

IN THE MORNING OF TIME

shouts, at the nearest of their assailants. But the assault was a blind one. The buffalo, a black mass that seemed to foam with tossing horns and rolling eyes, soon passed on to their unknown destination. And the tribe, dropping down from the branches, quite cheerfully resumed its march.

On the fifth day of the march they saw the jungle on their right come to an end. It was succeeded by a vast expanse of shallow mere dotted with half-drowned, rushy islets, and swarming with crocodiles. After some hesitation, Grôm decided to go on, though he was uneasy about forsaking the refuge of the trees. Some leagues ahead, however, and a little toward the left, he could see a low, thick-wooded hill, which he thought might serve the tribe for a shelter. With many misgivings, he led the way directly towards it, swerving out across the path of a vast but straggling horde of sambur deer which seemed almost exhausted.

To Grôm's surprise these stately and beautiful animals showed neither hostility nor fear toward human beings. According to all his previous experience, the attitude of every beast toward man was one of fear or fierce hate. These sambur, on the contrary, seemed rather to welcome the companionship of the tribe, as if looking to it for some protection against the strange pursuing peril. His sleepless sagacity perceiving the value of this great escort as a buffer against the contact of less kindly hordes, Grôm gave strict orders that none of these beasts should be molested. And the