

me. My movement seemed to break the kind of spell under which Angus sat; his arm sank slowly to his side, and his eyes rolled from my face to the figure of the lion. To right and left the sides of the valley shut in the view. In front stood the lion; behind the defile in which we now were, broadened out until it became little more than a mere undulation in the broad wild plain through which it ran. As I slowly swept the sandy tract in our rear, I suddenly observed a man on horseback emerge into the open, moving leisurely along at about the distance of a mile or so away, and, gazing intently, I made him out to be a cavalry soldier: probably a mounted orderly who had been sent from the camp on dispatch business.

"We must bolt," said Captain Angus at my elbow; "that lion means mischief by the manner in which it is advancing towards us; and mark you how restive the horses are! Their instinct is keener than ours; they can scent danger in the air. The instant we move to fly, depend upon it the lion will start in chase, and our only chance will lie in outrunning him, for unarmed as we are, what could we do to defend ourselves against such a brute."

"Look you, Angus: yonder is a mounted orderly riding across country. You have good eyes; see what you make of him."

Captain Angus shaded his sight with his hand and stared towards the retreating figure.

"It is a Lancer trooper," said he presently. "I can see the plumes in his head-dress, and I can also see the pennon fluttering from his lance."

"He is armed, then?"

"He is carrying his lance," replied the captain.

"Good!" I cried. "Now, if we can reach that soldier before the lion catches us we shall be all right. It will not take him long to touch the heart of the brute with the keen steel head of his spear. Fortunately we have not been working our horses hard, but they must go now if ever they did for their very lives. Are you ready?"

"Yes," said he, drawing his hat on firmly, and planting himself square upon the saddle. "Come now!"

We turned our horses about, and with shouts and slaps gave them rein. The intelligent creatures, as though conscious of their danger, started off like frightened deer along the sandy valley. I let the newly-lighted cigar drop from my mouth, and setting my knees firm against the sleek sides of the mare, grasped the reins with a grip of steel. A low sullen roar reached my ears, and turning for an instant to glance over my shoulder, I caught a glimpse of the lion flying after us in pursuit, its lithe form bounding like a flash of light from ridge to ridge, and its whole shape a mere fleeting vision of flowing mane, flashing eyes, and distended jaws.

"Hey-on! Hey-up!" It was like a dead heat with the order of the hunt reversed. The horses' hoofs thundered over the sand, raising a smoke-like column of dust, as they swept with the velocity of the wind towards the figure of the soldier, every instant growing more defined. My cap flew off; I tried to catch it, but it whirled away astern like a bit of chaff. Our speed was prodigious. I felt my horse tremble beneath me, and the steam rose from her reeking hide in a warm mist. I lay forward to whisper in her ear, although breathless as I was, I rather hissed than spoke the syllables of encouragement that came from my lips. My companion and I kept our stations abreast of each other with wonderful precision. We occasionally exchanged a few hurried words, but it was no time for talking; the whirl and tumult, and above all the sense of danger, were too great for coherence and almost for articulation.

Five minutes passed, although so much of *sensation* was packed into them that the time might well have been an hour. Once I turned again to see whether we still maintained our station ahead of the lion, and perceived that the creature was slowly but visibly gaining upon us. Yet the speed of our horses was prodigious. I could feel the heart of my mare beating with a violence that sent a thrill through her whole frame to each throb of it, but she kept bravely on, with no signs of flagging. Whether the soldier had perceived us or not as yet, it was impossible to say; but even had

he done so, there would be nothing in the sight of two officers galloping through the Long Valley to excite his curiosity. Such a spectacle would be as common to him as the sight of his own blue tunic. I could now clearly make him out, even to the glitter of his accoutrements. He was heading transversely away from us, his horse going at a moderate trot. Several times we united our voices in a shout, but he was apparently still too distant for our confused halloos to reach him, for he kept steadily on.

Presently, however, I saw him turn his head in our direction. I raised my arm and flourished it wildly, hoarsely calling to Angus to do the same. He snatched off his hat, which still adhered to his head, and waved it violently. The soldier continued looking our way, growing plainer to the view even as he did so; then apparently noticing our gestures and interpreting them into signals, he drew rein, and brought his horse to a standstill. Now that he had stopped, we swept down upon him like a whirlwind. As we approached we alternately shouted and pointed behind us, but he apparently made nothing of these signs—as indeed, what suspicion should he have of the real motive of our headlong flight towards him? Suddenly, however, he rose nearly erect in his saddle, and I saw him hastily release his lance from the sling which confined it to his arm, and lower the long glittering weapon down to the trail. I then knew that he had caught sight of the lion, and remembered amidst all the hurry and tumult of my thoughts at that moment admiring the prompt presence of mind of the fellow, staggered as he must have been by the unexpected apparition of our wild and fierce pursuer.

Then what followed took place, as it seemed to me, all in a breath. Ourselves, punting like a hare in its final spurt, and our horses reeking and spent, we darted past the figure of the soldier, crouching with his spear pointed low, and came to a standstill, wheeling round to see what would now happen. The trooper's horse reared up on to its hind legs till it seemed as though the man must slide from off the saddle. In a flash the lion was upon the creature, leaping upwards at its throat at the very moment that the soldier, like St. George slaying the dragon, plunged his lance with all his might into the quivering yellow body of the beast. The creature gave a loud deep roar, and a moment after the trio of man, horse, and lion rolled over into the dust with a dull dead thud. Captain Angus vaulted clean out of his saddle, and in an instant gained the side of the struggling group. The lion was doubtless badly wounded, but it was tearing the shoulders of the horse cruelly with its claws, and the soldier, who lay pinned to the ground by the weight of the animal's carcase, was in danger of being mutilated by the ferocious brute. The pole of the lance stuck out from its side, buried high as its pennon in the flesh. With the rapidity of thought my companion seized this, and withdrew it, the lion giving a prodigious howl of pain as he did so. Then stepping back a few paces, and gripping the spear with both hands, the captain poised it for an instant, and rushed full tilt at the prostrate creature, plunging the gore-stained head of the lance into the body with such force that I looked to see the barbed point appear on the other side. The lion sprang into the air, doubling itself nearly up in the rigor that ran through its frame, then fell with a flop upon the sand, tumbling over on its side with the lance sticking straight up into the air, as though it pinned it to the earth. A few silent struggles convulsed its form, and then it stiffened out, with its jaws distended, its eyes lolling out, its tail rigid as a spike—dead as a nail!

I dismounted, and hastened to assist Angus in raising the fallen soldier. Badly lacerated as the horse was by the terrible claws of the lion, it yet made shift to stagger to its feet when we laid hold of its bridle and encouraged it to rise. The man was confused and stunned by his fall, and made no effort to move when we accosted him. However, after a few moments he sat up, supporting himself on his elbows and looking with a bewildered air at the dead lion. Then when, by our aid, he got upon his feet, he found that he could stand, though his knees trembled like those of a man in a fit. His helmet had been crushed and his tunic split, whilst his nose seemed to be bleeding a little, but beyond the contusion of his fall