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TRAVELS.

From Captain Harris's Expedition from the Cape into Southern Africa.

After passing Sunday River, and having completed a total of two hundred miles from Graham's Town, they arrived at Graaff-Reinet.

The village is sheltered on each side by high conical mountains, decorated with perpetual verdure, which is derived from the abundance of speckboom that covers their rocky declivities. The serpentine banks of the river are lined with willows and acacias; many of these latter are overgrown with miseltoe, and both with evergreen creepers, which, climbing to the very topmost branches, fall gracefully in festoons adorned with a profusion of fragrant white flowers, not unfrequently concealing the tree upon which they have entwined themselves. Nothing can exceed the neatness of the quaint little Dutch houses; and whilst the salubrity of the climate has no rival in Southern Africa, the produce of the gardens and vineyards may vie with those of Europe. Fruits and vegetables of all kinds grow here in abundance and perfection. On looking out of the window in the morning we saw the street carpeted with snow, while garden-hedges of quince, and a row of lemon-trees on either side, bending beneath a load of ripe fruit, formed decorations as beautiful in themselves as they were novel to an Indian eye.

This district our travellers considered the starting-point or base of their operations; and here they procured a capital waggon, with thirty draught oxen, and completed their stud of twelve horses. The vehicle appears to have been well freighted:—

Our waggon, fitted up with water-casks, tar-buckets, side-chests, beds, pockets, and other appurtenances for the long journey before us, during which it was to be our only abode, might now not inaptly be compared to a ship proceeding to sea. Besides ourselves and our personal conveniences, it contained, with the addition of a barrel of gunpowder, and the commodities for barter already enumerated, six sacks of flour, two bags of rice, and two of sugar, with chests of tea and bales of coffee. The baggage-waggon carried tent, camp-stools, table, and cooking utensils: hams, tongues, and cheeses in profusion: salt and dried fish, biscuits, wax candles, soap, and oilman's stores, or, in other words, sauces and pickles. The luxury of beer, so palatable to an Anglo-Indian, we were compelled to dispense with in consequence of its bulk; but we provided ourselves instead with a few dozens of brandy, and a small barrel of inferior spirits for the use of the followers. Crannies and empty spaces were filled up with spades, pickaxes, hatches, sickles, and joiner's tools, together with nails, screws, spare bolts, and linchpins; and, as if all these were not weight sufficient, no less than eighteen thousand leaden bullets, duly prepared, to say nothing of a large additional supply of that precious metal in pigs, to be converted into instruments of destruction as occasion required, were added to our stock.

HUNTING THE ELEPHANT.

Leaving the waggons to proceed to a spot agreed upon, we again took the field about ten o'clock, and pursued the track indefatigably for eight miles, over a country presenting every variety of feature. At one time we crossed bare stony ridges, at another threaded the intricacies of forests; now struggled through high fields of waving grass, and again emerged into open downs. At length we arrived amongst extensive groups of grassy hillocks, covered with loose stones, interspersed with streams and occasional patches of forest, in which the recent ravages of elephants were surprising. Here to our inexpressible gratification we descried a large herd of those long-sought animals, lazily browsing at the head of a distant valley, our attention having been first directed to it by the strong and not-to-be-mistaken odour with which the wind was impregnated. Never having before seen the noble elephant in his native jungles, we gazed on the sight before us with intense and indescribable interest. Our feelings on the occasion even extended to our followers. As for Andries he became so agitated that he could scarcely articulate. With open eyes and quivering lips he at length stammered forth, "Dar stand de oliphant." Mohanycom and Lingap were immediately despatched to drive the herd back into the valley, up which we rode slowly and without noise, against the wind; and, arriving within one hundred and fifty yards unperceived, we made our horses fast and took up a commanding position in an old stone kraal. The shouting of the savages, who now appeared on the height rattling their shields, caused the huge animals to move unsuspectingly towards us, and even within ten yards of our ambush. The group consisted of nine, all females, with large tusks. We selected the finest, and with perfect deliberation fired a volley of five balls into

her. She stumbled, but, recovering herself, uttered a shrill note of lamentation, when the whole party threw their trunks above their heads, and instantly clambered up the adjacent hill with incredible celerity, their huge fan-like ears flapping in the ratio of their speed. We instantly mounted our horses, and, the sharp loose stones not suiting the feet of the wounded lady, soon closed with her. Streaming with blood, and infuriated with rage, she turned upon us with uplifted trunk, and it was not until after repeated discharges that a ball took effect in her brain, and threw her lifeless on the earth, which resounded with the fall.

Turning our attention from the exciting scene I have described, we found that a second valley had opened upon us, surrounded by bare stony hills, and traversed by a thinly-wooded ravine. Here a grand and magnificent panorama was before us. The whole face of the landscape was actually covered with wild elephants. There could not have been fewer than three hundred within the scope of our vision. Every height and green knoll was dotted over with groups of them, whilst the bottom of the glen exhibited a dense and sable living mass, their colossal forms being at one moment partially concealed by the trees which they were disfiguring with giant strength, and at others seen majestically emerging into the open glades, bearing in their trunks the branches of trees, with which they indolently protected themselves from the flies. The back-ground was filled by a limited peep of the blue mountainous range, which here assumed a remarkably precipitous character, and completed a picture at once soul-stirring and sublime.

Our approach, being still against the wind, was unobserved, and created little alarm, until the herd that we had left behind suddenly showed itself, recklessly thundering down the side of the hill to join the main body, and passing so close to us that we could not refrain from firing a broadside into one of them, which, however, bravely withstood it. We secured our horses on the summit of a stony ridge, and then, stationing ourselves at an opportune place on a ledge overlooking the wooded defile, sent Andries to manoeuvre, so that as many of the elephants as possible should pass before us in order of review, that we might ascertain, by a close inspection, whether there was not a male amongst them. Filing sluggishly along, they occasionally halted beneath an umbrella-like tree within fifteen yards of us, lazily fanning themselves with their ample ears, blowing away the flies with their trunks, and uttering the feeble and peculiar cry so familiar to Indians. They all proved to be females, and most of them mothers, followed by their little old-fashioned calves, each trudging close to the heels of her dam, and mimicking all her actions. Thus situated, we might have killed any number we pleased, their heads being frequently turned towards us in such a position, and so close, that a single ball in the brain would have sufficed for each; but, whilst we were yet hesitating, a bullet suddenly whizzed past Richardson's ear, and put the whole herd to immediate flight. We had bare time to recede behind a tree before a party of about twenty, with several little ones in their wake, were upon us, striding at their utmost speed, and trumpeting loudly with uplifted heads. I rested my rifle against the tree, and, firing behind the shoulder of the leader, she dropped instantly. Another large detachment appearing close behind us at the same moment, we were compelled to retreat, dodging from tree to tree, stumbling amongst sharp stones, and ever coming upon fresh parties of the enemy.

Not an elephant was to be seen on the ground that was yesterday teeming with them; but, on reaching the glen which had been the scene of our exploits during the early part of the action, a calf about three and a half feet high walked forth from a brush, and saluted us with mournful piping notes. We had observed the unhappy little wretch hovering about its mother after she fell, and having probably been unable to overtake the herd, it had passed a dreary night in the wood. Entwining its little proboscis about our legs, the sagacious creature, after demonstrating its delight at our arrival by a thousand ungainly antics, accompanied the party to the body of its dam, which, swollen to an enormous size, was surrounded by an inquest of vultures. Seated in gaunt array, with their shoulders shrugged, these loathsome fowls were awaiting its decomposition with forced resignation; the tough hide having defied all the efforts of their beaks, with which the eyes and softer parts had been vigorously assailed. The conduct of the quaint little calf now became quite affecting, and elicited the sympathy of every one. It ran round its mother's corpse with touching demonstrations of grief, piping sorrowfully, and vainly attempting to raise her with its tiny trunk. I confess that I had felt compunctions in committing the murder the day before, and now half resolved never to assist in another; for, in addition to the moving behaviour

of the young elephant, I had been unable to divest myself of the idea that I was firing at my old favourite Mowla-Bukhsh, from whose gallant back I had vanquished so many of my feline foes in Guzerat, an impression, which however ridiculous it must appear, detracted considerably from the satisfaction I experienced.

HUNTING THE GIRAFFE.

'To the sportsman,' says the captain, 'the most thrilling passage in my adventures is now to be recounted. In my own breast it awakens a renewal of the past impressions, more lively than any written description can render intelligible; and far abler pens than mine, dipped in more glowing tints, would still fall short of the reality, and leave much to be supplied by the imagination. Three hundred gigantic elephants, browsing in majestic tranquillity amidst the wild magnificence of an African landscape, and a wide-stretching plain, darkened as far as the eye can reach with a moving phalanx of gnous and quaggas, whose numbers literally baffle computation, are sights but rarely to be witnessed; but who amongst our brother Nimrods shall hear of riding familiarly by the side of a troop of colossal giraffes, and not feel his spirit stirred within him? He that would behold so marvellous a sight must leave the haunts of man, and dive, as we did, into pathless wilds, traversed only by the brute creation, into wide wastes where the grim lion prowls, monarch of all he surveys, and where the gaunt hyæna and wild dog fearlessly pursue their prey.

Many days had now elapsed since we had even seen the camelopard, and then only in small numbers, and under the most unfavourable circumstances. The blood coursed through my veins like quicksilver, therefore, as on the morning of the 19th, from the back of Breslar, my most trusty steed, with a firm wooded plait before me, I counted thirty-two of these animals, industriously stretching their peacock necks to crop the tiny leaves which fluttered above their heads, in a mimosa-grove that beautified the scenery. They were within a hundred yards of me, but, having previously determined to try the bounding system, I reserved my fire. Although I had taken the field expressly to look for giraffes, and had put four of the Hottentots on horseback, all excepting Piet had as usual slipped off unperceived in pursuit of a troop of koodoos (*Strepsiceros Koodoo*). Our stealthy approach was soon opposed by an ill-tempered rhinoceros, which, with her ugly calf, stood directly in the path; and the twinkling of her bright little eyes, accompanied by a restless rolling of the body, giving earnest of her intention to charge. I directed Piet to salute her with a broadside, at the same moment putting spurs to my horse. At the report of the gun and the sudden clattering of hoofs, away bounded the giraffes in grotesque confusion, clearing the ground by a succession of frog-like hops, and soon leaving me far in the rear. Twice were their towering forms concealed from view by a park of trees, which we entered almost at the same instant; and twice on emerging from the labyrinth, did I perceive them tilting over an eminence immeasurably in advance. A white turban, that I wore round my hunting-cap, being dragged off by a projecting bough, was instantly charged by three rhinoceroses; and, looking over my shoulder, I could see them long afterwards, fagging themselves to overtake me. In the course of five minutes the fugitives arrived at the small river, the treacherous sands of which receiving their long legs, their flight was greatly retarded; and, after floundering to the opposite side and scrambling to the top of the bank, I perceived that their race was run. Patting the steaming neck of my good steed, I urged him again to his utmost, and instantly found myself by the side of the herd. The stately bull, being readily distinguishable from the rest by his chestnut robe and superior stature, I applied the muzzle of my rifle behind his dappled shoulder, with the right hand, and drew both triggers, but he still continued to shuffle along, and being afraid of losing him, should I dismount, among the extensive mimosa groves with which the landscape was now obscured, I sat in my saddle, loading and firing behind the elbow, and then placing myself across his path, until the tears trickling from his full brilliant eyes, his lofty frame began to totter, and at the seventeenth discharge from the deadly grooved bore, bowing his graceful head from the skies, his proud form was prostrate in the dust. Never shall I forget the tingling excitement of that moment! Alone, in the wild wood, I hurried with bursting exultation, and unsaddling my steed, sank exhausted beside the noble prize I had won.

When I leisurely contemplated the massive frame before me, seeming as though it had been cast in a mould of brass, and protected by a hide of an inch and a half in thickness, it was no longer matter of astonishment that a bullet, discharged from a distance of eighty or ninety yards, should have been attended with little effect upon such amazing strength. The extreme height