack of hungry wild dogs, which maintained their position, although all my kennel joined them in the chase, and, holding on, the wild dogs killed the koodoo just as it reached the water where my oxen drank. On the 3rd I followed the spoor of four bull elephants for many miles. I was fortunate enough to secure the finest, after a severe and dangerous conflict, during which, on three separate occasions, I narrowly escaped destruction. The sun was powerful throughout the

day, and summer was rapidly advancing. The trees were budding and putting forth leaves, which loaded the passing breeze with a sweet and balmy fragrance. In low-lying districts the young grass had already commenced to shoot forth its tender blades, and all nature seemed to pant for the grateful rains to robe herself in her mantle of summer verdure.

In the evening I laved in the fountain my sunburnt eyes, which were sore and irritated from the constant strain attendant upon spooring. As the sun went down, the number of the feathered tribe that visited the fountains was truly surprising: turtle-doves and extremely small long-tailed pigeons were most abundant. I also observed four distinct varieties of partridge; and guinea-fowls attended in flocks of from twenty to sixty. On the 4th, I was occupied, from early dawn until the sun was under, in cleaning the skull and hewing out the tusks of my bull elephant, and on the following day returned to camp with a party of Bakalahari bearing them upon their shoulders. On the 6th I again took the field with about forty natives, and falling in with two white rhinoceroses, one of which carried an unusually long horn, was induced to give her chace, and by hard riding overtook and finished her with four shots behind the shoulder.

In the afternoon I was engaged for three or four hours combating with a vicious elephant, which I finished with thirty-five bullets in the shoulder, in an impracticable jungle of wait-a-bit thorns. The barrel of my rifle burst with a terrific explosion at the last round, sending the locks and half the stock flying right and left, and very nearly sending me to "the land of the leal." I, however, received no further damage than a slight burn on my left arm, and the loss for many days of the use of my left ear, a fragment of the barrel having whizzed close past it. The loss of my trusty two-grooved rifle, in such a remote corner of the world, was irreparable; it was my mainstay; and as I thought of the many services it had performed for me in the hour of need, I felt quite overcome. I still had, however, the double-barrelled Moore and Purday rifles, carrying sixteen to the pound, and set about casting hardened bullets to suit them; but I had now the mortification to discover that all the solder I had brought with me had

mysteriously vanished by some underhand transaction betwixt my followers and Sicomy. I was thus reduced to the extremity of melting the contents of my old military canteen to harden the bullets, viz., the tray of the snuffers, the spoons, candlesticks, teapots, and two drinking-cups, which I found were admirably suited for this purpose.

In the evening I had the pleasure to behold my old friend Mutchuisho walk into my camp, followed by a numerous party of the natives. He seemed glad to see me, and we at once arranged to make an expedition to the eastward on the following day. Accordingly, on the morning of the 9th, we continued our course till sun-down without finding fresh spoor, when we halted for the night. On the morrow I again held on through boundless forests, till I found myself in a country which I had not hitherto visited.

In the afternoon we reached a small vley, where five first-rate bull-elephants had drunk on the preceding evening. Johannus and I went off on the spoor at a rapid pace, but I had not the slightest expectation of overtaking them, for our horses began to evince symptoms of distress; and, despairing of success, I was just going to pull up, when I heard Johannus exclaim, "Sir, sir, dar stand illa!" and, looking before me, I beheld five enormous old bull elephants walking slowly along. They seemed heated by the pace at which they had retreated, and were now refreshing themselves with large volumes of water, which, having taken into their capacious stomachs, they showered back upon their bodies with their trunks. I had never before obtained so satisfactory a view of a herd of bulls; they really looked wondrous large. It is a heart-stirring sight to behold one bull elephant; but when five gigantic old fellows are walking in front of you, and you feel that you can ride up and vanquish whichever you fancy, it is so overpoweringly exciting that it almost takes a man's breath away. But it was now near sunset, and too late to part with any breath for a single moment. Spurring my horse, therefore, I was in the middle of them, closely followed by Johannus, and in a twinkling the finest bull had received the contents of the Moore and Purday behind the shoulder. On receiving the twenty-fourth shot, at duelling distance, the poor fellow

stood trembling violently for several seconds, and then fell heavily forward on his tusks, after which he rolled over and rested on his side.

On the morrow I went in quest of another herd, accompanied by Mutchuisho and a small party, and on the second day came up with them and bagged an old bull whose tusks were the stoutest I had ever seen.

After a most weary and toilsome spoor of two days I cast loose the steeds at earliest dawn on the 13th, and soon after we heard the hoarse cry of an elephant within half a mile of us.

It is extraordinary how soon the mind accustoms itself to everything, good or bad. There I sat eating my breakfast, with a troop of princely elephants feeding within a few minutes' ride of me, with as much indifference as if I were going woodcock-shooting—certainly not half so anxious about the matter as I usually was when taking my breakfast on a fine May morning, with a southerly wind, before starting to fish my native rivers. This indifference was probably owing to the reduced state of my system from improper diet and constant toil. The troop was composed of three old bulls, two of which carried stumpy and broken tusks.

On a subsequent evening I bowled over another elephant with a splendid pair of tusks, and returned to camp, where, to my utter horror, I found my favourite Colesberg dangerously ill. Guessing what it was, I bled him freely, but to no purpose. Finding him worse on the morrow, I bled him again, but before midday he died in great pain, and shortly after life had departed a copious discharge of white foam issued from his nostrils, by which I knew that his illness was the African distemper. This bitter scourge of the African sportsman prevails throughout every district of the interior during the greater part of the year. At no season is the hunter's stud exempt from its ravages; it is most prevalent, however, during the summer months, generally commencing with the early rains. There are various opinions among the horse-breeders of the colony regarding its prevention and cure, but notwithstanding all that has been said and done, the subject still remains wrapped in utter mystery. The distemper rarely visits a country adjacent to the sea, and is also unusual in

mountain districts. In proportion as the traveller advances from the sea, so will he find the sickness prevalent. In all years it is not alike, and every fifth or seventh it ravages the farms on the frontier, where a farmer often loses from fifty to a hundred horses in a single season. Bleeding is generally believed to act as a preventive. When a horse is attacked with it, he almost invariably comes up to his master's waggon, or the door of his dwelling-place, as if soliciting assistance in his distress, and when led away to a distance, unless he be secured, the poor animal will continue to return to his master's dwelling. This was the case with my much-lamented free and fiery Colesberg.

I had also the mortification to observe that the "Immense Brute" exhibited similar symptoms, on which I had him caught and bled him freely. About midday I trekked till sundown in a south-westerly course, steering for the mountains of Bamangwato.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TURN MY WAGGONS TOWARDS THE COLONY — ELEPHANT-SHOOTING —
RAINY SEASON COMMENCES — LEAVE THE LAND OF ELEPHANTS.

HAVING so far succeeded in the object of my expedition, and both my waggons being now heavily laden with the tusks of elephants, a large collection of the spoils of the chase, and a number of other interesting curiosities, I at length resolved once more to turn my face towards the distant dwellings of my countrymen; but on the 23rd of September, though harassed in my mind, and fearful of losing all my horses if I did not speedily depart, I yielded to the persuasions of Mutchuisho, and once more took the field to follow the spoor of two bull elephants, reported to have visited a distant fountain. Before starting, I gave Johannus my fleam, and a hasty lesson in the art of bleeding, with instructions to bleed copiously any of my stud evincing the slightest indications of distemper. We held an easterly course, and at sundown on the second day I bagged a white rhinoceros and a fine old bull elephant, beside whose carcase we bivouacked as usual.

On the forenoon of the 25th I held for camp, accompanied by only one attendant. It was a glorious day, with a cloudy sky, and the wind blew fresh off the Southern Ocean. Having ridden some miles in a northerly direction, and crossed the broad and gravelly bed of a periodical river, we entered an extensive grove of picturesque camel-dorn trees, clad in young foliage of the most delicious green. On gaining a gentle eminence about a mile beyond this grove, I looked forth upon an extensive hollow and beheld two first-rate old bull elephants. This was a fine look-out, the country appeared to be favourable for an attack, and I was followed by Wolf and Bonteberg, both tried and serviceable dogs with elephants. Owing to the pace at which I had been riding, both dogs and horses were out of

breath, so I resolved not to attack immediately, but to follow slowly, holding them in view.

The elephants were proceeding right up the wind, and the distance betwixt us was about five hundred yards. I advanced quietly towards them, and had gone about half way, when, casting my eyes to my right, I beheld a whole herd of tearing bull elephants standing thick together on a wooded eminence within three hundred yards of me; these elephants were almost to leeward. Now the correct thing to do was to kill the best in each troop, which I accomplished in the following manner:—I gave the large herd my wind, upon which they instantly tossed their trunks aloft, “a moment snuffed the tainted gale,” and, wheeling about, charged right down wind, crashing through the jungle in dire alarm. My object was to endeavour to select the finest bull, and hunt him to a distance from the other troop before I should commence to play upon his hide. Stirring my steed, therefore, I galloped forward, and in the wake of the retreating elephants, tracing their course by the red dust which they raised and left in clouds behind them.

Presently emerging into an open glade, I came full in view of the mighty game; it was a truly glorious sight: there were, with one exception, nine or ten full-grown, first-rate bulls, and all of them carried very long, heavy, and perfect tusks. Their first panic being over, they reduced their pace to a free, majestic walk, and followed one leader in a long line, exhibiting an appearance so grand and striking that any description, however brilliant, must fail to convey to the mind of the reader an adequate idea of the reality. Increasing my pace, I shot alongside the elephants, at the same time riding well out, the better to obtain an inspection of their tusks. It was a difficult matter to decide which of the herd I should select, for every one of them seemed larger than his neighbour; but, on account of the extraordinary size and beauty of his tusks, I eventually pitched upon a patriarchal bull (which, as is usual with the heaviest, brought up the rear), and separated him from his comrades, driving him in a northerly direction. There is a peculiar art in driving an elephant in the particular course which you may fancy, and, simple as it may seem, it nevertheless requires the hunter to know what he is about. It is

widely different from driving in an eland, which also demands judicious riding: if you approach too near your elephant or shout to him, a furious charge will certainly ensue; whilst, on the other hand, if you give him too wide a berth, the chances are that you will lose him in the jungle, which, notwithstanding his size, is a very simple matter, and, if once lost sight of, it is more than an even bet that the hunter will never again obtain a glimpse of him. The ground being favourable, Kleinboy called to me to commence the attack, remarking very prudently that he was probably making for some jungle of wait-a-bits, where we might eventually lose him; I continued, however, to reserve my fire until I had hunted him to what I considered a safe distance from the two old fellows we first discovered.

At length closing with him, I dared him to charge, which he instantly did in fine style, and as he pulled up in his career I yelled to him a note of bold defiance. It was thus the fight began, and, the ground being still favourable, I opened fire, and in about a quarter of an hour twelve of my bullets were lodged in his fore quarters. He now evinced strong symptoms of approaching dissolution, and stood catching up the dust with the point of his trunk and throwing it in clouds above and around him. At such a moment it is extremely dangerous to approach an elephant on foot, for although nearly dead, he can muster strength to make a charge with great impetuosity. Being anxious to finish him, I dismounted from my steed, and, availing myself of the cover of a gigantic *nwana*-tree, whose diameter was not less than ten feet, I got within twenty yards, and gave it him sharp right and left behind the shoulder. These two shots wound up the proceeding; for on receiving them he backed stern foremost into the cover, and soon after I heard him fall over heavily; but, alas! the sound was accompanied by a sharp crack, and, on running forward, I found him lying dead, with his lovely tusk, which lay under, snapped through the middle.

I did not tarry long for an inspection of the elephant, but, mounting my horse, at once set off to follow on the spoor of the two old fellows I had first seen, and had not gone far when casting my eyes to the right, I beheld within a quarter of a

mile of me a herd of eight or ten cow elephants, with calves, peacefully browsing on a sparsely wooded knoll. Leaving these ladies to enjoy their dinner, we followed the spoor at a rapid pace, the native who led the party being the best tracker in Bamangwato; and I was glad to see that the elephants had not been alarmed, for their course was strewn with branches which they had chewed as they slowly fed along. At length we emerged into an open glade, and clearing a grove of thorny mimosas, came full in sight of one of them; cautiously advancing, I next discovered his comrade, standing in a thicket of low wait-a-bits, within a hundred and fifty yards of me, they were both first-rate old bulls, and the first displayed to my delighted eyes a pair of the most beautiful and perfect tusks.

Regaining my horse, from which I had dismounted, I advanced towards this elephant, which, when within forty yards of me, walked slowly on before me, his huge ears gently flapping, and entirely concealing me from his view. Inclining to the left, I slightly increased my pace, and walked past him within sixty yards, upon which he observed me for the first time; but probably mistaking "Sunday" for a hartebeest, he continued his course with his eye upon me, but showed no symptoms of alarm. The natives had requested me to endeavour, if possible, to hunt him towards the water, which lay in a northerly direction, and this I resolved to do; having advanced a little, I gave him my wind, when he instantly backed into the bushes, holding his head high and right to me. Riding slowly on, I described a semicircle to obtain a shot at his shoulder, and, halting my horse, fired from the saddle; he got it in the shoulder-blade, and, as I silently continued my course, he still stood gazing at me in utter astonishment. Two of my dogs were now slipped by the natives, and in another moment they were barking around him. I shouted loudly to encourage them and perplex the elephant, who seemed puzzled to know what to think of us, and, shrilly trumpeting, charged headlong after Bill and Flam; again, he backed into the thicket, charged once more, and then made clean away, holding the course I wanted. But I was not long in coming up with him, and, running in, gave him two fine shots behind the shoulder; the dogs also gave tongue, and the consequence was

a terrific charge, his tormentors at once making for their master, and bringing the elephant right upon me. I had no time to gain my saddle, but ran for my life; the dogs, fortunately, took after Sunday, who, alarmed by the trumpeting, dashed frantically away, and, though in the midst of a most dangerous affray, I could not help laughing.

Recovering my horse, I returned to the wounded elephant, and plainly saw that he was dying; but I continued firing to hasten his death, and when that took place, had the intense mortification to find, on going up to him, that one of his matchless tusks was broken short off by the lip. This was a glorious day's sport: I had bagged in one afternoon probably the two finest bull elephants in Bamangwato, and, had it not been for the destruction of the two largest pair of tusks I had obtained that season, my triumph would have been great and unalloyed.

At an early hour on the following day, leaving Kleinboy with the natives to look after the ivory, I set out with two men, to show them where the other elephant lay, and thence continue my way to camp.

The weather had hitherto been favourable, little rain having fallen since I first entered the country. At length, however, the wet season was at hand, and we were constantly visited by the most appalling thunderstorms, accompanied by torrents of rain, which filled the hitherto dry nullahs and gravelly watercourses with running streams, and converted the parched forest and arid plains into blossoming verdure and grassy meads. While hunting, I was often overtaken by the rain, and on these occasions compelled the natives to erect for me a bothy, or temporary hut; it was a duty they often were reluctant to perform, but I invariably managed to gain my point by explaining to them that, if my guns and powder were exposed to the wet, they would die, for I could kill no more elephants for them.

When attended by a large party, the erection of a good substantial hut was a simple and easy proceeding, and was accomplished in the following manner:—One party, armed with tomahawks, went in quest of long forked poles, which they cut in lengths of ten feet; a second party gathered green brushwood, and the third collected a large quantity of long dry

grass, which they tore out of the ground by the roots. The poles were set up in a circular position, the forked ends meeting and resting against one another overhead, then the brushwood was tightly interlaced between the poles, leaving a small low aperture for the door, and the fabric was effectually thatched with the long grass, the conical summit being usually crowned either with an enormous ear or a portion of the hide of an elephant. Such was my habitation during the remainder of this and all the subsequent seasons that I hunted among the Bechuana tribes. But it often happened that I had no other roof above me than the vaulted canopy of heaven, and that my placid slumbers were rudely disturbed by rain falling like a water-spout on my face ; this was extremely disagreeable, more especially when it came down so heavily as to preclude the possibility of maintaining our usual watch-fires. In weather like this the prowling tyrant of the forest is ever most active in his search for prey, and our ears were occasionally greeted with the deep-toned voices of troops of lions, as, attracted by the smell of our game, they prowled around our encampments.

I continued hunting to the eastward of Bamangwato until the 3rd of October, during which time I added four other noble elephants, besides rhinoceroses and other animals, to my already satisfactory list of game. It is about this latitude that the traveller will first meet with the gigantic nwana, which is decidedly the most striking and wonderful tree among the thousands which adorn the South African forests. It is chiefly remarkable on account of its extraordinary size, actually resembling a castle or tower more than a forest-tree. Throughout the country of Bamangwato the average circumference of these trees was from thirty to forty feet ; but on subsequently extending my researches in a north-easterly direction, through the more fertile forests which clothe the boundless tracts through which the fair Limpopo winds, I daily met with specimens of this extraordinary tree averaging from sixty to a hundred feet in circumference, and maintaining this thickness to a height from twenty to thirty feet, when they diverge into numerous goodly branches, which seem to terminate with a peculiar suddenness. The wood of this tree is soft and utterly unserviceable ; the shape of the leaf is similar to that of the

sycamore-tree, but its texture partakes more of the fig-leaf; its fruit is a nut, which in size and shape resembles the egg of the swan.

A remarkable fact, in connexion with these trees, is the manner in which they are disposed throughout the forest. They are found standing singly, or in rows, invariably at considerable distances from one another, as if planted by the hand of man; and from their wondrous size and unusual height (for they always tower high above their surrounding compeers), they convey the idea of being strangers or interlopers on the ground they occupy.

My oxen, having done little else than feed and rest themselves for several months, were now full of spirit and in fine condition, and rattled along before my heavily laden waggons, over rugged hills and through the trackless mazes of the forest, at a rapid and willing pace, so that on the evening of the 4th of October I once more formed my encampment at Lesausau, in the Bamangwato Mountains.

Here I was quickly welcomed by Sicomy, who visited me in company with a numerous body of his tribe. He expressed himself much gratified at seeing me return in safety from the dangerous pursuit in which I had been occupied, and his Majesty was pleased to compliment me on my extraordinary success and skill in hunting, observing that the medicine of the white man must indeed be strong.

In the course of the evening he amused me with the quaintness of his questions, asking me if my father and mother were alive, how many brothers and sisters I had, if the flocks and herds of my king were extremely abundant, and if his subjects were more numerous than his own. On informing him that our chief was a woman, he seemed much tickled by the information; but when I said that her subjects were as numerous as the locusts, he looked round on his warriors with an evident grin of disbelief, and then inquired of me if all my countrymen could vanquish the elephants as easily as I did. This was a puzzler: so I replied that I could not say, but I knew that the hearts of all my nation were very strong, like the heart of the lion when his cubs are small; the whole assembly was greatly moved by this bright remark, and a general murmur of surprise

and admiration extended through the dusky ranks as each man repeated it to his neighbour. Old Mutchuishi understood my gibberish better than any of the rest, and acted in the capacity of interpreter between me and the king, my attainments in the language being as yet but limited. Mutchuishi now intimated to me that two friends of Sicomy's, with their two attendants, wished to accompany me to the colony in the capacity of cattle-herds, who promised at the same time to make themselves generally useful in the way of collecting firewood and carrying venison home to the waggons; to this proposal I fortunately agreed, and the four aspirants came forward and were duly introduced to me. The names of these four Bechuanas were Mollyee, Mollyeon, Kapain, and Kuruman: the two former belonged to the aristocracy, and were old friends of mine, having often assisted me in the field. These men agreed to serve me faithfully as far as the sea and back again to the country of their chief, in consideration of which I promised on my part to reward them with a cow and a musket each.

Mollyee and Mollyeon were brothers; they were tall, active-looking savages, with large, bright, sparkling eyes, and a pleasing cast of features. Kapain was a short, thickset, noisy individual, remarkable for his ugliness, and was the funniest fellow in all Bamangwato. Kuruman was a good-natured boy of about sixteen years of age; his face was prepossessing, resembling that of a girl more than the sex to which he belonged. I entertained Sicomy with stewed meat and coffee, and he and his retinue remained that night in my encampment. At an early hour on the morrow I obtained sundry fine tusks and some good specimens of native arms and costume in barter for beads, ammunition, and other articles. On inquiring of the king what had become of Isaac, he said that he had long since returned to Kuruman in company with a son of "old Seretse," a Bechuana of distinction residing in the vicinity of that place. This individual, whose name, being translated, signifies "*mud*," is remarkable for his bitterness against the advancement of the Christian religion and for the number of his progeny. Bidding adieu to Sicomy at midday on the 5th, I continued my march for Corriebely, which I reached about noon on the

following day. I was accompanied, as usual, by a number of the natives, in the hope of obtaining a supply of flesh, elephants being reported to have revisited Massouey. Here I dug up a large quantity of lead, I had interred in a hole beneath the ashes of my fire, before recrossing the mountains of Bamangwato. On reaching Massouey, and examining the fountain, I sought in vain for the tracks of elephants; the natives, nevertheless, declared that one or two herds were still to be met with in the district, which I felt inclined to credit; and this report turned out to be correct, for on the following day I succeeded in bagging a whole herd of eight bull and cow elephants, after a most exciting chace. The natives were overjoyed at my success, and frequently drew their hands across their mouth, a gesture commonly made use of by them when a "clean sweep" (as in the present instance) had been made, either in the chace or in their combats with each other.

I continued hunting at Massouey till the 12th, when, bidding a long farewell to the land of elephants, I inspanned, and marched upon Lepeby, which I reached at an early hour on the following day. When last I visited this fine fountain the game came to drink at it in numerous herds, but now not an animal of any kind, with the exception of a few rhinoceroses, was to be seen. This I always found to be the case at the fountains during the summer months, when the game are very independent of water, owing to the more abundant moisture contained in the young grass. In the forenoon I went bird-nesting among the reeds which grew around the fountain; hundreds of birds resembling the redpole were busy building their grassy nests, which they ingeniously suspend between the tops of the reeds. I also found two nests of the water-hen, containing eggs, in the rushes, which, with the nests, exactly corresponded with those in Scotland. Two beautifully painted wild geese, an egret, or white heron, and about twenty teal, were so tame that they permitted me to approach within a few yards of them.

At an early hour on the 16th I trekked for Boötlonamy, which I reached at sundown the same evening, and drew up my waggons under an impenetrable grove of picturesque mi

mosas, gaily decked with a profusion of highly scented yellow blossoms, brightly contrasting with their summer vestment of delicious green. Here I continued hunting for several days, and enjoyed excellent sport, daily securing fine specimens of the different varieties of game frequenting the district. On one occasion I started a secretary from off her nest, to which, from the denseness of the thorns, I with much difficulty cut my way; the eggs were the size and shape of a turkey's, and the colour of a buzzard's.

On the forenoon of the 19th we were visited by a most appalling thunder-storm; it burst close over my head with a report so sudden and tremendous, that I involuntarily trembled, and the sweat ran down my brow. The lightning fairly pained my eyes, and seemed so near, that I fancied every moment it must strike the waggons, which would certainly have proved extremely inconvenient, as 300 lbs. of gunpowder were stowed in one of them beneath my bed. The storm passed away at sundown, having exquisitely purified the atmosphere, while the grateful earth and fragrant forest emitted a perfume of overpowering sweetness. Sauntering out with my rifle I shot a couple of shaggy old brindled gnoos, firing right and left. The storm set in again about ten P.M. with thunder and lightning, which continued throughout the greater part of the night.

CHAPTER XIX.

COLONIAL SERVANTS DESEET — MELANCHOLY ANTICIPATIONS —
ARRIVE AT DR. LIVINGSTONE'S.

I HAD now arrived at a period of considerable importance in my expedition, when an event occurred which caused me a world of trouble and anxiety; it was nevertheless finally beneficial in its results, as it taught me what difficulties a man may surmount when he is pressed by adversity, and also made me an accomplished waggon-driver. I allude to my being abandoned by all my colonial servants, with the exception of Ruyter, the little Bushman. This unmanly and dastardly proceeding was, I believe, mainly owing to their despair of succeeding in bringing the waggons safely across the sandy deserts intervening betwixt me and the distant missionary station at Bakatla, on account of the broken state of one of the axletrees of my travelling waggon. Kleinboy, in one of his drunken fits, had driven it against a tree with such violence that one of the wooden arms of the fore axletree was cracked right across, so that little now held the wheel beside the linchpin and the iron skein. I had remarked on the 22nd there was something unusual on the minds of my followers, for none of them could look me in the face; and on the 23rd of October, when lying asleep in my waggon, a little before the day dawned, Ruyter awoke me, to report that my four Hottentots had decamped during the night; he said that each of them had taken with him a large bundle of biltongue or sun-dried meat, and tried hard to prevail on him to accompany them. This was a startling announcement, for I had barely enough hands to perform the work when they were with me, and the four savages from Bamangwato, like myself, were quite unaccustomed to the laborious and intricate art of waggon leading and driving, and the inspanning and outspanning of oxen. Imagining that the Hottentots would

not persevere in so rash a measure, and that they would assuredly change their minds and return to their master when they reflected on the step they had taken, I did not endeavour to overtake them, but employed the morning in stowing the waggons, lashing down pots, spades, axes, &c., in their proper places, and overhauling the gear preparatory to marching.

Having breakfasted, the little Bushman and myself, assisted by the savages, lassoed, sorted, and yoked twenty-four oxen, placing twelve before each waggon, when we cracked our whips and started from Bootlonamy. Mollyee and Mollyeon led the teams, while Kapain and Kuruman followed behind, driving the horses and loose oxen. In former days I had acquired considerable experience in driving tandem and four-in-hand; but I had now undertaken a pursuit of a widely different character; I soon, however, became quite *au fait* in the mysteries of inspanning and outspanning, and eventually learnt to drive my own waggons with nearly the same expedition as the Hottentots.

The vley of Bootlonamy being firm and hard, we rattled along it at a good pace; but in the evening, as we cleared it, and entered the heavy sandy tracts beyond, the oxen, having discovered that their new drivers could not wield the whips with the rapidity and execution of the old, declined to move beyond the pace they fancied, often halting of their own accord. Eventually, in ascending a sandy ridge, the Bushman's waggon stuck fast in the deep sand, and in trying to drag it out, the oxen broke the "dissel-boom," or pole. Finding that the labours we had undertaken were greater than I had calculated upon, I resolved to go on the morrow in pursuit of the run-aways; and accordingly, at dawn on the following day, leaving the waggons and their valuable contents at the mercy of the savages, I started with the Bushman and a spare horse to endeavour to overtake them, but after a fruitless search of many miles we at length lost our way in the intricacies of the forest. Here we spent the night, and, owing to my having lost my matches, I was without a fire, thereby incurring great danger of losing the horses and ourselves by lions; and we had scarcely off-saddled when two huge rhinoceroses came up and stood

within twenty yards of us, and would not for a long time be persuaded to depart. Some time after a hyæna made his appearance, which I pelted with stones, when he took the hint and made off. The horses were completely done up, and when knee-haltered would not feed.

On the 25th, as soon as it was clear, I ascended the summit of a pyramidal little hill beside which we had slept, to ascertain if possible whither I had wandered; but the view from hence did not help to elucidate matters, endless forests stretching away on every side without a mark to assist my memory. I now resolved to seek no longer for my ruffianly Hottentots; and on the morning of the 26th, having cast loose our horses, we proceeded to consume raw meat and water, and rode for the waggons, which we reached in the afternoon. They were as I had left them, and also the savages, who had fortunately discovered a small vley of rain-water about two miles to the southward of their position, where they had daily refreshed themselves and the cattle. My situation here was by no means an enviable one: one of the waggons was fast in deep sand, with the dissel-boom broken, and the fore-axle of the other was cracked, so that if it gave way on the line of march while crossing the desert and far from water, I should have had no alternative but to abandon the vehicle to its fate. Moreover, owing to the indolent disposition of the Hottentots, everything connected with the gear was broken and out of order; the hatchets appeared to have been used in chopping gun-flints, and all their handles were in similar condition.

On the morning of the 27th, having cast loose the horses and oxen, I rummaged out my tools, and in two hours put in a new dissel-boom, which I made from the stem of a tough mimosa. This being accomplished, I yoked twelve oxen to the waggon that was sticking in the sand, and tried to make them drag it out, but the cunning animals knew that it was fast, and would not exert themselves to attempt to extricate it. After inconceivable trouble and repeatedly shifting the positions of the oxen in the span, I at length made a fortunate arrangement of the cattle, the brutes for once pulled all together, and the waggon was in motion. I then inspanned the other team, and on our way to the next water very fortunately

knocked over a young bull camelopard with three shots. Having obtained for the present both flesh and water, my next look-out was to consider how I was to cross the sandy desert which lay betwixt me and the kraal of Booby. It was very evident that I could not return by the route I had previously held, having already ascertained that that country was now impassable for ox-waggons, all the waters being dry.

On explaining this to my Bamangwato followers, Mollyeon stated that he had once traversed that country in a dry season, though many years before, and that he and his comrades had obtained water in some deep pits, which had been excavated by Bakalahari in a rocky part of the desert, considerably to the eastward of my former route. He said we should require the greater part of two days to reach this water, our route thither lying across a soft sandy soil, varied in many places by almost impenetrable forest; but he seemed a little doubtful as to whether we should be able to discover the place, and if we did, whether the pits might not prove dry—this was certainly a bright prospect, more especially as the next water (which he represented as a perpetual fountain) was two days beyond the pits.

On the 28th I was occupied in putting sundry things to rights, for I had thoughts of trekking on the following day, but could not divest myself of the most dismal forebodings, for I felt certain that the heavier waggon would again stick fast, or that the cracked axletree would come in contact with some tree, and leave me in the desert a hopeless wreck, remote from water or any assistance. On the 29th I waited till the sun was up, that the cattle might drink plentifully, when I immediately inspanned, and commenced my anxious journey. For the first ten or twelve miles we proceeded along a hollow, where the soil was in general tolerably firm, but on leaving this we entered upon a most impracticable country, the waggons sinking about four inches in the soft sand; to increase our difficulties our progress was presently opposed by an interminable forest, where the trees stood so close together as often to bar the possibility of the waggons passing betwixt them.

On these occasions I was obliged to turn pioneer, and in

the course of the day felled with the axe not less than fifty trees. In this manner I held on till the sun went down, when I halted in dense forest and cast loose the oxen for an hour; after which, with infinite trouble, I lassoed the two teams and made them fast on the trektoew, in their proper places, ready to inspan at dawn of day. I had also nine horses to catch and make fast, and none to assist me but the little Bushman; for the savages were so lazy and awkward, that one Hottentot would have assisted me more than the whole pack of them.

On the 30th I inspanned before light, and held on through heavy sand and forest, where it was necessary to keep the axes in constant operation. In the afternoon we reached the promised pits, but had the mortification to find that all they contained was a little mud. The Bechuanas, however, having unlashed the spades, which were vigorously plied, the water began very reluctantly to trickle in from every side, and in two hours I obtained a very moderate supply for the oxen. My poor horses did not get a drop; and we resumed our march beneath a burning sun of unusual intensity. The sand became, if possible, worse than ever, and the waggons repeatedly stuck fast; my waggon sails were reduced to ribbons by wait-a-bit thorns, and at sunset I halted for the night, and cast loose my wretched oxen.

On the 31st at about four P.M. I got clear of the desert, and to my infinite delight reached a strong perennial fountain situated in a finely-wooded valley on the northern borders of the mountain country, extending to the southward, with little intermission, as far as a chain of the Kurrichane range. Towards the end of the march it was necessary to descend into a rugged valley, and cross a very awkward watercourse, in which the baggage-waggon was within a hair's-breadth of being capsized. Ascending from this valley, we crossed a precipitous ridge, where large disjointed masses of rock threatened the momentary destruction of the waggons. As I was yoking one of the oxen, which had broken his yokeskey and got out of his place, I received a severe kick on the cap of the knee from a vicious ox in front, which gave me intense pain and laid me prostrate on the ground. I however managed to drive

the waggon to its destination, when, after lying for a few minutes, the pain increased so much that I lay panting on my bed. A herd of zebras approached the fountain to drink before my knee stiffened, and this was a godsend, for our flesh was at an end and the dogs starving. In torture as I was, I managed to make a limping stalk towards them, and brought down a brace of fine old mares.

The following day my knee was much better, and in the afternoon I shot two koodoos and a pallah—one of the former from the saddle as he bounded past me at a hundred yards. During the night I was awoke by an unusual disturbance in the camp, and, raising my head, found the Bechuanas standing close together round the fire with their faces outwards, while they talked with unusual volubility. The dogs were barking loud and angrily, and kept rushing back occasionally to the fire, as if pursued by some animal; the night was pitch dark, so that nothing could be seen, but Mollyeon told me that a lion and a leopard were prowling round us, endeavouring to obtain the venison of the zebras, which hung in festoons in the trees beside us, and next moment I heard the voices of both, for the lion roared and the leopard shrieked wildly as they sprang after the dogs. At length their boldness increased; the lion chased the dogs with angry growls within twenty yards of where we stood, and the leopard actually sprang into the centre of my larder beside the fire, and was making off with a large fragment of ribs, when the dogs went gallantly at him, but were so terribly lacerated that two of them soon after died from their wounds. We now snatched up large flaming brands from the fire, and, meeting the lion as he advanced, sent them flying in his face, when he made off: I feared to use my rifle lest I should shoot the dogs. The horses and oxen, although much alarmed, did not endeavour to break loose, being still very much fatigued from the hardships they had undergone.

On the morning of the 2nd I shot a koodoo, which antelope seemed to be tolerably abundant here. This day my poor Old Grey was attacked with the African distemper. With considerable difficulty I brought him to camp, where I instantly bled him, but to no purpose, and in another hour the

“gallant grey” lay down and “stretched his stiff limbs to rise no more;” at night the lion feasted on his body, and when he was full the leopard and hyænas finished it.

On the morning of the 3rd I held for Booby, which I reached at midday on the 5th. I was kindly welcomed by Caachy, now the chief of Booby, the former one having been blown up in my absence as already mentioned. He informed me that my runaway Hottentots had reached his kraal, and were very much exhausted by their march; he had assisted them with corn, and passed them on to Bakatla. They informed the chief that I had dismissed them from my service, having engaged other servants at Bamangwato. I remained at Booby till midday on the 7th, and left that place accompanied by a large body of the natives, some of them leading pack-oxen which were sent by Caachy to convey the venison of sundry rhinoceroses which I engaged to shoot for him. These men led me towards Bakatla by a different route from that which I had formerly taken.

Early on the 13th I was met by a party from Bakatla kindly despatched by Dr. Livingstone, the resident missionary, when he heard of my being abandoned by my colonial servants. The party consisted of a Bechuana, named Mabal, belonging to Kuruman (who assisted Dr. Livingstone in teaching the children of the Bakatlas), and three of the Bakatla tribe. These men reached me just at the right moment; for we had scarcely proceeded three hundred yards when the damaged axletree broke short across, and the wheel rolling away the waggon came down on its side. This was a catastrophe I had for some time anticipated, and was only thankful that it had been deferred so long. We outspanned, and having unloaded the waggon, put a support under it, took out the forestell, and then set about making a false axletree of tough thorn-wood. The vertical sun was extremely powerful, and both my ankles gave me severe and never-ceasing pain from wounds inflicted by the wait-a-bit thorns and inflammation induced by the constant animal diet upon which I had so long subsisted. In the afternoon of the following day I got the false axletree fixed in its proper position.

On the 15th we outspanned, and, having passed through the