

# THE TUSK- HUNTERS



FRANCIS ROLT-WHEELER



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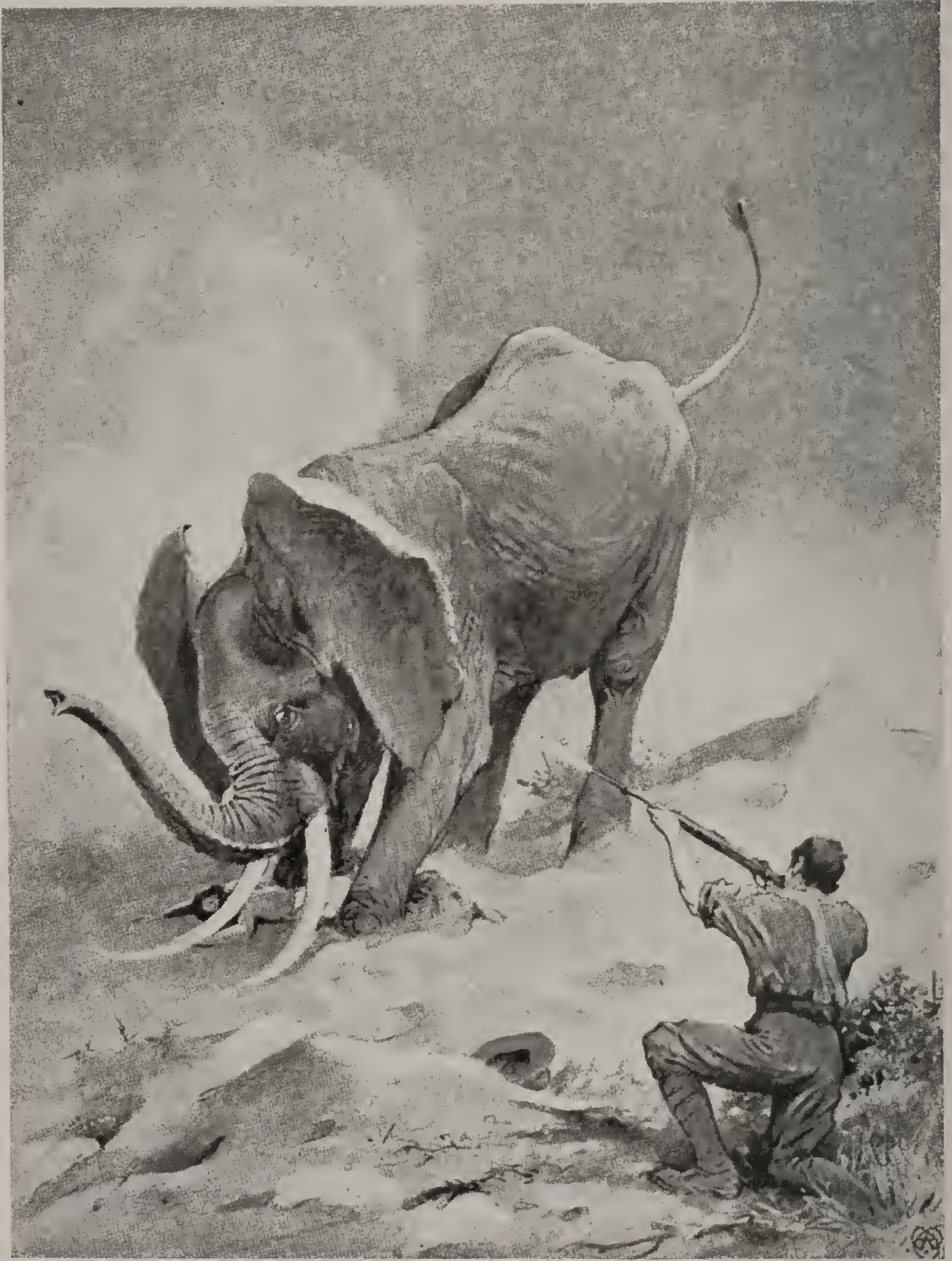
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A dead shot, taken from very near.



# THE TUSK-HUNTERS

By

FRANCIS ROLT-WHEELER

*Author of "U. S. Service Series,"*

ILLUSTRATED



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THE TUSK-HUNTERS



Printed in U. S A.

Norwood Press  
BERWICK & SMITH CO.  
NORWOOD, MASS.

MAY-6'27

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## FOREWORD

IN a book where so much courtesy has been shown by Museum officials, naturalists, famous hunters, and writers, it is difficult to discriminate, but the Author takes this opportunity to express his obligation to the authors of the following books: "The Mammoth and Mammoth-Hunting," by Bassett Digby; "Animal Life in Africa," by Major J. Stevenson-Hamilton; "The African Elephant and its Hunters," by Denis D. Lyell; "The Elephant," by Agnes Herbert; and "A Hunter's Wanderings in Africa," by F. C. Selous. The Author is indebted, also, to the Colonial Office and to "The Elephant God," by Gordon Casserly, for matters dealing with the Indian elephant.



## PREFACE

THE lure of the wild will call to men so long as red blood flows in human veins, whether that call come from the frozen tundra of Siberia or the sweltering jungle of Equatorial Africa. The thrill of big-game hunting will ever appeal to adventurous natures, as it has since the long-ago days when Prehistoric Man battled for his livelihood and his life with flint-tipped weapons, as it does still, with all the marvellous resources of modern invention.

In later days, a deeper spell has been given both to the "call of the wild" and to big-game hunting, in the desire to learn the inmost secrets of the lives of animals, a spell which is shared by the scientific naturalist and the photographer alike. The wonder and the splendor of wild life is felt in a tenfold greater sense than it ever was before, for men have begun to realize that knowledge is greater than trophies, and that the worth of an animal is greater than the value of its hide or its tusks.

To try to give some measure of the life of the Elephant, how he came to be, how he lived and lives, the part that he plays in the semi-explored wilds, and to arouse a deeper appreciation of that mighty Lord of the Forest is the aim and purpose of

THE AUTHOR.



# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

A SIBERIAN WIZARD - - - - - 13

## CHAPTER II

A CHARGING MAMMOTH - - - - - 29

## CHAPTER III

FOSSIL IVORY - - - - - 46

## CHAPTER IV

A HAIRY MONSTER - - - - - 62

## CHAPTER V

A SPLENDID FIND - - - - - 78

## CHAPTER VI

AN ARCTIC BLIZZARD - - - - - 97

## CHAPTER VII

A DANGEROUS RESCUE - - - - - 122

## CHAPTER VIII

CAPTURING ELEPHANTS - - - - - 143

## CHAPTER IX

A TRUNKED DEITY - - - - - 162

## CHAPTER X

GORED TO DEATH - - - - - 182

## CHAPTER XI

INTO THE JUNGLE - - - - - 203

## CHAPTER XII

AMIDST A HERD - - - - - 224

## CHAPTER XIII

A RHINOCEROS FIGHT - - - - - 242

## CHAPTER XIV

FACING A LION - - - - - 257

## CHAPTER XV

SHOOTING THE OUTLAW - - - - - 274

## CHAPTER XVI

THE PLACE OF PEACE - - - - - 294



## ILLUSTRATIONS

Just in Time! . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
Sorting some Big Tusks . . . . .	28
Siberian Mammoth-Hunters . . . . .	28
The Beresovka Mammoth at an Early Stage of Excavation . . . . .	29
The Beresovka Mammoth . . . . .	29
The Mammoth . . . . .	42
An Elephant Road in Open Country . . . . .	43
An Elephant Road in Dense Jungle . . . . .	43
Moeritherium . . . . .	66
Palæomastodon . . . . .	67
Tetralobedon . . . . .	70
Dinotherium . . . . .	71
An Elephant Kraal in India . . . . .	148
Indian Elephants Leaving the Water . . . . .	149
The Mahout Directs Everything . . . . .	152
Elephant Stacking Timber . . . . .	153
Strength, Intelligence, Fidelity . . . . .	162
Elephant Herd Crossing the Zambesi River . . . . .	163
Elephant Farm in the Belgian Congo . . . . .	202
Elephant-Trackers from the Belgian Congo . . . . .	203

Herd of Old Hippopotamuses . . . .	208
Immature Hippopotamuses . . . .	208
Hippopotamuses at Sunset . . . .	208
Square-Mouthed Rhinoceros . . . .	209
A Sniff of the Man-Smell . . . .	209
Rhinoceros Charging . . . .	209
Forced to Swerve . . . .	209
A Massive Bull Elephant . . . .	226
Vital Shots for an Elephant . . . .	227
A Bull Elephant's Spoor . . . .	227
An African Elephant Pushing through the Jungle . . . .	234
Trees Broken by an Elephant . . . .	235
A Rhinoceros Attacking an Elephant . . .	252
Square-Mouthed Rhinoceros in Shallow Stream . . . .	253
Chief Agbashan of Oban . . . .	256
With the Trophies of the Chase . . . .	257
African Lion and Lioness . . . .	304
Going to the "Place of Peace" . . . .	305

# THE TUSK-HUNTERS



# The Tusk-Hunters

## CHAPTER I

### A SIBERIAN WIZARD

“ A LIVING mammoth! Impossible! ”

“ Well, that’s what this old monkey-faced witch-doctor says, anyway. Why not? Wouldn’t it be a find, though! ”

“ But the mere idea is absurd, Spencer! The race of mammoths is absolutely extinct. There has not been a specimen alive, these thirty thousand years and more! ”

“ Perhaps, but you can’t tell what’s going to happen in these outlandish parts, Father. We’re certainly the first scientific folk who ever crossed this part of the Siberian tundra, at least, according to your detailed map.”

“ I am glad to know that you consider yourself a scientist, Son,” “ Hunter ” Wolland rejoined, looking at the boy with some amusement, and using a professorial tone, “ but your credulity does not go far to support your claim. There could not pos-

sibly remain an isolated specimen of the mammoth, still living. In order that the species should have been perpetuated, a whole herd, at least, must have survived all those thousands of years. It is not to be admitted that all Siberian explorers, since the beginning of historic times, should have failed to hear of any such."

"Perhaps this one is a sort of Methuselah mammoth!"

"I wish you would learn to be serious, Spencer! Tell me, just exactly, what does this shaman say?"

"He says he knows where there's a living mammoth. Those are his very words."

"Get him to explain himself, if you can. Oh, that I could understand the Tungus language, or Yakut, or even Russian!"

The boy turned again to the Yakut guide and recommenced his roundabout efforts to probe the mystery. That there was a real mystery seemed certain, for his father had told him that, while the Tunguses have the gift of recounting marvellous stories, they have the reputation of being superlatively honest and they do not lie—at least, not those who live on the shores of the Arctic Ocean and are not yet "civilized." However difficult it might be to extract the truth which was contained in this appar-

ently fantastic tale of a "living mammoth," assuredly there must be some grounds for it.

How to secure the precise information was a problem. The Yakut guide understood but very few words of the Tungus language—a Ural-Altaiic tongue having a close relation to old Japanese—and his own knowledge of Russian was confined to what he had picked up on the streets of Yakutsk. The Tungus shaman knew little of the Yakut language—which is a mixture of ancient Turkish and Northern Mongolian—and he knew no Russian at all.

Spencer's knowledge of Russian was not very profound, by no means so complete as he wanted his father to believe it to be, and this added still another element of uncertainty in any translation. He had only chanced to learn Russian from the fact that his high school chum, in Duluth, was the son of a wealthy Russian nobleman, forced into exile by the Bolshevist Revolution. Spencer had spent two summers with his chum, living in a home where Russian was currently spoken.

It was this very knowledge of Russian which had induced Professor Wolland or "The Hunter," as he was more generally known, to take his son on this "mammoth-hunting" expedition into Eastern Siberia, financed by a group of capitalists interested in

the Detroit Museum. As matters turned out, Spencer's presence proved to be of the highest value, for the two Russian guides, who had been engaged at Tomsk, had been seized and held as political prisoners by the Bolshevist authorities at Yakutsk.

This misadventure had almost caused "Hunter" Wolland to abandon the expedition, for one of these guides was an old ivory-trader with a thorough knowledge of the tribes of Northeastern Siberia and the Arctic Coast. Spencer was wild with disappointment, and his urgent declarations that he could serve as interpreter had played a part in his father's determination to pursue the quest. The news that a Yakut guide, who knew a little Russian, could be found at Sigansk, a couple of hundred miles down the Lena River, made Spencer's part possible.

Such Russian as Spencer had learned from his chum—and his chum's sister—was of little use to him, here, where only the highest authorities spoke pure Russian. But the boy had a natural gift for languages, and, realizing that this was the only way in which he could be of use to his father, he had spent every minute of the seemingly interminable voyage along the Lena in mastering Yakut. The



language was one of incredible difficulty, but youth and energy, together, can accomplish much. Even so, being forced to use two intermediaries, The Hunter found that the securing of accurate information was a tedious and inaccurate process.

To make this particular conversation still worse, the smell in the shaman's hut was one which white men could hardly endure. Widely as The Hunter had travelled, inured as he was to the manifold discomforts of scientific expeditions into unknown parts, experienced elephant-hunter though he had been in his youth, he had never been able wholly to overcome his repulsion to the malodorous. The atmosphere of the Tungus shaman's hut was a fearsome compound of unholy smells, and only by great self-control could the Americans keep from getting "sea-sick." Even the Yakut was beginning to feel squeamish, and a Yakut can live in the vilest kind of atmosphere.

"Get him to come outside, to talk!" burst out The Hunter, impatiently. "At least, we should have a chance to breathe!"

"I have tried. He won't; just positively won't. According to what Ivan says, he declares that it's after the full moon, and that a shaman mustn't put his foot outside the door of his hut while the moon

is waning. It doesn't seem to have any sense, but that's what he says."

The Hunter, who had spent many years as a Natural History Museum curator, nodded understanding.

"That's quite possible. All shamans are supposed to be more or less moon-struck."

"Let me try again! We don't want to have to wait here for nearly two weeks, do we? We'll have to stand the smell. After all, how can he help smelling? He hasn't washed since he was born, and he hasn't changed his clothes since he grew up. You told me yourself, Father, that was the custom of the Tungus who have adopted Eskimo habits."

The boy turned to the guide.

"Ask him when it was that he last saw the mammoth, Ivan."

"It was one night, last winter, Excellency."

"In the dark, eh? Does he mean he dreamt it?"

"No, Excellency. Pardon, but he says you do not understand."

"He's quite right; I don't!"

"It is thus he says, Excellency. The mammoth is not always alive. It comes alive only at nighttime and during certain phases of the moon. The rest of the time it is in a non-breathing sleep——"

Spencer interrupted.

“Wait a minute, Ivan!”

He turned to his father:

“I don’t know what he means by a ‘non-breathing sleep.’ Our word ‘trance’ doesn’t seem to fit. Say, Father, this couldn’t be a case of suspended animation, could it?”

“For thirty thousand years? Do show some sense, Spencer!”

“Well, there’s the story of toads found imprisoned in rocks nobody knows how many thousands of years ago, and seeds from the Pyramids of Egypt have germinated and grown, too!”

The Hunter answered these “scientific” arguments with a look of withering professorial scorn.

The guide and the shaman went on palavering, and the boy put in explanations to his father from the few words he could catch.

“The old medicine-man seems serious enough about it. He says that two men of his tribe have been hurt by the mammoth’s tusks. He says he can bring you the men, to prove it. They were chased by the mammoth. It happened a good way from here, in a river valley. He declares that the mammoth wanders up and down that valley, by night.”

“Will he take us to the place?” queried The Hunter.

Spencer put the question.

“Not for a million roubles!”

“Never mind the roubles. They have little chance to use money here. Offer him a gun.”

In his earlier travels, as an elephant-hunter in Africa, and, later, as the head of several scientific collecting expeditions, The Hunter had learned that nothing tempts a savage or a barbarian so much as a modern gun.

“He says he has all the guns he wants. Every hunter in his tribe has a gun.”

“The remnants of the Red Army and White Army campaigns in Siberia, I suppose. How about ammunition?”

This word aroused the shaman's interest. It was quite true that many Tunguses and most of the Yakuts had guns—since the World War nothing is commoner in Modern Siberia than a rusty and ill-tended rifle—but none of them had ammunition. A rifle, without any cartridges, may be a sign of affluence and authority, but it is not a very valuable weapon to the hunter.

Even with this bribe, the shaman seemed unwilling.

“He says he’s afraid the mammoth will come and haunt him.”

“Haunt him! Then it’s a ghost-mammoth!” exclaimed the boy’s father. “Is this one of these tales of imaginary creatures that the Tungus chatterboxes are so fond of? The mammoth is one of their principal devils, so I have heard.”

“No,” explained the boy, after some more talk. “He declares that it’s a real sure-enough animal. He calls it a ‘giant underground rat,’ I don’t know why. By daylight, so he says, the beast is quiet, but no one dares to go near the place because other ‘giant underground rats’ may be burrowing beneath the surface and setting the whole world atremble; by night, according to his account, it roams around, feeding, and then the natives are more scared, still. It’s surely the weirdest story I ever heard!”

The Hunter-Professor understood, at once, the shaman’s reference to a “giant rat,” but he was much too anxious to get out of the foul-smelling hut to discuss the matter with Spencer, there. Yet it was imperative to secure the information. Already they had been five weeks on the voyage through Siberia, and time was scant. This was their first clue.

“Try to bully him into telling us something worth while!”

On Spencer's orders, the Yakut guide became insistent, authoritative, and angry. He threatened the shaman with every kind of punishment he could think of, including tortures formerly used in Siberian prisons, of which the American boy had never heard. The shaman looked terrified at the Yakut's threats, but his fear of the mammoth was greater than his fear of the knout, of the nail-studded head-cord, or of the two fish-hooks thrust through the tongue and either cheek—a pleasant custom taken from the Koriak tribes, which made eating and drinking an agony. The guide added a few Chinese tortures, for good measure. All were unavailing.

“It's no go, Father; we can't move him. And if you'd only heard what Ivan threatened!”

“If he were not so old, I would seize him and make him come, by force!” stormed The Hunter, completely losing his poise in his eagerness.

The shaman actually smiled.

“He says, Excellency,” translated the guide, “that if you lay a finger on him, either you will die immediately, or within a few days, certainly before the next new moon. I, Excellency, think that

this is true. I have heard so, of the shamans, many times before."

"We'll have to find those two natives he was talking about then," said Spencer.

"At least," said his father, "let us get a breath of fresh air. I shall collapse, if we don't."

He had reached the door of the low hut, when the shaman spoke, in a louder voice. The tone seemed more conciliatory.

"What does he say, Spencer?"

"So far as I can make out, he offers to show us the mammoth, for five times twenty cartridges."

"But that's what we've been asking him to do for the last half-hour and more. That's all I want! Let him come right along!"

The boy shook his head.

"I don't think he means that he'll come with us, himself."

"No! What then?"

"Only that he'll show us the way."

"That's something. Let him come. The sooner we start, the better."

On this being translated to him, Ivan made a resolute protest.

"You do not understand, Excellency. He will show you the way, but he will not leave his hut

until after the new moon. He will show you the way, here, now."

"You mean he will tell us?" queried Spencer.

"No, Excellency. He will show it so that you can see the way with your own eyes. He will show you the mammoth, alive, too!"

"What on earth does that mean?"

A long explanation, with much mutual cross-purpose, followed, but, at last, the boy grasped the shaman's plan.

"I've got it, Father! I see what he means. He's going to show us the way, by magic."

"Magic?"

"'On a wall of smoke' is a literal translation. It seems to be some kind of sorcery, so far as I can make out from what Ivan says."

"Hunter" Wolland calmed down at this, so far as he could remain calm in that atmosphere of smells. He knew that the shamans or medicine-men of the Tungus are reputed to possess magical powers unapproached by those of any other race, save, perhaps, the Eskimo.

Entirely aside from his quest for a well-preserved mammoth for the Detroit Museum—his principal reason for coming to Siberia—he was making careful ethnological studies throughout the journey.



Here was a most unusual opportunity to see a Tungus shaman at work. Certainly, in the whole history of mammoth-finding, not one explorer had been favored with the aid of witchcraft.

“Very good. Tell him that I will give the cartridges. When is this performance to begin?”

“Soon, Excellency; very soon.”

“I’ll get a breath of fresh air, first. Arrange the affair as best you can, Son, and then follow me. I can’t stand this any longer.”

Spencer would have liked to stay in the hut, to watch the shaman begin his preparations, but the odor drove him out, too.

He found his father lying prone on the muddy ground outside the “yurt” or Tungus hut, which, with its out-tilted walls, looks like a square loaf of bread that has been thoroughly rolled in the dirt. The Hunter had been suddenly and violently ill; the change from the fetid atmosphere of the interior to the fresh air, outside, had been too sudden.

Spencer did his best to resist his father’s example, but the atrocious smell in the hut had turned his stomach, likewise, and he was not long in following suit. The fresh air, which had produced the attack, was a restorative, none the less, and, half an hour afterwards, both felt a little better. Yet they were

still pale and nauseated when the Yakut guide came and called them, stating that everything was ready.

“Great Cats! We’ve got to go into that smell and get sick all over again, I suppose!” the boy said, making a wry face.

“Well, I want to see that ‘giant underground rat’ of his, smell or no smell.”

“Oh, yes; what did he mean by that? Do you know, Father?”

“Certainly. It is a Chinese belief. Some Chinese traders, at Kiakhta, told Klaproth, the famous Orientalist, when he was a member of Count Golovkin’s embassy to China, that some ivory drinking-cups, which he had observed, were made from ‘the tusks of the giant rat, Tien-Shu. It is a creature which dislikes the light and lives in dark holes, near the Polar Seas. It comes seldom to the surface and then only during the dark nights. Its flesh is cooling and wholesome to eat.’”

“What an idea!”

“Some of the Chinese writers go even farther. They declare that earthquakes are produced by a whole drove of these monstrous ‘giant rats,’ burrowing, like moles, under the soil.”

“Where did they get such a notion?”

“From the Ostiaks, possibly. John Bernard Müller, a Swedish officer who was sent as a prisoner of war to Siberia, reported that the natives supposed the mammoth tusks to be ‘the Horns of a live huge Beast, which lives in Morasses and subterranean Caves, subsisting by the Mud and working itself by the Help of its Horns through the Mire and Earth, but when it chances to meet Sandy Ground, the Sands rowl after it so close that, by reason of its unwieldiness, it cannot turn itself again, it sticks fast at last and perishes.’”

“What nonsense!”

“How else would a Siberian native, who had never seen an elephant or the picture of an elephant, account for the sudden discovery of cold-storage flesh-and-blood mammoths, being washed free, by erosion, in gullies or along the banks of rivers? The beast was found underground, it must have lived underground—there is their reasoning. Like most savage reasoning, it is strictly logical, but the original premises are wrong. You can’t expect them to know geology. Even for those of us who do, Spencer, there are plenty of unexplained mysteries about mammoths.”

“What, Father?”

“There are too many to tell you, now. We’ve

got to muster up our courage to go into the hut. Your friend the shaman will grow impatient. Come along, Spencer, since we must."

They entered the hut again, agreeably surprised to find that the smell troubled them much less than before.

"You might get to like it after a while, Father," the boy suggested, with a grin.

The guide hastily motioned to them to be silent. The shaman was beginning his incantations.



SORTING SOME BIG TUSKS.



SIBERIAN MAMMOTH-HUNTERS.



THE BERESOVKA MAMMOTH AT AN EARLY STAGE OF EXCAVATION.  
Right fore leg and skull exposed.



*Courtesy of H. F. and G. Witherby.*

THE BERESOVKA MAMMOTH.  
Mounted exactly as it lay in the silted-up crevasse on the  
river bank.

## CHAPTER II

### A CHARGING MAMMOTH

THE arrangement of the interior of the hut had been changed, and, after a moment or two, Spencer realized why the odor had become more supportable. Along the roof of the hut, in the joint of the wall, a log had been slightly shifted, making a crack one inch wide the whole width of the hut. Through this opening, the foul air was rushing upward. Whether the shaman desired it or not, the "yurt" was being aired.

On the floor, immediately below these holes, and therefore against the wall, a row of small fires had been lighted, made of moss charcoal. This sent up a faint blue smoke and also gave off some stupefying fumes.

From somewhere—neither Spencer nor his father could tell where, for the hut was not large enough to hide anything and the Tungus certainly had not left the place—the shaman had brought out two mammoth tusks. They were almost semicircular in form, with the upward twist at the ends which is characteristic of the species. So far as ivory was concerned, they were poor specimens, but were of

fair length, a little over nine feet long. He had laid them on the ground, their points toward the fire, making, as it were, a ring of mammoth ivory.

The shaman was squatted in this circle, a drum between his knees. On the outer side of the ring of tusk were several small piles of dampened moss and leaves, each seeming to be of a different kind. These, also, must have come from some secret cache. In his hands the shaman held two huge mammoth teeth, weighing about eight pounds each, all that his old and withered arms could lift.

When perfect silence had been established, the shaman leaned forward, blew upon the fire, and then began to beat the drum, with a regular and monotonous rhythm, using the heel of the hand and his knuckles alternately. From time to time he leaned forward to pick up the mammoth teeth, clashed them together like a pair of cymbals, set them down again and recommenced drumming. After a time he began to sing.

At his father's suggestion, Spencer whispered to the Yakut guide to try to remember the words, but the guide answered that he did not understand them very well. They were in some old, old tongue, apparently allied to Chukchi, and which was a magical tongue, known only to the shamans. All



that he could grasp was that it was an incantation to the Tungus " devils " : the mammoth, the polar bear, and the killer whale.

This drumming and singing continued for a long while, and, in spite of his desire to keep his senses as alert as possible, Spencer began to be conscious that the fumes of the charcoal and the monotonous rhythm were making his head swim. This was, of course, a necessary preparation for the ceremony, for all witch-doctors know the necessity of bringing their spectators to a semi-hypnotic state. The Yakut was already under the influence, but The Hunter's glance was as keen and sharp as ever. He was too old a hand to give way so easily, and he had known what Zulu witch-doctors were, many years before.

Then, with a deft throw, the shaman scattered some handfuls of the damp leaves along the line of fires. Instantly, a white, dense cloud arose, and lifted toward the line of holes in the roof, forming an opaque sheet of smoke. It was so compact that the wall beyond could not be seen.

The shaman rose to his feet and began jumping upward, with wild yells. His bent and decrepit figure seemed to take on a supernatural energy, and his leaps were such as no white athlete could com-

pass. Almost it seemed as though he paused a second or two, in mid-air, before descending. A moment or two of this would have been surprising enough, but the shaman continued these frantic leaps for several minutes with an incredible agility.

Then he whirled, and, with gestures so rapid that it was difficult for the eye to follow them, he jerked his hands forward and back as though he were actually throwing an invisible Something at Spencer and his father. The effect was startling. While, probably, it was nothing but fancy, the boy felt as though he were actually being bombarded by something barbaric and strange.

Without pausing to see whether the hypnotic passes—if they were such—had taken effect, the shaman squatted down again, in his circle of tusk, and began anew his slow chant, to the accompaniment of the beating of the “tungur” or drum, and the clicking clash of the mammoth teeth.

For some time, nothing startling occurred. The chanting droned on, and the smoke curled upward slowly, being fed, from time to time, with handfuls of leaves.

Spencer was conscious of a sort of numbness stealing over his senses, making him feel as though he were dreaming, though still awake. A feeling of

unreality possessed him. The figure of the shaman in the circle of mammoth tusks grew smaller and smaller, until it faded away altogether. The wall of smoke first grew thicker and thicker, and then, in some strange fashion, deeper and deeper, as though it were a fog beyond which objects could barely be seen. Steadily the semi-transparence of the fog increased, distant objects became clearer, and Spencer realized that the wall of the hut had disappeared and that he was looking upon a distant scene.

The rain was falling heavily. The sky was blue-black, shot with a tinge of green, lightnings stabbed out from the overhanging masses of cloud, and the wind, blowing in violent gusts, drove the rain in oblique sheets.

Upon a turbulent and muddy stretch of rushing water, so wide that the strength of the current alone showed it to be a river, a tiny steel steamer, little bigger than a good-sized rowboat, struggled up-stream. Blocks of broken ice, uprooted trees, and floating islands of tundra "cannon-balls" and matted stretches of swamp grass, came hurling down the stream, rendering navigation extremely dangerous.

As the picture upon the smoke steadied, Spencer heard his father murmur, in amazement:

“That’s Benkendorf, on the Indigirka River!”

Instantly, the whole story flashed back to Spencer’s mind, as he saw, pictured before him, the finding of the first flesh-and-blood mammoth which modern man had ever seen. The scenes brought the whole adventure before him, a thrilling adventure in itself, which he had read, only a few days before, in Benkendorf’s own words:

“In 1846,” he had written, “there was unusually warm weather in the north of Siberia. Already in May, abnormal rains poured over the swamps and bogs, storms shook the earth, and the streams not only carried broken ice to the sea, but also swept away large masses of soil thawed by the warm off-run of the southern rains.

“We steamed up the Indigirka River on the first favorable day, in order to continue our work of mapping the Arctic Coast and the estuaries of the Lena and Indigirka Rivers to a hundred miles above their mouths. Though we were already far from the ocean, we could see no signs of land. The landscape was flooded so far as the eye could see.

“A lot of débris was coming down-stream, and some one had to stand continually, with sounding line in hand, to keep us from running aground, since there was nothing to show where lay the bed of the river. Our little steamboat received many a blow from the flotsam which made her shake to the keel. A wooden vessel would have been smashed.

“At the end of the second day we were only forty versts (27 miles) up-stream. We saw nothing all

around but floods. For eight days we met with hard going of this kind, until at last we reached the spot where our Yakuts were to have met us. Farther up was a place called Ujandina, whence people were to have come to us, for government purposes. No one had turned up, however. Evidently the floods had stopped them.

“As we had been here in former years, we knew the place. But how it had changed! The Indigirka, here about three versts (2 miles) wide, had torn up the land and made itself a fresh channel. When the floods subsided, we saw, to our astonishment, that the old river-bed had become merely that of an insignificant stream. This enabled us to shove through the soft mud; and we went reconnoitring up the new stream, which had cut its way westward. Later, we landed on the new bank, and surveyed the undermining and destructive work of the wild waters that were carrying away, with extraordinary rapidity, masses of peat and loam.

“It was then that we made a wonderful discovery.

“The land on which we were walking was turfy bog, covered thickly with young plants. Many lovely flowers rejoiced the eye in the warm radiance of a sun that shone for twenty-two out of the twenty-four hours. The stream was tearing away the soft sodden bank like chaff, so that it was dangerous to go near the brink.

“In a lull in the conversation we heard, under our feet, a sudden gurgling and movement in the water under the bank. One of our men gave a shout, and pointed to a singular shapeless mass which was rising and falling in the swirling stream.

I had noticed it, but had not paid it any attention, thinking it only driftwood. Now we all hastened to the bank. We had the boat brought up close, and waited until the mysterious thing should again show itself.

“Our patience was tried. At last, however, a huge black horrible mass bobbed up out of the water. We beheld a colossal elephant’s head, armed with mighty tusks, its long trunk waving uncannily in the water, as though seeking something it had lost. Breathless with astonishment, I beheld the monster hardly twelve feet away, with the whites of his half-open eyes showing.

“‘A mammoth! A mammoth!’ some one shouted.

“I called out:

“‘Chains and ropes—quick!’

“I will tell you (this account is from a letter which Benkendorf wrote to a scientific friend) of the preparations we made for securing the monster that the river was trying to tear from us.

“As it sank again under the surface, we had to wait for a chance to throw a rope over its head. This was accomplished only after many efforts.

“After a close examination, I satisfied myself that the hind legs of the mammoth were still embedded in the frozen mud, and that the waters that swept over the caved-in fall of soil from the bank would loosen them for us. Accordingly we made a noose fast round its neck, threw a chain round the tusks, which were eight feet long, drove a stake into the ground about twenty feet from the bank, and made chain and rope fast to it.

“The day passed more quickly than I expected, but still the time seemed long enough before the

animal was free at last, which happened about twenty-four hours after the cave-in.

“The position of the beast interested me; it was standing in the earth, thus indicating the manner of its destruction, not lying on its side or back, as a dead animal naturally would. The soft peat or bog on to which it had stepped, thousands and thousands of years ago, had given way under the weight of the giant, and he had sunk, as he stood, on all four feet, unable to save himself. A severe frost came, turning into ice both him and the bog which overwhelmed him.

“The surface of the bog gradually became covered with driftwood, and sand and uprooted plants swept over it in each successive spring freshet. Nature’s wondrous agencies had worked for its preservation. Now, however, the stream had brought it once more into the light of day. And I, an ephemera of life compared with this primeval giant, was sent here by Providence just at the right moment to welcome him!

“During our evening meal, our outposts announced the arrival of strangers. A group of Yakuts came up on their fast, shaggy ponies. They were the people we had arranged to meet, and increased our party to about fifty persons. On our pointing out to them our wonderful capture, they hastened to the bank. They were all intensely excited.

“For a day I left them in possession, but when, on the following day, the ropes and chains gave a great jerk, a sign that the mammoth was free from the clutch of the frozen soil, I ordered them to exert all their strength to drag the beast ashore. At length, after much hard work, in which the horses

were extremely useful, the animal was brought ashore, and we were able to roll the carcass about twelve feet from the water. The rapidly decomposing effect of the warm air filled us all with astonishment.

“Picture to yourself an elephant with a body covered with thick fur, about thirteen feet in height and fifteen feet in length, with tusks eight feet long, thick and curving outward at their ends. A stout trunk six feet long, colossal legs one and one-half feet thick, and a tail bare up to the tip, which was covered with thick tufty hair.

“The beast was fat and well grown. Death had overwhelmed him in the fulness of his powers. His large, parchment-like naked ears lay turned up over the head. About the shoulders and back he had stiff hair, about a foot long, like a mane. The long outer hair was deep brown and coarsely rooted. The top of the head looked so wild and steeped in mud that it resembled the ragged bark of an old oak. On the sides it was cleaner, and under the outer hair there appeared everywhere a wool, very soft, warm and thick, of a fallow brown tint. The giant was well protected against the cold.

“The whole appearance of the great beast was fearfully strange and wild. It had not the shape of our present elephants. As compared with the Indian elephant, its head was rough, the brain-case low and narrow, the trunk and mouth much larger. The modern elephant is an awkward animal, but, compared with this mammoth, he is as an Arabian steed to a coarse, cumbersome dray-horse.

“I could not divest myself of a feeling of fear as I approached the head. The open eyes gave the



beast a lifelike aspect, as though at any moment it might stir, struggle to its feet, and bear down upon us with stentorian roar. . . .

“The bad smell of the carcass warned us that it was time to save of it what we could; the encroaching river, too, bade us hasten.”

The words seemed to ring in Spencer's ears as he watched, almost without realizing the marvel, the acting anew of this dramatic discovery of a century before.

“First we hacked off the tusks and sent them aboard our boat. Then the natives tried to hew off the head, but, notwithstanding their efforts, this was slow work. As the belly of the brute was cut open, out rolled the intestines, and the stench was so dreadful that I could not avert my nausea and had to turn away. But I had the stomach cut out and dragged aside. It was well filled. The contents were instructive and well preserved. The chief contents were young shoots of fir and pine. A quantity of young fir-cones, also in a chewed state, were mixed with the mass.

“As we were eviscerating the animal, I was as careless and forgetful as my Yakuts, who did not notice that the ground was sinking under their feet until a cry of alarm warned me of their predicament, as I was still groping in the beast's stomach.

“Startled, I sprang up and beheld how the undermined bank was caving in, to the imminent danger of our Yakuts and our laboriously rescued find. Fortunately our boat was close at hand, so our natives were saved in the nick of time. But the car-

cass of the mammoth was swept away by the swift current, and sank, never to appear to us again."

With a vividness and detail that no story could give, Spencer and his father saw this amazing drama of exploration acted out before their own eyes, saw for themselves the first discovery of a flesh-and-blood mammoth made by any modern civilized man. When the carcass of the mammoth was carried down the raging, yellow river, the boy felt as though it were his own discovery which was escaping him.

He wanted to speak to his father, but it seemed to him that everything was far, far away. His voice did not seem under his control, his ears were buzzing. Before he could formulate his thoughts, the shifting smoke steadied again, became misty, then transparent, and a new scene appeared.

This was again a river, but narrow and confined between fairly high clay banks. There was a row-boat on the river, more correctly a "baidara"—a skin canoe which closely resembles the smaller Eskimo "umiak." In this boat was a Tungus canoe-man and two passengers, in whom he recognized his father and himself. If Spencer's interest had been excited by the first scene, how much more by this, in which he, himself, was taking a part!

To the left, Spencer saw, in the shaman's smoke, a clump of pines and stunted larches beyond which there was a sharp turn in the river. A smaller tributary stream poured down its turbid waters into the main river at this point. This little copse, on the top of a bank that was high enough almost to be called a cliff, was a clear landmark in this flat and dreary landscape. The "baidara" turned up this tributary, though the force of the stream and its swiftness made progress difficult. Indeed, the current grew so rapid that the Tungus boatman paddled for the bank, and Spencer saw his father and himself gingerly creep from out the cranky skin-canoe to the frozen shore.

The native stayed beside the baidara, but Spencer and his father—so the vision on the smoke displayed—walked up the right bank of the little river. The banks were steep, but not high. After what seemed to him like a long time of walking, they came to a place where the stream widened into a valley, perhaps a mile in length, with fifty yards of dry land on either side of the stream. These details fixed themselves in Spencer's memory.

The smoke blurred for an instant, then rose again, but with a greenish tinge in it. The shaman had thrown upon his fires some different kind of

fuel. An aromatic smell rose from it which made Spencer feel all the more dream-like.

Down in the valley, below them, the boy could see a huge form, black and ungainly, wrenching at the low growth which lay scattered in patches over the valley bottom. He knew intuitively that this must be a mammoth.

A wild excitement and a sudden fear seized him. In spite of his burning curiosity, he was conscious of a desire to keep far away from the hulking mass. It looked prehistoric and unnatural.

Then, on the smoke, he saw his father scrambling down the steep bank, evidently with the intention of getting a nearer look at the beast. The boy's fears vanished, or, at least, they were overcome by a natural shame. Was he hanging back, thus, because of cowardice, and letting his father face the danger alone? Never!

He went down that sloping bank in a rush. On the magic mist-wall he could see himself with absolute clearness; he even saw himself catch on a ragged root of scrub as he slid, and tear his trousers just above the knee.

Down the valley, it was easier walking, and he had fortunately escaped injury.

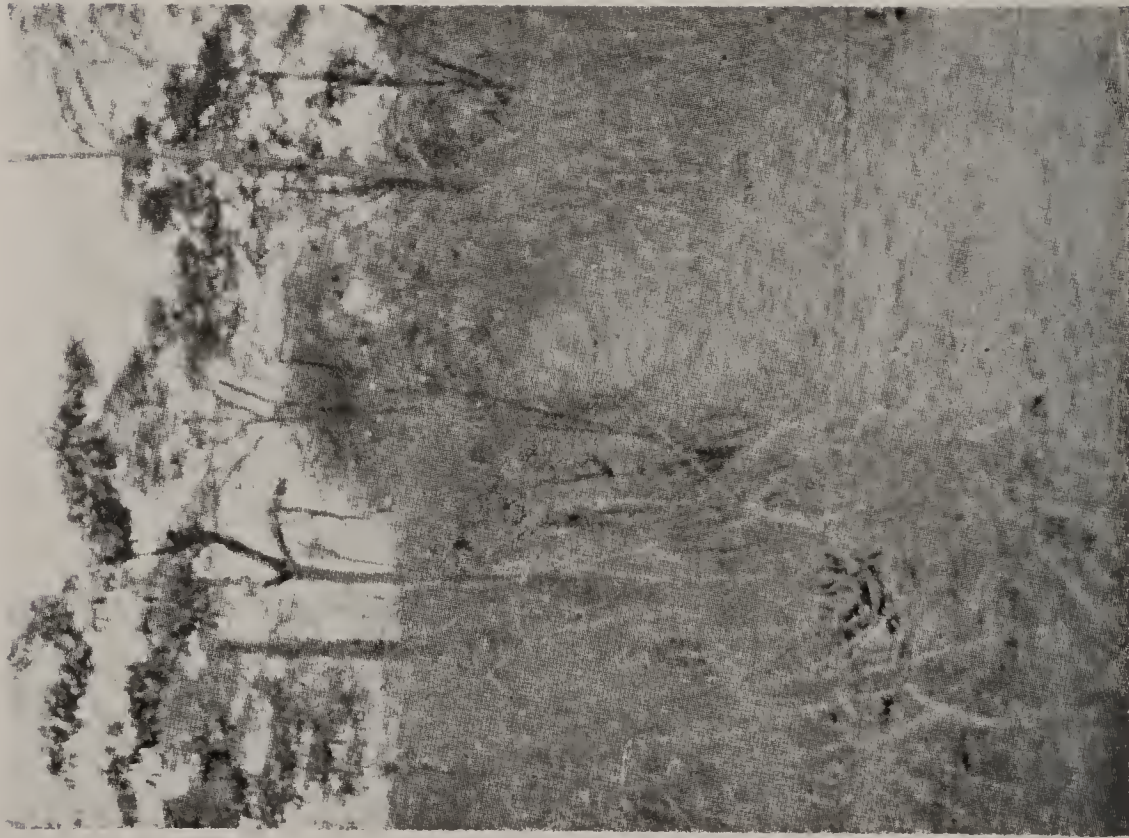
Back in the shaman's hut, the two Americans,



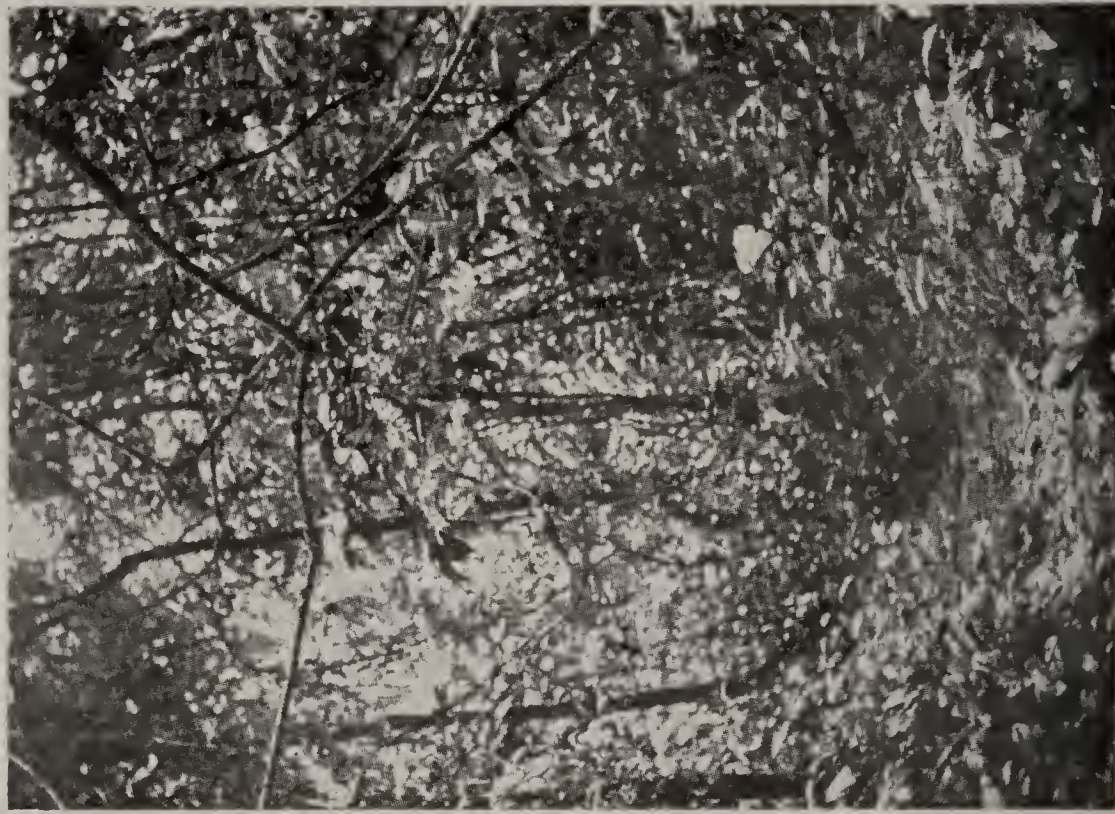
*Courtesy of Herbert & Daniel Co. Drawn by Alice B. Woodward.*

**THE MAMMOTH.**

**IN his native weather.**



AN ELEPHANT ROAD IN OPEN COUNTRY.



AN ELEPHANT ROAD IN DENSE JUNGLE.

father and son, saw their very selves advancing steadily and surely toward the mammoth.

Seen close, the monster was of huge size, shaggy and grim, yet the big tusks, turned inward at the tips, looked more formidable than cruel; they lacked the wicked menace of the straight-tusked African rogue elephant. The beast was not very much bigger in body than the largest of modern elephants, but his thick coat of long coarse black hair and brown wool added almost a foot in apparent height, and the ragged down-falling hair, coming almost to the ground, gave an appearance of vastly greater bulk. His ears were smaller than those of the modern elephant, and the tail was short.

Suddenly the huge beast turned and looked straight at the two who were approaching.

The low-angled Arctic sun shone full on the tusks. They were about ten feet long, and, at the base, more than twice as thick as a man's leg. Gleaming against the mane of black hair, which showed only a glint of the rufous undercoat of wool, their tremendous size and weight revealed what fearsome strength a beast must possess that carried them so easily. What matter if their tips turned inward? He did not need them for attack or de-

fense. Invulnerable, himself, he could stamp any enemy—even the prehistoric Great Cave-Bear—into a shapeless mass with a single blow of the foot.

His small eyes gleamed wickedly. The trunk curled upward slowly.

Suddenly, without a sound, the mammoth charged upon them, bent on killing.

On the curtain of smoke—yet with no sense that he was not looking at an actual happening,—Spencer saw his father throw rifle to shoulder. The gun missed fire. He saw himself do the same, though he was carrying only a sporting rifle of small calibre. The click of the hammer told him that his gun had missed fire, also.

The huge beast was upon them, trunk upraised, the ears spread out.

Two strides and all would be over. Escape, there could be done!

At that very instant, there came a sudden hiss. The shaman had dashed water on the line of fires.

The mammoth vanished in a whirling cloud, as the dense smoke eddied, writhed, broke into curling whorls, thinned and drifted upward through the holes in the roof.

Nothing was to be seen of the river valley, noth-



ing of the mighty creature which had menaced them. There was nothing but the wall of the hut, the line of half-extinguished fires, and the shaman squatted between the two mammoth tusks. He was still drumming softly.

Then he set down his drum, rose, and turned to the two figures of that magic terror-drama.

“In a second more,” he declared quietly and convincingly, “the ‘old one’ would have killed you both!”

## CHAPTER III

### FOSSIL IVORY

SPENCER and his father stumbled out of the shaman's hut, wondering and a little dazed. After a curt command to Ivan to pay the witch-doctor the hundred cartridges that had been promised, The Hunter set out along the little track that crossed the tundra, at a sharp walk. It was his custom to walk swiftly and far whenever a problem puzzled him, and Spencer, though fairly athletic himself, had trouble keeping up with his father.

Presently the silence grew burdensome, and Spencer broke it.

"What was that magic, Father? Some kind of telepathy?"

"Perhaps, for the Benkendorf mammoth-finding; both of us knew the story, and he might have read our thoughts. For the second part of it, where we saw ourselves, it could not have been telepathy. There's no use asking me how it was done; I don't pretend to know. You may call it a case of 'crowd-hypnosis' or give it any name you please, but there's always something in the doings of these primitive wizards which escapes analysis."

He pointed to the boy's knee.

"How did your trousers get torn?"

"Sliding down the bank ——" Spencer stopped suddenly. "But—but, Father, we only imagined we saw all those things! How could ——" he stopped in bewilderment.

"It's a hole in the cloth, isn't it?"

Spencer examined the tear.

"Yes, a regular triangular rip, just as if I had torn it on a root. Why, half the knee is gone!"

"You're sure it wasn't done before?"

"No, I'm sure. I'd have seen it, when we were waiting outside the shaman's hut. A tear four inches long—why, a fellow would spot that at once."

"How did it happen, then?"

The boy looked at his father in stupefaction.

"I haven't the least idea!"

"Nor have I."

They walked on for some time in silence.

"Could it be true, Father?" the lad queried.

"Could what be true? All that we saw, you mean? A living mammoth charging down on us? How could it be true since all the mammoths have been dead for thousands of years?"

"You think it was all a sort of a fantasy, then?"

“Not at all. I’m sure that there is some truth in it, somewhere. A shaman has a reputation to lose. He would forfeit a great deal of his prestige in the tribe if we came back and spread the word that his witchcraft was only a falsehood.”

“Then you think there is a valley, like the one we saw?”

“Very likely. Also the little copse of trees set on the top of a cliff. That may be true enough. The shaman would have little difficulty in making us see what he wanted us to see. The Hindu fakirs do it, every day in the week. But, to make us see it, he must have seen it himself; for him to have seen it, the copse must be there. We shall see!”

“You mean to try to find it?”

“I mean to go there, Spencer.”

“But since it was only a dream—a vision—a hypnotic suggestion or something of that sort?”

“A thing may be true, even if it is shown in an extraordinary or unusual manner. But there’s another thing, too. He took the cartridges as pay for his information. A Tungus is generally honest. If his magic had been nothing but a make-believe to fool us, he would not have taken the ammunition. No, there’s surely something behind that whole story. What, I don’t know.”

“But how will you find the place, Father?”

“That is easy. Any of the natives will know it. A landmark like that copse will be familiar to every hunter in the tribe. Besides, they will all know a spot where there is a likelihood of finding fossil ivory. It is the principal article of trade, here. If there really is mammoth ivory in that valley, the only reason for its remaining there is that the natives have been too much terrified by the story of the living mammoth to go near the place. The famous Adams Mammoth was nearly lost to science by just such a superstitious story.”

“How, Father?”

“Very simply! In 1799, Schumarov, a nomadic Tungus hunter, happened upon a hairy monster protruding from the side of a crumbling bank as if—to quote Bassett Digby—‘as if literally springing out of the earth in answer to the Trump of Doom.’”

“I suppose the Tungus ran away?”

“He did, and never went near the place for another two years. He went back, finally, but with a good deal of fear of what he might see. The second appearance was more alarming than the first. Almost the whole head, with the tusks, was exposed, and one of the hind legs had kicked free. Schumarov did not linger on the scene. He hurried

home—a three weeks' journey—and told his wife of his adventure. She told a shaman. The witch-doctor prophesied that all his children would die within the year."

"And did they?"

"None of them; the shaman claimed the credit of having saved them by his magic, and demanded, as his fee, half the value of those tusks. This forced Schumarov's hand, and, confident that he had the shaman's magical assistance, he plucked up courage and actually had the nerve to go and cut out the tusks, which he sold to a Russian trader. The news of the find reached Petrograd six years later and the Russian Imperial Academy sent Professor Adams to investigate. He went the following summer. But this was seven years later. The mammoth had become entirely exposed, and the wolves had devoured most of it, even the skin. That is saying a good deal for the jaws of a wolf."

"Is the skin so thick?"

"From three-quarters of an inch to an inch and a half, and as tough as ironwood where it hasn't rotted. Skinning a mammoth is not child's play. Besides, the skin, alone, weighs a ton or so and mammoths are generally found a thousand miles or more from a railway, in a country where there are

no roads. But, to return to Schumarov, if it hadn't been for the commercial value of fossil ivory, he would never have dared to brave his superstition, and science would have lost its first mammoth."

"Is fossil ivory any good?"

The Hunter fairly jumped.

"It has been a prime article of trade for a couple of thousand years and more. One of Aristotle's pupils was a dealer in 'fossil ivory and bones.' The father of Demosthenes, the great orator, was a wholesale ivory dealer, and it is on record that he distinguished between mammoth and elephant tusks. The bazaar at Khiva, in Southwest Asia, has been famous for its ivory trade for over a thousand years and we have written records of sales of eleven-foot tusks, which certainly no modern Asiatic elephant ever carried. Chinese writings tell of regular expeditions into Siberia in quest of mammoth tusks. To say that millions of mammoth tusks have been sold in trade would be no exaggeration, and hundreds come to the market every year. But the scholars of the Middle Ages thought themselves wiser than the ancients and refused to believe in mammoths."

"Why, what did they think them?"

"All sorts of things, my son. There was a legend-

ary giant, St. Christopher; have you ever heard of him?"

"Yes, he was supposed to have carried the Christ-child across a flooded river."

"The same. Well, in Valencia, in Spain, the thigh-bone of a mammoth is still paraded in procession in the streets, every year, as a relic of the saint, and a mammoth tooth is shown as one of the teeth of St. Christopher."

"What nonsense!"

"Why? In the Middle Ages it was much more logical to believe in giants than in Arctic elephants. The Bible said so, for one thing: 'There were giants in those days,' you remember, and what would a fairy-tale be without its ogre? As a matter of fact, the skeleton of a giant, nineteen feet high, was reconstructed in Lucerne."

"Father! Nineteen feet high!"

"Precisely. He was found near Lucerne. An anatomist of the University of Basle, Dr. Plater, wired his bones into place, to the admiration of the town. That was in 1577. It was not until nearly a century and a half later that a naturalist proved the 'giant's' bones to be those of a mammoth. The 'Giant of Dauphiné' was a mammoth, so was 'Og, King of Basan,' found in Austria, and even Eng-



land had its 'Gloucester giant' in the reign of James I. After that time, the fashion in giants changed, and every one agreed that the mammoth bones and tusks must be the remains of the war-elephants in Hannibal's army."

"Hannibal! 'Way up in Siberia!"

"Your medieval geographers did not let a little discrepancy like a few thousand miles or so trouble them. To suggest that Hannibal might have gone from Spain to Italy with a huge army by way of the Arctic Ocean was a mere bagatelle to a theorist of the Middle Ages. That theory was never put down until the great naturalist Cuvier proved by exact science that mammoth bones and teeth could not have belonged to any living species of elephant."

"And you say there are plenty of fossil tusks still?"

"Uncounted thousands, yes, millions, probably." The Hunter stopped and walked more slowly, for he was getting out of breath. "Here," he said, taking a clipping from his wallet, "here is what Bassett Digby says of his own experiences of mammoth-hunting in Siberia. He knows what he's writing about, and he was up here just two years ago. He writes:

“ ‘Up into the North we went, in search of prehistoric ivory. It was an exciting quest, for though I had obtained clues from the natives to spots up in that vast empty wilderness where tusks would almost certainly be found, there was no knowing whether they might already have been secured by a Russian trader or one of his scouts; or whether they would prove to be fine, unblemished stuff, fit to compete on the billiard-table with ivory that had been roaming about on the hoof, down in the French Equatorial, last year, or merely crumbling rubbish. . . . There was the chance, too, of getting within accessible range of that greatest of all prizes of the paleontologist—a flesh-and-blood mammoth, revealed by a landslip of the spring thaw in exactly the same condition as when a fall into a snow-filled chasm cold-storaged him 250,000 years ago.’ ”

“That’s what we want!” interrupted Spencer.

“Let us hope that the shaman’s magic may be a clue!” agreed the Professor, and he continued reading:

“ ‘Numbers of unpleasant things might happen, for the north country held quantities of leprosy and other horrible skin diseases, tramp-bandits, escaped convicts, vermin of every species, and mosquitoes of all kinds.

“ ‘Adventures are not rare, up there. The first night, on the north trek, in came an engineer returning from the gold-fields. A brodyag——’ ”

“What’s a ‘brodyag,’ Father?”

“A desperate outlaw. Some of them are criminals, escaped from Siberian convict gangs, but a large proportion are political prisoners, risking every form of hardship and danger to creep unseen through the thousands of miles of forest and steppe back to Russia. Very few ever win through. Winter and the wolves get nearly all.

“‘The brodyag,’” he continued, quoting, “‘had just clambered up behind his tarantass, or carriage, during the slow going up a hill, and had begun to cut the moorings of his baggage. The engineer’s revolver jammed, so he held it upside down and swiftly ripped up the fumbling hand he could see in the starlight, through a gap in the hood, with the “sight” of the weapon. Done neatly, and with adequate pressure, you can get excellent results from an empty revolver in this way, but take care to tackle the back of the hand so that the fingers can’t grasp the barrel before the damage is done. The brodyag dropped off with a loud howl, the horses were whipped up, and that was that.

“‘For many days of the journey northward, I was rowed down-stream, the women doing all the work. Such maps as had been procurable I carried. They showed the Arctic Ocean and its larger islands, the main rivers and the main mountain ranges, and gave dignified prominence to the names of the rare little groups of squalid hovels, surrounding a trader’s hut, that constitute villages up there. Enormous tracts of Northeast Siberia, however, are unexplored, and likely to remain so for a long time.

“ ‘Our luck was in. One morning, in a village, we located a really big hoard.

“ ‘A key was turned in a massive padlock. Bolts were drawn. With a muffled clang a sheet-iron door—strange to see in that part of the world!—was flung open.

“ ‘We stepped out of the blinding July sunshine into pitch-darkness. We sent Nikolai Ivanovitch for a taper, but, before he came back, our eyes began to get used to the gloom; and, dimly at first, then more and more clearly, this great heap of Arctic loot appeared, like the slow developing of a photographic plate.

“ ‘Huge horns that curled this way and that. Straightish horns, and horns that writhed. Horns curled almost in circular spirals. The hollows of horns, and the tips of horns. Tips blunt, and tips sharp. Horns as slim as a bullock’s or as thick as a tree-trunk. Horns smooth as satin or gnarled and rough as weather-worn old logs. No, not horns; but tusks, mammoth tusks by the dozen, by the score—hundreds and hundreds of them, cairn upon cairn, stack upon stack. Tons and tons of prehistoric ivory!

“ ‘I fell a-musing in that dim vault, of the vicissitudes of this store of tusks, and of the men who faced the rigors of the coldest region on earth to obtain them.

“ ‘How petty our historical periods seemed in comparison with their age! Some of the rugged old bull mammoths who fought their battles with these giant eleven-foot tusks may have ranged the top of the world 500,000 years ago. Others passed their time upon earth only a few tens of thousands of years before the Egyptian pyramids were built.

“ ‘How were they found, these tusks, and what of the men who had found them? Which had been hacked from a shaggy-hided monster of flesh-and-blood, newly exposed by a landslide on the thawing cliff of a Kolyma creek? Which had been seen afar off, dark, curly things sticking out of the level sea of snow on the Taimyr? Which had been dredged in a trawl from the shifting bars of the Lena delta? Which had been smashed or sawn from a gigantic white skull bleaching in a tangle of tundra brambles? Which had been raked up from the sandy beaches of the Olenek, along the Polar shore, or brought into view by the gale-driven ice-packs that pound along the undermined cliffs of Kotelnoi, one of the Ivory Isles of the North Polar Sea where no one lives and only the hardest and most daring hunters dare to venture?

“ ‘Yakut and Samoyede, Tungus and Lamut, Yukaghir, Ostiak and Tchuktcha, men of races that few people have ever heard of, had ranged the unmapped Arctic wilds for this treasure trove, now mere grist to the mills of commerce, flung, like so many bales of cotton or kegs of pork, at the feet of a trader!

“ ‘Dangers innumerable had been braved for these tusks, men maimed and killed. Leprosy and snow-blindness, frost-bite and starvation, lingering deaths in crevasses in the ice. Frail skin canoes capsized by the unexpected shifting of that awkward cargo—a mammoth tusk never seems to want to lie still. Death from the paw of a vengeful polar bear, from the teeth of a ravening wolf-pack. . . .

“ ‘They brought the tusks out into the sunshine, one day, and we sorted them. These were perfect, those were pretty good; here were some with seri-

ous flaws. That heap yonder would serve for billiard balls; the next heap for making the Russian ball, which is larger. This for knife-handles, that for combs. These for powder-boxes, those for piano keys.

““ Each tusk had to be closely examined, this side and that, point and hollow. A long job for us and an arduous one for the men,—for these tusks weigh a couple of hundredweight, sometimes. They worked well so long as their flagging spirits were revived with glimpses of small silver and allusions to vodka, the national intoxicant.

““ Handling a thousand or two mammoth tusks is instructive. You soon learn that the average text-book is quite wrong in picturing the typical mammoth with tusks so curly that they form nearly a circle. Not one tusk in ten forms a third of a circle, not one in twenty even a semicircle. Nearly all have a curious “writhe.” When you drop them on the ground, they do not lie flat.

““ As for length. Well, of those I examined in Northeast Siberia, twenty or thirty ran between nine feet, six inches and ten feet, six inches. A few ran eleven feet and an inch or two. One eleven-footer, in particular, had a skin of beautifully symmetric grain, like a brown kid glove seen under a magnifying glass; it was mahogany-color, not a crack in it, sound as the tusk of a freshly killed elephant. Another tusk ran eleven feet, five inches. One tusk ran twelve feet, one inch.

““ The monster tusk of the lot ran twelve feet, nine inches. It was bright blue, and seemed to be a cow tusk. This tusk ranks with two others as the second biggest of which records exist. The biggest mammoth tusk in the world is the left one of a

monster pair in the possession of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in Petrograd. This pair came from a skull which a trader found in the cliff of the Kolyma River. The right tusk measures twelve feet, nine inches, and the left one thirteen feet, seven inches and weighs 185 pounds.

“ “I doubt if there is any other natural growth, animal or vegetable, extinct or existent, that varies in color so much as the mammoth tusk as found in Arctic Siberia. Two or three that I examined were as white as modern elephant tusks. They must have come straight out of clean ice. There are tusks that look like stained mahogany, highly polished near the point, though coarsening toward the butt. There are blends of mahogany and white, and mahogany and cream. There are bright blue tusks, with a powdery bloom on them that you can rub off with your finger; tusks of steely blue; tusks of walnut, and russet and brick-red.

“ “Not only are these tints present, but there are rich and delicate combinations—superimposed one on another—of several tints on the same tusk, polished surfaces of softly blending tints ranging the entire spectrum. Understand, however, it is only the glazed skin on the tusk that is tinted. Beneath one-tenth inch of this and a layer of brownish or creamy bark about one-fourth inch deep, is white ivory.

“ “But only about a quarter of the tusks are in such fine preservation. The rest, in color and bark, are extraordinarily like weather-worn old limbs of trees, the dead wood you find underfoot in forests. And there were the tusks that had been exposed to water action; pounded about the Arctic beaches and rolled along the pebbly bed of swift

creeks swollen with spring's melted snows; gripped in jammed masses of driftwood and rocks for years—perhaps centuries—curious dead-white spindles and lumps, pitted and honeycombed.'

"Note, Spencer," The Hunter continued, "that was just one hoard. There are, undoubtedly, many more."

"But why didn't the natives bring it down to market, themselves?"

"In their pockets? Think of the capital that would be required to handle and transport several tons of mammoth ivory over a thousand miles of country where there is not the faintest semblance of a road! All the rivers run down toward the Arctic Ocean. Think of the organization, of the food! And the natives would never obey one of their own race as a leader. No, fossil ivory has to be gone after."

"Shall we get any?"

"If I hear of a hoard, I shall arrange to take it, certainly, and to sell it for the cause of science. Strictly speaking, it would belong to the Detroit Museum and might serve to finance some other scientific expedition. But I am not going out of my way for any commercial aim. I am here to find a flesh-and-blood mammoth, if possible."



“ Or a living one, still better! ”

“ You’ll never see anything more living than the mammoth we saw in the shaman’s hut, an hour ago.”

“ I’m not sure that I want to, Father. I’ll admit that I was scared.”

“ I was afraid, myself. And, as I said to you before, there was something about it that I don’t understand. How did your trousers get torn? Visions do not have material powers.”

“ Could the shaman have done it himself, on the sly, when I was half-dreaming? ”

“ He might, Spencer, he might have done it. But there’s more than trickery there, it seems to me. Anyway, I shall lose no time in hunting that copse upon the cliffs.”

“ When shall we start, Father? ”

“ To-morrow. I shall not be at ease until I have solved the mystery.”

## CHAPTER IV,

### A HAIRY MONSTER

As though to bring reality to the prophetic vision of the shaman, Spencer and his father found themselves, next day, in a little baidara, with a single Tungus canoeman. It had been their intention to take Ivan in the boat with them, but the Yakut refused, pointblank.

He, too, had seen the fearsome-tusked mammoth on the wall of smoke and he refused to go to the valley of the vision. He had done his full duty, he declared, in guiding the Americans to the shaman of this isolated Tungus village, lost on the desolate tundra, and thereby procuring for them a clue. More, he would not do. He would not go anywhere near the place where the mammoth was supposed to be, until he was well assured either that there was no mammoth there, or that the beast was really dead.

A second baidara followed, carrying food. Somewhat to the boy's surprise, the natives of the village had at once recognized the shaman's description of the pine copse growing on the top of a cliff, and

had declared it to be five days' journey away by boat. For some reason or other, Spencer had supposed the valley to be quite close.

The journey thither was monotonous, for the slowly-running river ran between muddy banks with never a hill or tree to break the line of the horizon. Nothing was to be seen but the dreary landscape of knobby plain or moss-clumps in marshy water, with never-melted ice that lay all summer long on the north sides of the larger shrubby clumps.

Spencer's restless spirit disliked the silence and the barrenness, but, by the look on his father's face, he saw that his father was in deep thought, and he knew, of old, that it was not wise to interrupt with purely idle questioning. At the same time, even in his most concentrated moments, The Hunter was always willing to give information.

"Father," the boy asked, thoughtfully, "is the modern elephant descended from the mammoth?"

"Only very indirectly," came the reply. "None of the species of modern elephant has come from the Hairy Mammoth of these parts. The line which has developed into the Asiatic Elephant of to-day branched off from the Southern Mammoth half a million years ago. Do you want me to give

you a trifle of scientific talk? Very well! There were three ancestral lines of big Proboscideans before modern elephants appeared on the scene. These were the Dinotheres, the Mastodons, and the Mammoths."

"I thought mastodons and mammoths were the same thing!"

The Hunter-Professor turned sharply, almost upsetting the frail skin canoe.

"Spencer!" he exclaimed. "One would think that you had never learned anything! For goodness sake, if you are on a scientific expedition, do try to learn a little about what you are doing!"

"Well, Father, a mastodon and a mammoth look much about the same, in pictures, anyway."

"You can't always go by looks, Spencer. A lemur looks like a squirrel, but it is really more a monkey, and the fur seal is really more a bear than the true seal to which it bears so close a resemblance. In the case of mammoths and mastodons, the teeth tell the story. Tusks are teeth, remember."

"How did teeth turn into tusks, Father?" Spencer continued questioning, delighted to have started his father in conversation.

"Very simply. Like Topsy, in Uncle Tom's

Cabin, they 'growed.' But it took some time for them to grow."

"Didn't the very first elephant have any tusks?"

"The 'very first,' as you put it, wasn't an elephant at all. Here, since we've nothing else to do and there is not much to see, I'll explain to you, Son, as simply as I can, how elephants came to be.

"You've never shown much interest in geology, Spencer, but you ought to know, at least, that the Age of Giant Reptiles came to an end during the Cretaceous Period, or the Period of Chalk. That closed about four million years ago, and it had lasted for about a million years previously. After all, Son, a million years is quite a long time, long enough for a fauna to undergo some changes. It isn't true to suppose that the Giant Reptiles were wiped out suddenly, and that the Mammals attained supremacy with a jump."

"No, I shouldn't say that something which took a million years to happen was exactly sudden!"

"Nor I, though some geologists would. Now, during the Age of Giant Reptiles, there were already a few generalized types of ancestral proto-mammals; but, except for their teeth, we know almost nothing about them. The Age of Mammals began with the Tertiary Period. Already in the

first division of that Period—which is known as the Eocene Epoch, or the Dawn-of-Recent-Animals Epoch—we find that nearly all the giant reptiles or saurians had died out, and that warm-blooded mammals had usurped their places.”

“I did know that much, Father!” protested Spencer, not wanting to seem too ignorant.

“Did you? I’m not so sure! But that is not the point, just now. I’m not going to trouble you with geology. One thing at a time. You want to find out about mammoths and elephants and to learn where elephants’ tusks came from. Let us stick to that point.

“We will begin in the Dawn or Eocene Epoch, and see what kind of beast was the great-great-grandfather of the elephant, a few million years back. On the shores of the Lake of Moeris, an ancient lake once draining into the Nile, in Egypt, and now nearly dry, the bones of a strange animal were found, which seems to be the most primitive of the Proboscideans. He was given the name ‘Moeritherium.’”

“What was he like, Father?”

“He must have resembled a snoutless pig with five-toed feet very much more than an elephant, to my way of thinking! He stood about three feet



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**MOERITHERIUM.**

The elephant's earliest known ancestor.



*Courtesy of Herbert & Daniel Co. Drawn by Alice B. Woodward.*

**PALAEOMASTODON.**

How the elephant's trunk began to develop.



high at the shoulder, had a sloping pig-like face not in the least like the vertical face of the modern elephant, and he had four slightly enlarged teeth—the incisor teeth—two on the upper jaw and two on the lower. An extremely interesting point about him is that his brain capacity was proportionately a good deal larger than that of the other beasts by which he was surrounded. The Elephant's intelligence can be traced back to his earliest ancestor.

“Before we leave Moeritherium, Spencer, it might interest you to know that his nearest cousins were the primitive sea-cows now represented by the dugongs and the manatees, the creatures whose appearance and habits gave rise to the old legends about mermaids.”

“I'd never have thought of giving elephants and mermaids the same great-grandfather!” exclaimed Spencer.

“No, there doesn't seem much outward resemblance, but the eye of Science can see it, just the same. This was only at the very beginning. Elephanthood had a long road to travel.

“The next link in the chain upward was a creature named Paleomastodon. In his prime he got to be the size of a pony; he had a fairly long neck, a sloping face and a long chin, on which

rested a prehensile upper lip. This was not yet a trunk, properly speaking, but it foreshadowed the coming of a trunk. Nature was already preparing a scaffolding on which to support the trunk that was to come. So far as tusks were concerned, *Paleomastodon* had improved on *Moeritherium*. He was the proud possessor of a couple of spoon-shaped lower incisor teeth, and a pair of upper incisor tusks, as much as five inches long. These tusks had bands of tooth enamel on the outer sides, clearly showing their derivation from cutting teeth. His grinding teeth were better developed than *Moeritherium* and show him to be the direct ancestor of the big Narrow-Toothed Mastodon which was to follow. *Paleomastodon* flourished throughout the next division of time, the Oligocene or Far-Recent-Modern-Animals Epoch, at the end of which appeared a broad-toothed and primitive Pygmy Mastodon, found in Algeria."

"Mastodons seem to have been scattered all over the world in those days, Father."

"They were. They flourished in every continent except Australia; I'll explain to you, some time, why they were never there. But let us get on. We pass next into the third division of the Tertiary Period, which is known as the Miocene or Less-

Recent-Modern-Animals Epoch, and which was a very important epoch for the elephant race. Nature, apparently undetermined in which way to develop the elephant, passed through two stages (*Euelephas* and *Stegodon*) to try out three different kinds of ancestral elephant. These were the Dinotheres, the Mastodons, and the Mammoths.

“It may make it a little easier for you to understand, Spencer, if I show you the trap that Nature got herself into. In the early part of the Miocene we find seven different types of primitive mastodons, four types with their grinding teeth possessing four ridges, and known as *Tetralophodon*, and three with their molars possessing three transverse crests, known as *Trilophodon*. We will concern ourselves only with one of the latter species, who is better known as *Tetrabelodon*.

“That fellow was worth looking at. He was about as big as a good-sized cart-horse, though, in the next epoch, some of his descendants grew to even larger size, as big as a small Indian elephant of to-day. In him, for the first time, the trunk became a real trunk. The neck of *Tetrabelodon* was a good deal longer than that of modern elephants, and his head was sloping. He had four tusks ——”

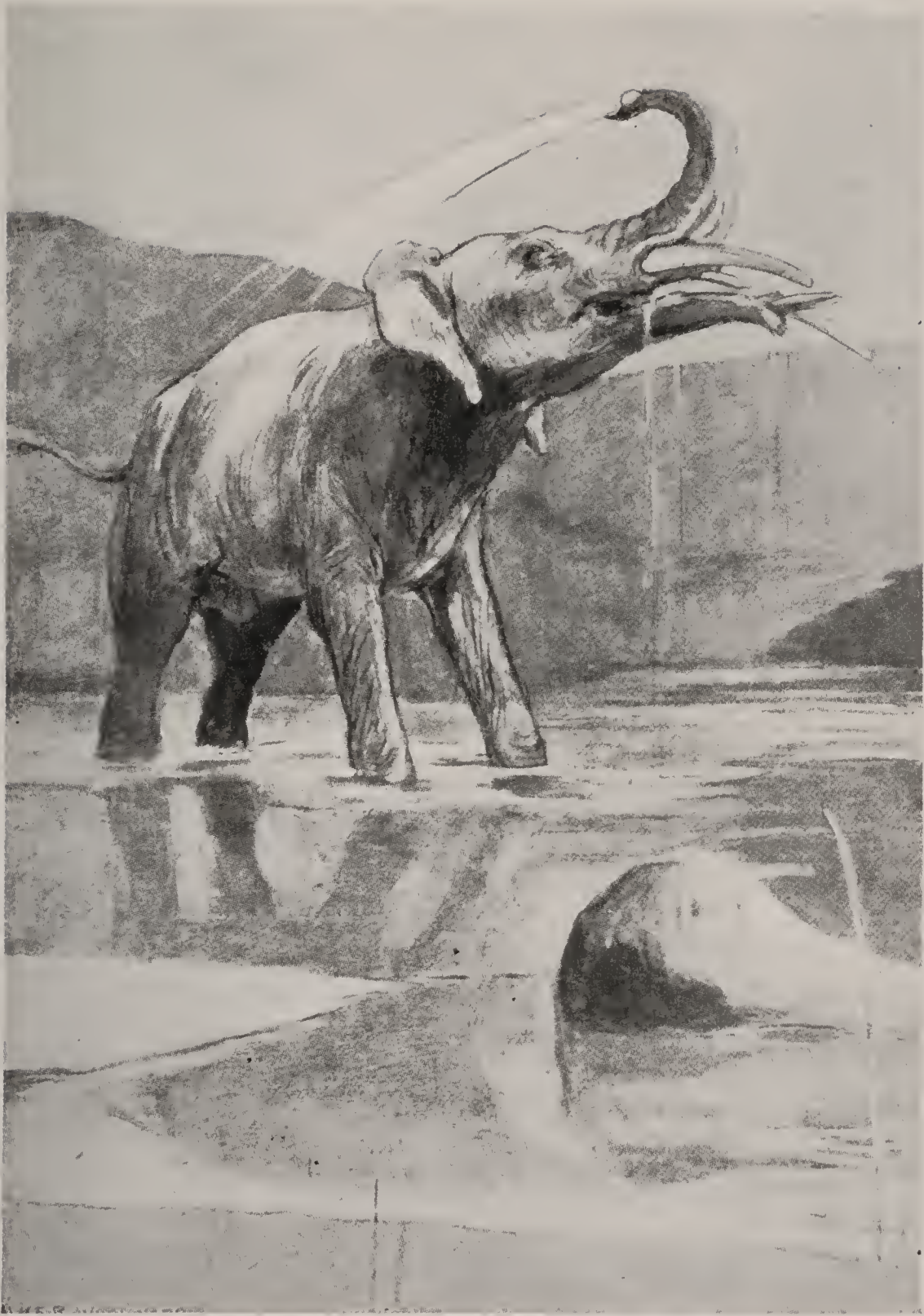
“Four, Father?”

“Four very representative tusks. Those of the upper jaw—which have developed into the tusks of the modern elephant—were the longer of the two, but they did not project as far as the two straight tusks of the lower jaw. This lower jaw was of unconscionable length and there was a strong chin which stood out still farther. Because of this length of lower jaw, the short lower tusks stood out in advance of the long upper tusks.

“This device, however, was not very practical. Since the trunk and the chin were developing at the same time, it is clear that they must have been getting in each other’s way. One of the two had to go. Which would be the better? Nature, as usual, tried both ways.

“Let us take, first, the type in which the plan did not work. In the next division of the Tertiary Period, known as the Pliocene or More-Recent-Modern-Animals Epoch, there developed a queer beast called the *Dinotherium*. In the Tetrabelodon, Nature had found out two things. The first was that four tusks were too many; the second was that a long trunk and long chin got in each other’s way.

“So, as an experiment, Nature developed the lower two tusks, in the *Dinotherium*, and dropped



*Courtesy of Herbert & Daniel Co. Drawn by Alice B. Woodward.*

**TETRALOBEDON.**

In the far-off days when the elephant had four tusks



*Courtesy of Herbert & Daniel Co. Drawn by Alice B. Woodward.*

### DINOTHERIUM.

Nature's attempt to put the elephant's tusks in the lower jaw,  
instead of in the upper one.

the upper two. So far, so good. But there was still the long lower jaw there to embarrass the trunk. Nature was in a hurry, and, instead of letting the long lower jaw diminish, little by little, she gave the end of it a downward twist, so that the end of the jaw was at right angles to the beginning. This changed the direction of the tusks of the lower jaw, which had projected straight in front, and turned them into downward and inward. If you can imagine a walrus with his tusks coming from his lower jaw, and the jaw twisted down to accommodate the setting of the tusks, you'll get the idea.

“With the lower chin out of the way, there was plenty of room for the trunk to develop; this trunk development, in turn, produced a straightening of the angle of the skull. For some reason or another—we do not quite know why—this device proved unsatisfactory. The *Dinotherium* lingered on for half a million years or so, and then died out, leaving no descendants.”

“There's nothing resembling a *Dinotherium* today?”

“Nothing. None of them lived beyond the Pliocene Epoch.”

“But the mastodons lived until modern times,

didn't they? I've heard you speak of an American mastodon."

"You may have heard me speak of an American Bear-Hippopotamus (*Amblypoda*) or an American Giraffe-Camel (*Altecamelus*) but that isn't to say that were modern! You didn't imagine that Columbus found mastodons roaming around, did you?"

"No, Father, of course not! But didn't they last as long as the mammoths?"

"Probably not quite so long, though there seems some reason to believe that the American Mastodon lived until the appearance of Man. Mastodons were as common in America, during the last division of the Tertiary Period,—which is known as the Pleistocene or Most-Recent-Modern-Animals Epoch—as mammoths were common in Siberia. They must have been as numerous in pre-Glacial times as the buffalo in post-Glacial. At Big Bone Lick, Kentucky, the remains of mastodons far outnumber those of the Columbian Mammoth, being five times as numerous as the mammoth and a hundred times as numerous as the bison."

"Did they look very different from the mammoth?"

"Quite a good deal. The mastodon had a low



sloping forehead, short massive limbs, it was enormously broad at the back, and, while of good weight, it never reached ten feet in height. The chin was longer than that of the mammoth, a sign of its earlier origin. The tusks were of good size, averaging eight feet long, with a few specimens touching ten feet, and they did not curl upward in the same way as those of the mammoth."

"And there were American mammoths, too, then?"

"Yes, two very different species. There was the Imperial Mammoth, which may bear comparison with the biggest of the True or Siberian Mammoths, which we're looking for, now; and the Columbian Mammoth, a slightly smaller animal. So, you see, Spencer, Nature tried out these three lines of Dinothere, Mastodon and Mammoth, in order to find out which was the best adapted to survive.

"I am speaking as though Nature were 'personal,' now, just to make it easier for you to understand. As a matter of fact, the real cause of these changes and modifications is still under dispute, and may never be clearly understood.

"Dinothere was unsatisfactory, and mastodon and mammoth disappeared just about the time of

the arrival of Man. We've still got the elephants to account for.

“I mentioned, a few minutes ago, that, in the Pliocene Epoch, there were two forms of a creature known as *Euelaphas*. One developed into the Southern Elephant of Europe, and the present Indian elephant shows a relationship to this ancestor; the other developed into the Straight-Tusked Elephant, and, from him, the African Elephant sprang.

“There, Son, in a rough way, you have the gradual development and evolution of the elephants. But you must not suppose that elephants have stopped developing. There are certainly six different kinds of elephants in Africa—some authorities name fourteen,—and there are certainly three in Asia, though some zoologists have raised this list to seven. Between the Congo dwarf elephant, the little water-elephant, the small-eared and domesticable Indian elephant, and the large-eared and savage African elephant, the differences are very great.”

This description of the development of the Mastodons, Mammoths and Elephants had been interrupted from time to time, as one or other small incident occurred to break the monotonous journey. Next day, Spencer returned to the charge, with fur-

ther questions about elephants, and so on for the two days following. It was an ideal chance to learn, and Hunter Wolland was an authority on the subject, knowing it from the points of view both of the ivory-hunter and the scientific naturalist. By the end of the fourth day, Spencer had learned all about elephants that he could hold at one time.

They had been paddling for about an hour, on the morning of the fifth day, when, at a turn of the stream, they saw before them the very pine copse, perched on the top of a cliff, which they had seen in the smoke-vision in the shaman's hut.

Although Spencer secretly had been expecting to find some of the witch-doctor's magic come true, he was none the less amazed to see how exact the vision had been.

“Look, Father!” he exclaimed.

“Incredible!”

“Why, it's exact!”

“I can even recognize individual trees.”

“And if there's a little stream on the other side, Father, are you going up it?”

“Isn't that precisely what we've come for?”

Spencer's heart gave a quick pit-a-pat. There was more than astonishment in his feelings. There

was fear, also. He remembered the ending of that dream-adventure, and, should the end prove as true as the beginning, how were their lives to be saved?

The shaman had not led them astray. No sooner had they passed the copse and turned a projecting point, than they saw directly before them, as they had seen in the vision, the mouth of a little tributary stream with a swift current. The main river bent away and took a wide sweep to the westward.

There was no need to give instruction to the canoeman. Evidently he had received his orders from the shaman. Without any hesitation, he turned up-stream and paddled valiantly against the current for more than an hour. Then, without any sign to the Americans, he made for the shore. Neither Spencer nor his father said a word. Both recognized the exact spot where, in the magic prophecy, they had seen themselves leave the little skin baidara.

Still silent, they left the boat, shouldered camera and guns, climbed up the bank and began to walk along the bank of the stream. There was something peculiarly eerie and frightening in the feeling that they were repeating in actuality what they

had seen themselves doing in a dream. It was like being one's own ghost.

Moreover, just as in the vision, Hunter Wolland carried the "elephant gun," a magazine rifle (Mauser .311 bore), while Spencer had nothing but a double-barrelled shotgun. Since the Americans had not come big-game shooting, but only to find mammoths that had been dead tens or hundreds of thousands of years ago, they had not brought a battery of weapons.

As before, in the shadows on the smoke, they saw the valley opening before them, a mile long, and with some fifty yards of dry bottom land on either side of the river. Spencer dared not glance at his father to see if he were looking, and it was with a decided effort of the will that he steeled his nerves to raise his eyes and fix them on the landscape ahead.

Below them, some four hundred yards away, his back half-hidden by the high clay bank, and his great head with its tremendous curly tusks slightly bent forward toward a clump of shrub, stood the great hairy Mammoth!

## CHAPTER V

### A SPLENDID FIND

By what strange magical powers could the shaman have known beforehand, have seen in all details, what was going to happen?

Even while Spencer gazed, dumfounded, at the dark and bulky form of the mammoth, outlined against the cliff, his father set off straightway down the bank. He had reached the level of the valley below before the boy realized that he was alone.

Ashamed of his laggardliness—which was due more to amazement than to timidity—Spencer went down the bank with a rush. Again—the thing was so bewildering as to pass beyond the bounds of mere marvel—again he caught the knee of his trousers in a sharp projecting root. This minor incident, almost more than all others, numbed his sense of surprise. Before, he had only felt that anything might happen; now, he felt that the events which had been foreseen must happen.

By the time that he had reached the valley, he had to run in order to catch up with his father.

They came nearer and nearer to the mammoth. When within a couple of hundred yards, or so,

Spencer distinctly saw the huge beast slowly turn its head and face them.

Convinced that the vision which he had seen in the shaman's hut was to be fulfilled at every point, he waited for his father to shoot, but The Hunter did not make any move to raise his rifle. Almost in panic, and wishing to forestall the mammoth's charge, which, in the vision, had seemed so menacing, Spencer threw his shotgun to the shoulder.

At the very instant of firing, his father's hand brusquely knocked the barrel aside.

"Nonsense!" he said, though his voice was none too steady. "Get hold of yourself, Spencer! Keep a grip on your nerves. The mammoth is dead. It *must* be dead."

"But I saw it move——"

"The mammoth is dead," The Hunter interrupted with an over-persistence, "although I'll admit that I thought I saw the beast move, too. I could swear that I saw it move. But I should be swearing to an illusion. It must be an illusion. Unconsciously, we are deceiving ourselves. Nothing is so self-infectious as fear, or as wonder. The mammoth is dead. It *must* be dead."

"But——"

"It is dead, I tell you!"

The Hunter's tone was far from being that of a man sure of himself. It was quite clear that he was repeating these bald phrases of common sense almost as though they had the character of a charm. Wise in the ways of psychology, he held his mind hard down to bare matter-of-fact statements. Moreover, he walked forward doggedly, if slowly.

"It's got its eyes open! It's looking at us, Father!"

"It is dead. Stone dead. Thousands of years dead. Dead. *Dead!* Keep that well in mind, Son; hang on to that idea as you would to a plank if you were drowning. Don't let your good judgment go under. Our senses may fool us, Spencer, all of them. But Reason deals with facts and my reason tells me that the beast is dead."

Silenced, but not convinced, Spencer followed, in spite of cold shivers and a pronounced trembling of the knees. But he could not contain himself.

"Father!"

"Well?"

"The trunk is curling upward, just as it did, before!"

The Hunter halted, pulled his watch from his pocket, opened the hunting case, and held it out to the boy.



“Keep your eyes on the second-hand, Spencer,” he said, abruptly. “Do what I tell you! Don’t raise your eyes until a full minute has passed!”

The boy obeyed, although that minute seemed to him at least an hour long.

“Now, look up! Tell me, has the mammoth’s trunk moved?”

“No.”

“Fix your eyes on the trunk, again!”

“It is moving!” cried Spencer, in renewed alarm.

“I see it moving, too. But I know that it is not so. I know that it cannot be so. Self-deception is a potent cause of error, into which even the wisest and most reasonable people may fall.

“Remember this, Son! Our eyes only convey an impression to the brain, but if that brain has previously been impressed with an expectation more vivid than the impression which is given by actual observation, the brain will be inevitably stimulated by the eyes not to see what is really there but to see only those things which agree with the vision that the brain has previously absorbed.

“That is what is happening to us both, now. In spite of our reason, our brains are still under the influence of that hypnotic suggestion given us in

the shaman's hut, and we simply cannot help seeing wrongly what we see now."

"You think it's that?"

"I am sure of it. All conjuring tricks and all processes of magic—whether genuine or no—are based on the principle that unconsciously we regard as a probable happening a thing which is expected. In this case, Son, our eyes are not deceiving us, or at least I think not—I believe there is a mammoth, there—but our brains are doing so.

"We are not to blame for being deceived, Spencer. On the contrary, there are cases where the ability to deceive oneself is as much a sign of strength as it is of weakness. Skepticism is always the mark of a small mind. It is because we have cause to trust our reason that we give it so much play, but, since we cannot know all things, it follows that we may be reasoning out our conclusions from an insufficient number of facts. The logic may be sound, but if the premises are false, so will the results be.

"Then, there is another thing, too. We have to consider the sense of strain. Nerves which are too tightly stretched may play us any number of tricks. Only let our emotions or our nerves be put to a sufficient strain and we need not be surprised to

see, in some external object, things or acts which are not really there, especially if there is an unconscious desire to supply them."

"How, Father? I don't quite see!"

"I will give you an illustration, in the form of an experiment which was carried out by the famous Wisconsin psychologist, Joseph Jastrow. It was just about the time when there was a great deal of discussion as to whether the faint dots on the planet Mars as seen by the telescope and recorded by the telescopic camera were or were not oases along a line of canals.

"Upon a large sheet of paper, Jastrow inked a number of large dots, entirely at haphazard. He pinned this paper on the blackboard. Then he called in a dozen members of one of the younger classes, told them that these dots represented the canals in Mars and bade them draw the lines of those canals as they saw them. The children did so. Of the twelve, only two children saw the sheet of paper as containing an array of unrelated dots.

"Then he called in another dozen children, and, with the same diagram, he asked them to try to draw the outlines of the animal which was partly dotted on the paper pinned on the blackboard. Not one of the children failed to see an animal in

those scattered dots, but no two of the children's drawings were alike. To another group, the suggestion of a bouquet of flowers was given, with the same result, and so on. The eyes of the children saw the dots, but the suggestion of canals, of an animal, or of flowers having been given them, they honestly saw in those scattered dots the semblance of what a suggestion had bidden them see."

He broke off suddenly.

"Spencer, has the mammoth moved?"

The boy looked up with a start and turned, for his father had moved slightly so that, during the conversation, Spencer's back was toward the mammoth.

"No, Father."

"You see, Son! I have deliberately forced you to follow my talk, these five minutes or more, without thinking of the mammoth, and you can see for yourself that the beast has not seemed to move."

"Yet, if I look at it," replied Spencer, staring, "it does seem to move!"

"Pure illusion! The longer you look, the more you will see there, what is not there to see. Come, we will go forward. But, as you go, repeat constantly to yourself that the mammoth is dead!"

They approached closer.

A shifting whiff of wind brought a very characteristic odor to their nostrils.

“ You smell that, Spencer? ”

“ Yes. It’s like something decaying. ”

“ Small wonder! The mammoth is dead, it has been dead for thousands of years. And this is summer-time. Do you understand? ”

“ It’s as dead as all that! ”

The two Americans were coming closer, now. The smell grew stronger. The illusion of lifelikeness began to disappear. When fairly near, Spencer stopped and gazed calmly at the enormous beast. His fear was gone.

“ My word, ” he said, with a sigh of relief, “ if the natives felt as I did, no wonder they ran! ”

“ If you had been alone, Son, I believe you would have run, too. ”

“ I certainly should! It looks so real! ”

“ That is the most curious part of it. Why has the animal not been torn to pieces by the wolves? ” queried his father. “ It is that which has puzzled me most. Ah, I see, ” he added, as they came closer.

The mammoth, truly, was in a most astonishing position. Its fore legs were firmly planted on a rock, but the rump and the hind legs were still embedded in the clay-ice bank of the river and were

frozen in. The rock on which the fore legs rested was not a ledge, but a huge boulder.

This boulder had resisted erosion, and the river, therefore, had cut a channel on both sides of the rock, so that the body of the mammoth formed a natural arch. The obstruction to the stream had narrowed the bed, and the narrowing had produced a rapids, which sent the water foaming past the boulder at a whirling speed. The roar of the rapids might easily have been taken by a superstitious Tungus for the roaring of an animal.

“You see, Spencer,” his father pointed out, “the river is too wide for any animal to jump; the current is far too rapid for any creature to swim. Neither from above or below can that boulder be reached. On the farther side, the cliff overhangs.

“You notice that the mammoth faces toward the north. This overhanging cliff has kept the rays of the sun from ever touching the monster, during the short but hot summers of this Arctic region. In winter, of course, it is frozen hard. That is why decay has not been more rapid. It is a chance in a million millions! No specimen so perfect as this has ever been found, not even the Beresovka Mammoth. We shall be the envy of the whole scientific world! We will take photographs of it, Spencer,

from every possible angle, and then we must return to the village at top speed."

"What for, Father?"

"For material to make a bridge, so that we can get to the rock—and that will not be an easy matter, here. For ropes to hang over the cliff on which to attach a scaffolding from which to chop out the hinder quarters—a very long job and a difficult one; and, even when the mammoth is free, I shall have to devise a way to get it to this side. Fortunately this bank is lower than the level of the mammoth, so we may be able to slide it down. But where shall I find timbers, in this country of stunted trees, to support so tremendous a weight?"

Spencer was taken aback. He had not realized that the finding of the mammoth was only the beginning of the quest, not the end.

"We must get skins to make a comfortable hut," his father went on, "so that we can live right here while the work is proceeding. We must have large quantities of food. We must engage every native that we can lay hands on, either by threats or good pay, or both. We must procure all the sledges and all the horses that can be found within five hundred miles of here. We've got weeks of work before us, and this is already the beginning of September!"

“ Well, we’re not in any hurry to get home, are we? ”

“ We’re in a hurry to get away from here, though! I don’t want to abandon my find for an entire winter; there wouldn’t be much left of it, when we came back in the spring.”

“ Why abandon it? ”

“ Because of the cold. We’ll be able to endure the temperature of October, but, even with heavy furs, Spencer, you and I could not live here later than the middle of November, at latest. Remember, this part of the world is colder than the Arctic Ocean, colder than the North Pole itself. Only the plateaus of Greenland can compare with it, and, on those plateaus, neither man nor beast exists.”

The photos taken, father and son hurried to the boat. A heavy bribe to the canoeman took them up the river to the village at the same speed as they had come down, but five days passed on the journey, none the less.

On the instant of their arrival, Hunter Woland woke into frenzied action. This was the first time that Spencer has seen his father at work in the field, and he realized why the Detroit Museum had chosen him. He was an incomparable leader. He had the gift of instilling workers with the same



enthusiasm as he possessed himself, he forgot nothing, he saw everything, and his long experience both as a big-game hunter and as the head of scientific expeditions had taught him the one invaluable rule that it is not hurry which begets speed, but organization, forethought, and the avoidance of having to do anything twice.

The fame of the shaman grew mighty in the land, for the news of the authenticity of his magic vision spread far and wide. At The Hunter's suggestion, on promise of a further gift of ammunition and the value of the mammoth's tusks, he agreed to declare that the white men had broken the magic spell and that the mammoth would wander alive no more, but that, to free the region from being haunted, all the natives must help the Americans to take the carcass away. The man who refused to help, declared the shaman, would be haunted, himself. This superstitious fear, added to the promise of higher wages than they had ever known, attracted natives from every quarter.

In less than two weeks from the finding of the mammoth, Spencer and his father were back in the little valley, with thirty natives at their back, ten boat-loads of provisions, and the whole country was being scoured for more workmen, for timber, for

horses and sledges, for the thousand-and-one things necessary to such a great enterprise. How difficult a task, Spencer did not realize in the least until it was begun. Then, indeed, the boy doubted if the mammoth would ever reach Detroit.

The cliff, in which the mammoth was embedded, was 110 feet high, and the body of the mammoth was some twenty feet above the level of the river at the top of the rapids. The upper stratum of earth and moss was a couple of feet thick. Below that came six feet of loam, frozen solid, and, below that, for eight feet, a layer of earth, moss and loam, mixed with stones, roots, and pieces of wood, intermingled with which were lamellar plates of ice, six inches thick. Below all this, for nearly a hundred feet, a vertical wall of brown-stained ice.

Not the smallest difficulty was the lack of tools for so large a number of workmen, and hacking away the ice-cliff from a swinging scaffolding with pickaxes of bone, in the endeavor to free the hinder quarters of the mammoth, was a tantalizingly slow piece of work. As more and more natives came to the scene, the Professor set them all at some task. There was labor enough for all.

No timbers strong enough to support such a tremendous weight could be found in the country,

and, of course, it was useless to try to find a beam of even one-fifth of the desired length. It was necessary to splice tree-trunk to tree-trunk, binding them together with strips of rawhide, and to strengthen all this construction with mammoth ribs, lashed together. These huge ribs were taken from a point eighty miles to the northward, where ivory hunters had found a mammoth "cemetery" and had despoiled the tusks. The ribs had no market value, and so had been left there.

The upper end of this bridge was anchored to the brink of the cliff, above, and, besides, it was swung to huge overhead cables which Spencer had secured from a former Siberian convict settlement four hundred miles to the southward, whither he had gone with Ivan. This quadruple suspension cable also was anchored to the cliff above and stretched as taut as possible to the ground below, near the tents.

By the time that Spencer returned from his visit to the penal settlement, it had become so piercingly cold that the Americans could no longer live in the skin tents. The bitterness of the nights was intense. The hours of sunshine diminished alarmingly, and the sun, at its highest, was but at a low angle with the horizon. Yet the work must go on. All the natives save the bridge-builders and those

who were chipping out the ice-cliff were set toiling to build a house that could be warmed. October was well advanced before it was completed.

The very day after the house was finished, after Spencer had enjoyed his first warm sleep for a month, a cry arose from the men at work on the scaffolding that the mammoth was almost ready to break free. All the natives, save one or two of the hardest, who had acted as foremen, scrambled down out of the way. There was no telling what might happen.

This was the crucial moment! On the happenings of the next few minutes depended the success or failure of the whole expedition. On the strength of the suspension bridge—it was really far more a slide than a bridge—everything depended, and what confidence could be put on half-rotten cables, on tree-trunks roughly spliced together with rawhide, and on mammoth ribs, perhaps thousands and thousands of years old? For several nights past, The Hunter had ordered the Tunguses to dash water from the river on the bridge. This, of course, froze as it fell.

The slide itself, four tree-trunks in thickness and eighteen tree-trunks in width, had been built in the shape of an immense gutter. The curving sides

were made of mammoth ribs—scores of them—set concave-wise, and now there was some three feet thickness of glare-ice over the mammoth ribs.

The fore legs of the mammoth already rested on the slide, for the frozen beast had been braced up from below while the rock on which the fore legs had rested was blasted away by small charges of dynamite secured from the gold-mines several hundred miles to the southeastward. This had been done in order that the slide might be built underneath, for not only would it be impossible to improvise a tackle strong enough to lift the mammoth, but there was no means of knowing whether the carcass might not drop to pieces.

It was to be feared, indeed, it was almost sure, that neither the bridge-slide itself nor the cables by which it was suspended were strong enough to sustain the whole weight of the mammoth, but The Hunter was not expecting it to do so. The slide had a steep slope, and, if it could stand up during the single moment of shock when the weight of the mammoth's whole carcass should first come on it, all might be well, for, in sliding swiftly downward, the weight would not be more than a fraction of a second on any one spot of the construction.

Beyond the lower end of the slide, water had also

been carried from the river and poured on the ground, to make a sheet of ice eighty yards wide, extending to the opposite cliff. Owing to the slope of the ground, this sheet of ice—Spencer called it an ice rink and lamented loudly that he had not his skates with him—bore upward slightly, and it had been strewn with scrub. Thus, if all went well, the impetus of the huge carcass—weighing several tons—would send it sliding a long way over the ground ice, but the scrub would get pinched under the body and thus cause friction enough to stop it. Once the mammoth was fairly on solid ground, the carcass, despite its size, could be hauled by horses over the ice to any desired position, without too great difficulty.

In spite of every precaution, the event came suddenly. Almost without warning, the hind quarters of the mammoth broke away from the cliff. It seemed almost to leap outward. Unable to fall either to left or right by the sides of the scoop-shaped bridge, the hind end slewed a little sideways, but the fore legs, frozen stiff, held the carcass almost upright.

There was a fraction of a second of agonized suspense. Then, with a terrific cracking and snapping, it began to slide.

At that crucial instant, two of the four suspension cables snapped as though they had been sewing-thread. The third held, for perhaps a second—not more; the fourth cable parted a second later. The whole bridge came down with a thundering crash.

But those two seconds had been just enough. A weight of six tons, set on a steep ice slide, receives an enormous impetus and gravity operates instantaneously.

The upper end of the bridge split asunder as it fell, but it could fall no farther than the rock in midstream, and the loose construction of tree-trunks and mammoth-ribs was held rigid by the three-foot thickness of ice. It cracked, it broke, it lurched, it split, yet, in the very act of breaking into a welter of confusion, it held its form for a few seconds longer. Though almost level, it offered no hindrance to the forward plunge of the enormous frozen beast.

The natives turned to flee in terror.

At that very instant, Spencer realized once again the fantastic precision of the shaman's vision.

The huge mammoth, its tusks gleaming, the whites of its eyes showing, came plunging down upon him and his father as they stood on either

side of the foot of the bridge-slide, in an agony of anticipation.

The mammoth charged them, truly, but it was dead, thousands of years dead, just the same!



## CHAPTER VI

### AN ARCTIC BLIZZARD

ONCE more, in his ignorance and optimism, Spencer had supposed that the biggest part of the work was done when once the mammoth was fairly and squarely on dry land. He found himself wrong in that, grievously wrong. It was as impossible to transport that mammoth, whole, to Detroit, as it would have been to tell the thirty-thousand-years-dead beast to get up and walk there.

“You mean,” he said incredulously, when his father had explained to him the next stage in the work, “that we’ve got to skin that whole monster, to cut it up into little bits, and to take it to the States, that way?”

“If you can suggest some feasible means of transporting a single mass of six tons of rotting flesh on a sledge a thousand miles to a rail-head, then over a few thousand miles of railway to a boat, then across the ocean, then half-way across another continent, keeping it strictly frozen all the time so that it doesn’t actually putrefy and fall to pieces, and, what’s more, if you can find me some method

of preventing the spread of disease all along the line, I'll be infinitely obliged to you, my son."

"I suppose it would get bad; I hadn't thought about that. It smells bad enough, now."

"Nothing to the way it will smell, in a few days. Wait till it gets warmed up a bit! To begin with, we've got to put the carcass indoors."

"What on earth for?"

"In order to be able to work."

"Oh, those Tungus chaps can stand the cold all right!"

"Perhaps," agreed The Hunter, dryly. "But how do you propose to disarticulate a mammoth's thigh, for example, with the flesh frozen so hard that it would turn the edge of a lumberman's axe? How would you skin a hide, frozen so stiff that a chisel would hardly make a dent in it?"

"You mean that you'll have to thaw it all?"

"How else? Frozen flesh is as hard as the toughest wood."

"But you'll have to roast it! To roast six tons at a time! You'd have to have a fire as big as a house!"

"Not quite. But the mammoth will have to be thawed, bit by bit, part by part, before we can open it, take out the stomach, examine the contents,

strip away flesh, tendons, and sinews in order to get at the bones, and all the rest of it."

"Father! The smell!"

"It will be vile, Spencer. I should say it will infect the air for ten miles around. But the job has to be done. One can't abandon the richest paleontological find of modern times because of personal discomfort. Go back to the village and wait for me, there, if you think you can't stand it."

Spencer fairly gasped with indignation.

"Me? Go? Show the white feather! I should say not! I'll stick if I get so sick that I'll not be able to eat for a month!"

It was a proud boast and a bold one, and, many a time in the succeeding month, Spencer was tempted to quit. The work was simply horrible, the smell abominable; so nauseating was the stench that men vomited, even during their sleep, and the natives were not immune. But the boy did not lack for grit, and he stuck by his father's side, learning dissection on a large scale.

Toward the end of the month, when he had learned exactly how the bones, the strips of hide, the pieces of fur, and certain parts of the body—all rotting and ready to fall to pieces at a touch—should be packed for safe transport, his father put

him in charge of a gang of men to superintend the packing.

There, in the open, the smell was less disgusting than under the shed itself, but the cold and the dark were almost as great a trial. Daylight hours were short, and the low-angled sun gave little heat. Whale-oil and seal-oil lanterns, their sides improvised from sheets of clear ice—which never melted, so great was the cold outside—enabled them to continue during the hours of darkness. A day shift and a night shift were kept continually on the job.

In order that the work should be constantly superintended, the hours of sleep, both for Spencer and his father, were constantly interrupted. With little rest and less chance to retain his food, the boy began to grow weak. Though robust at the beginning of the month, he was skeleton-thin at the end of it.

On October twenty-eighth, the first snow fell. Fortunately it was a light fall, but it served as a warning. Every day after that was a serious menace.

It was on November tenth, six days before the date set for the start, that the Arctic winter first showed its icy teeth. There was little snow, little

wind, but, about sunrise of that day, a low moaning sound began to boom over the tundra, like the regular throbbing beat of a distant gong.

An hour later, the camp was half deserted. The Southern Tunguses and the Yakuts could not even be tempted by the double wages, yes, the triple wages which The Hunter offered them for every additional day.

In this strait, the shaman showed himself a brave man and an honest one. Despite his age and feebleness, he came down to the camp, and, by sheer prestige, held the remaining workmen to their task. They feared the winter desperately, but they feared the shaman more.

On the very date set for the start, thirty-five sledges, heavily loaded—most of them overloaded for ponies little accustomed to harness work—left the camp for the village and thence for the long overland journey to Yakutsk.

Twelve sledges had already gone in advance, under Ivan. These did not carry mammoth remains, for Hunter Wolland obstinately refused to be separated from any part of his find. They were loaded down with fossil ivory.

Natives from far and wide, hearing of the presence of rich strangers, had brought tusks for pur-

chase. Though the Americans had no more ready money, the Tungus sold the tusks at the regular market price to a perfect stranger, not knowing for certain if they would ever get their money, and knowing that, in any case, it could not reach them that winter. Honesty is taken for granted in the Northern Tungus country—beyond the Arctic Circle.

At the entrance to the little valley, where they had first seen the mammoth, Spencer turned for a last look. Both the house and the great shed which had been built over the mammoth were gone. All had been dismantled. In addition to full pay, The Hunter had divided all the vast store of material which had been collected and had given it to the faithful Tunguses. This treasure of timber, of ropes, of tools and similar articles, to dwellers in that isolated region, was much more valuable than gold.

The valley looked forlorn and abandoned, in contrast with the feverish activity it had presented, only a few days earlier. Spencer had passed a terrible two months of hardship and discomfort there; yet, in a way, he was sorry to go. No other American boy had ever had such an experience.

“So, it’s ‘good-bye’ to that!” he said to his

father, as they turned the corner of the pine copse on the cliff, and the few remaining trees hid the valley from sight. "It's true that we haven't actually seen a living mammoth, but I don't believe that anybody in modern times has ever come closer to it. I almost feel as if I had seen one!"

"In all the history of mammoth-hunting, no one has ever been so fortunate as we have," agreed his father. "If we only succeed in getting everything home safely, I will have little more to ask for."

"Oh, I have, Father!"

"So? What have you got in mind, I'd like to know?"

"Well, now that I've really had all I want of mammoths, I'd like to see some real living elephants in their native haunts; African ones, by preference, since you say they are the biggest."

"Their charges might be a bit more dangerous, Son!"

"Perhaps. But they wouldn't smell as much!"

"No, there is some consolation in that. Well, Spencer, there's no saying; you might get a chance. Since the Detroit Museum is going to have the finest mammoth in the world, bar none, the Trustees might be persuaded to build that Elephant Hall I once urged them to do, and that will call

for a special collection. The plan was more or less in the air when we left.

“ You see, Son, thanks to those twelve sledge-loads of fossil ivory which Ivan is looking after, and which the Museum can sell at an enormous profit on the price I agreed to pay for it, this expedition will not have cost its backers a single cent. They may even be in pocket by it.

“ In that case, I’m almost sure that the Trustees would be willing to put the grant at my disposal again. I should like, above all things, to go to Africa and do a little elephant-hunting again, not only for the sake of old times, but also because there are quite a number of scientific problems to be worked out. One thing at least is sure, Son, there would be little danger of frost-bite there! ”

“ You’d take me along, Father, wouldn’t you? ”

“ Very willingly, if you would care to come, and if you can learn to be a real big-game shot. African elephants are dangerous. I may as well tell you, now, Spencer, that I think you’ve done yourself proud on this trip. The quick way you picked up the Yakut and Tungus languages was most creditable, and it was, and still is, exceedingly useful. Not everybody has the gift of mastering native languages, and you seem to possess it naturally.



“Then, too, though I doubt if you’ve been able to keep down many meals, during the last month, because of living night and day in an atmosphere of putridity, you haven’t lost either your temper or your nerve. It’s very hard to keep going steadily, with one’s stomach in open rebellion. You’ve made an exceedingly good record, my boy!”

Spencer almost burst with pride at these words, for his father was usually very scant of praise. Flushed with pleasure, he hurried forward on his stocky Tungus pony, to keep the leading teams whipped up to their work. The Hunter acted as rear-guard, in order to prevent any laggards from dropping behind.

There was little time for conversation, for thirty-five sledges take a good deal of handling, if speed is to be made. Tungus drivers are naturally talkative, and will stop for a chat on any excuse, or none. Tungus ponies, too, though exceedingly tough and hardy, and used to enormously long journeys, are inclined to a lazy pace.

Every hour, now, must be made to count. The expedition was far above the Arctic Circle, and the middle of November had passed. The going over the lumpy frozen tundra was slow and hard. It

took the caravan of sledges eight days to reach the village, with their heavy loads.

The shaman looked grave at the lateness of their coming. He warned them that the first Arctic blizzard—generally one of the worst of the entire winter, and which is due in that region during the first two weeks of November—could not hold off much longer. Indeed, the weather signs were menacing.

The full of the moon had passed, and the shaman could not be induced to stir out of his hut, though The Hunter would have given him almost any price to accompany them, so great was the medicine-man's power over his men.

“One thing I say,” advised the shaman. “Do not stop in this village to-night. Go on; go on! Even if the ponies are tired, go on; they will endure more travel than you think, if you feed them well. They will not fail you till they drop dead. Go on! Do not stop for meals, or, certainly, not more than once. Go on night and day, if you can! In fifty hours from here you should reach the Kusinensk Forest.

“You must reach it! If the blizzard catch you before you get to the forest, then other white men will come, some day, and dig your bodies out of

the snow and ice, just as you have dug the body of the 'giant rat.'

"If you reach the forest, you are safe. The ponies can feed on pine-needles. You can find shelter from the wind and the driving snow, and you will be wise to make shelters. The blizzard will last five days. I have already sent a man to set up sticks to mark the way, if the first snow comes to-night, as it may. It will come very soon. 'It is the hour when a man goes on a journey,'" he added, using a Northern expression of farewell.

Spencer translated this to his father with comparative ease, for he had spoken little else but Tungus during the last month at the camp.

"Ask him if he will show us, on the smoke, whether we will get to the forest?" The Hunter asked, anxious to add to his ethnological study of Siberian native customs.

"You do not have the time to wait!" the shaman answered impatiently. "You do not understand. It is to go! Go on! 'It is the hour when a man goes on a journey'!"

Remembering their previous experience of the precision of the shaman's foreknowledge, The Hunter did not linger. Spencer's shouted orders soon summoned the scatterers. The half-unhar-

nessed horses were hitched up again, the sledge-drivers mustered in haste, and, ten minutes later, the mammoth caravan was in motion.

This time, there was little need to urge the men on. A word from the shaman to Tapchuv, the chief driver, had been enough, and the prophecy that the November blizzard might catch them on the way, if they did not hurry, gave grim authority to the witch-doctor's orders.

Beyond the village, there was a faint track, barely visible to the two Americans, but which was almost a highroad to the Tungus sledge-drivers and to the ponies. The wind was not high, but the temperature was piercing, just 50° below zero. (More than 80° below has been recorded in this region.) Even though wrapped up to the eyes in furs, as were both Spencer and his father, the cold was numbing.

“Young Master, you would be wise to go back to your father and talk!” said Tapchuv. “The inside-of-head freezes in this cold.”

Then, for the first time, the boy noticed that every alternate sledge-driver had abandoned his post and was sitting beside the driver of the sledge behind him, and all were chattering continuously.

He rode back to report this to his father.

“ Ah, I had forgotten that, for the moment,” The Hunter declared. “ Tapchuv is perfectly right. Frost—such a frost as this—can get into the brain, and brain-frost is one of the chief causes why men who are caught, alone, in blizzards or periods of intense cold, often die or go mad. Death by exposure is not always due to the freezing of the body; more often it is due to the fact that the brain becomes numbed and that the will is unable to force the body to its work.

“ Tapchuv’s advice is good. Keep beside me, Son, and if you begin to feel your mind becoming heavy and stupid, or if you are conscious of any derangement of your sense impressions—especially if your eyes seem to be playing you tricks—start up a conversation. It will not do for either of us to get frost-struck.”

They rode on at a steady pace, through the brilliantly star-lit night, to the accompaniment of the almost ceaseless chatter of the Tungus sledge-drivers. They went on without a single halt until ten o’clock in the morning, when the sun first edged itself crab-wise along the horizon, rather than rose. Spencer was beside himself in amazement at the ponies’ endurance. How could the shaggy little animals endure such a gruelling test?

An hour later, when the sun had succeeded in dragging its whole disc clear of the horizon, and was beginning to emit a faint heat, a short halt was made. The ponies were unharnessed and fed copiously. The sledge-drivers hastily swallowed a few morsels of food and lay down in their furs to sleep. Tapchuv allowed them no more than an hour and a half of rest. He remained awake, himself, and made two cauldrons of scalding hot sweet tea. Each man, on being awakened, swallowed a pint of the almost boiling liquid. In less than two hours, the teams were again moving.

The sunset, or, rather, the extended twilight, had an ominous appearance. A watery canary-yellow band extended above the horizon for several degrees, sharply cut off at the top, as though with a knife. Without any gradation whatever, a pale whitish-green sky rose to the zenith, darkening into a sombre green in the east. There was no blue at all.

As the twilight faded away with Arctic slowness, and the stars appeared, it was evident to the most inexperienced eye that the weather was brewing trouble. The stars were clear, preternaturally clear, and, instead of twinkling in friendly wise, it seemed to Spencer that their sparkles were mali-

cious. Arcturus, the first-magnitude star of the constellation Boötes, flashed at them as redly as though it were the planet Mars; Capella's brilliant whiteness was like a glittering eye; and the blue glint in Vega's beams gave it a ghostly radiance.

The air was tense and vibrant. A light breeze sneaked over the tundra moss, scarcely rising more than a couple of feet above the ground; in comparison with the deadly tang of the air, this ground-wind seemed almost warm, although it was blowing over a thousand miles of frozen ground.

By midnight, the ponies were almost done. Save for two hours' rest, they had been driven at a lumbering but uninterrupted trot for thirty hours. They stumbled continually, and, once or twice, a pony fell in the traces. But the Tungus sledge-drivers—usually so considerate to their beasts—were merciless. The Hunter, with true American humanitarianism for animals, wanted to call a halt, several times, for the beasts' sake. Tapchuv resisted stoutly, and every Tungus in the party was of his mind. They went on.

A couple of hours later, there came a change in the night sky. The sharpness of the icy cold diminished. A streaky veil came over the waning moon and dimmed the over-glittering stars. The

atmosphere lost all its crispness and became chill and humid. A wind—more like a steady current than a storm-wind—came down from the north.

Then, suddenly and silently, fifty yards to the left of the sledge caravan, appeared a huddled mass of animals, running low and swiftly, their noses close to the ground, their tails stretched out.

“Wolves! A pack of wolves!”

Spencer reached for his gun, strung to the saddle.

The precaution was needless.

The wolves, despite the smell of horse-flesh, their favorite food, paid no heed to the caravan. At a long, steady lope which nearly approached their hunting speed, they overtook and passed the sledges as though they had neither seen nor smelt ponies nor men.

The boy spurred up to the chief driver.

“Did you see the wolves?”

“Yes, Young Master.”

“Do you suppose they will be waiting for us, somewhere along the road? Had we better unpack and get the guns out?”

“No, Young Master, there is no need. The wolves have gone on to the forest. They will be there in time. They know better than to delay, to



attack us even though starving. They will not risk what is behind them."

"What?"

"You have not looked, Young Master?"

"No!"

Huddled in his furs, nothing but his nose showing—and even that protected by the fringe of fox-fur sticking out from the edges of his hood, the hairs almost touching—Spencer had not turned in his saddle for the last two hours back. Facing the south, the cold was rigorous enough, but the light wind which had arisen from the north at the time of the dimming of the stars was not one that any man would face willingly.

At Tapchuv's question, the boy half turned in his saddle.

His first sensation was that he had received a charge of bird-shot full in the face. Yet no snow was flying. There was, however, a curious glint in the air, as though he were looking through water.

In a moment, the boy saw what it was. The humid, moist air had frozen, it had crystallized into long, floating splinter-like ice needles, driven, like Lilliputian arrows, by the wind. Beyond, on the northeastern horizon, the sombre green of the sky had taken on a milky tinge.

The boy whirled back on his seat, glad to face the south again, gasping. There was no need for him to ask if this were a premonition of the coming blizzard. He knew!

“How long before it strikes, Tapchuv?”

“At once? Soon? Later? Who can tell? But it will come before sunrise!”

“How far are we still from the forest?”

“Thirty versts, Young Master.”

Twenty miles to go, yet, and the blizzard at their heels! The boy remembered the shaman's grim suggestion that they would be buried alive and frozen, if the storm caught them.

At the outside, the ponies were not making more than six or seven miles an hour. Could they reach the haven? It was well that the packages of mammoth hide, of bones, and of trophies were well roped with rawhide, for there would be no time to refasten them now, if any bundle should work loose. If any one should fall, it must be lost, and the mammoth would not be complete; if any one should be lost, it would be Spencer's fault, for he had superintended all the packing.

Spencer dropped back to his father's side, and told what Tapchuv had said.

“I know,” said The Hunter. “I've had some ex-

perience with Canadian blizzards, and I struck some deadly storms when walrus-hunting on the North Labrador shore. But that a pack of hungry wolves should pass a caravan with more than seventy ponies, and not so much as even look at them, alarms me more than anything Tapchuv can say. And twenty miles is still a long way."

He pointed again to the left.

"More wolves, Spencer! When Arctic wolves flee before a blizzard, what chance would we have? I wish we were there!"

"You're afraid we shall never reach the forest, Father?"

"It is death for every one of us, if we don't!"

For half an hour they rode along, silently. Even the Tungus drivers no longer chattered. There was no longer any fear of brain-frost, for the feeling of snow in the air had softened the numbing cold.

Then slowly, almost unobservedly at first, large snowflakes began to fall, snowflakes of perfect forms, bigger than Spencer had ever seen before.

"Come, this is better!" cried The Hunter, more cheerfully. "This will give us a respite. Large snowflakes come from the lower strata of the air. There is no need to worry till the fine snow comes!"

In a very few minutes, all the world was white, for the snow lay as it fell. This light snowfall had its advantages, however, for it made the runners of the sledges go more smoothly, and the ponies, trotting stubbornly—though with drooping heads—found their loads easier to draw. The snow reflection, too, gave much more light.

Then, far away and low, a faint moaning sound came from the far northeast.

“Whip them up!” cried The Hunter. “Ride forward, Spencer, and tell Tapchuv to whip the ponies up! Drive them hard! The blizzard will be on us in an hour or less, and there are twelve miles to go!”

Spencer started forward, but he never reached the first sledge where sat Tapchuv. Before he had reached half-way along the line of sledges, the horses burst into a tearing gallop. A wild chorus of yells arose from the Tungus drivers, for they had heard the moan of the coming Polar tempest; the whips, made of shredded elk-sinew, whistled viciously as they fell on the ponies' backs.

Those sturdy beasts seemed to understand, and to find some latent strength for a final effort. Stumbling and leaping over the rough balls of frozen moss, they held to a clumsy gallop, the

sledges rocking and lurching behind them. Only once did a sledge upset and the drivers righted it almost immediately. Unbelievable as it seemed, all the fastenings held. The rawhide thongs had frozen hard and did not "give" an inch.

The large-flaked snow fell ever more and more heavily, blotting out the distance, but, from time to time, the travellers passed an upright stake, set there, the day before, to mark the road. How Tapchuv kept the direction was a miracle to Spencer, but that he did not swerve from the line was proved by the stakes.

The darkness grew greyer. Dawn had come, but so diffused was the greyness that it was impossible to tell in which direction lay the east. Of sunrise, itself, there was none; nothing but a grisly pallidness. All the world was snow. One could scarcely see the third sledge ahead. But even the sense of daylight gave courage. The hours were passing. They were drawing nearer.

Suddenly, there came an absolute lull. The flaky snow ceased falling. On the horizon, a dark line showed ahead.

"The forest! The forest!"

Madly, triumphantly, the drivers lashed their whips and the ponies galloped on. The nostrils of

most of the animals were bleeding. All were trembling. Their panting breath came in wheezy gasps. It seemed incredible that they could still stay on their feet, impossible that they could still gallop.

Then, with a scream of disappointed fury, the blizzard struck at the caravan, struck like an avalanche hurled by some Boreal demon.

Had the blast come in their faces, not one breath could have been drawn. In sight of safety, all would have been annihilated. But the wind was behind them, and helped to drive them on.

The snow came with a violence and thickness which made the air seem solid; the rushing of the wind made a vacuum before the face, which impeded breathing. Spencer's lungs ached as though every breath were a knife-thrust.

The snowflakes of the blizzard were as fine as sifted powder and as hard as shot; they fell so thickly as to increase the depth of snow on the ground at the rate of an inch a minute. As this dry snow struck the ground, the raging hurricane behind whipped them up anew and drove them on in swirling confusion.

The ponies, now half-way to their knees in soft snow, floundered. Their galloping became little more than a clumsy leaping forward, in jerks that

threatened to break the rawhide traces. The pace lessened.

Then, from the leading sledge, a cry of triumph came down the line:

“A tree!”

“Spur on, Spencer!” yelled The Hunter, above the blast. “Get into shelter, Son!”

It was no longer a race of hours, scarcely of minutes; it was almost of seconds. Already the ponies were beginning to be out of their depth in snow, the sledges to stick.

The first sledge shot into the shelter of the forest, closely followed by the second. The third did not reach the belt of trees; both horses fell, together, nearly bringing disaster to the fourth sledge, which was just behind.

Spencer, his heart beating madly, his lungs paining acutely, black spots dancing before his eyes, got to safety.

Where was the fifth sledge?

Where was his father?

Five yards away, nothing could be seen. It was impossible to face toward the north.

Then, having broken the line of march, pell-mell and in confusion, ponies and sledges dashed into the shelter of the woods.

Three sledges were still missing.

But Spencer's trouble was wilder, more agonized! Where was his father, who had remained at the rear to the last?

Then it was that Tapchuv and the Tunguses showed their mettle. Though it was imminent death to face that Arctic blizzard, to leave the lee of the forest, a dozen sledge-drivers answered the leader's shrill call, and four gallant ponies, though at the last gasp of exhaustion, obeyed.

The sledges could not be more than twenty or thirty yards away, at most; they must be found before they were snowed under.

Spencer turned to follow Tapchuv, but one of the Tungus men seized the rawhide bridle and forced him back.

"No! You will die!" he yelled above the storm.

Not more than five or six minutes of waiting followed, but they seemed endless to the boy.

After what must have been a terrible battle with the unchained elements, three moving masses of white emerged from the blinding fury of the blizzard—the three missing sledges, dragged and pushed by horse and man, in the desperation of a struggle that approached to madness.

"Father!" cried Spencer.



From behind the rearmost sledge tottered a figure covered with caked snow.

“ I’m all right, Son! ” came the cheering answer, and he fell prone, unconscious.

## CHAPTER VII

### A DANGEROUS RESCUE

FORTY Siberian natives in a forest, with tools, plenty of food, and under efficient direction, make little trouble of throwing together a wind-proof hut of logs chinked with snow. Before the short daylight of that day had faded away, two huts had been constructed in a little gully a quarter of a mile further in the forest; a small hut for Spencer and his father, a large one for the men.

Near the edge of the forest, the blizzard could be heard raging; even in the sheltered gully the tempest shrilled through the upper branches of the trees. But, as every traveller in the Arctic knows, nothing is more amazing than the warmth in a forest shelter during a blizzard. The temperature is never very low when snow is actually falling, so long as there be no wind, and, in their gully in the pine forest, the members of the expedition were able to rest in comfort.

Hunter Wolland, despite the strain of those terrible last ten minutes in the blizzard, had quite recovered by evening. After a large and hearty hot meal—of which both were much in need—he and

Spencer lay down beside a glowing fire to sleep. The healthy odor of the pine-woods was about them, instead of the disgusting smell of decaying mammoth. What a relief!

They slept the clock round, and, when they woke, they found most of the natives sleeping still. The living ponies were worrying along, quite contentedly. True, nine of them were dead; they had died of broken hearts within a few minutes of their arrival. All the rest of the animals had recovered, and showed no special signs of the strain which they had undergone.

Another big meal and another long sleep was the order of the next day. It was not until the third day that Spencer found energy enough to take interest in the things around him. In the weakened state that the month of work and "sea-sickness" had produced, the exhaustion of that fifty-hour sledge trip had been almost too much for him. As the boy admitted to himself, ten minutes' delay would certainly have cost many lives; even three or four minutes' lingering might have done so. Had they halted three hours, instead of two, not a man nor beast would have been left alive.

"When do we start off again, Father?" he asked, at dinner-time, the third day.

“Not just yet, Son! Tapchuv went to the edge of the forest, soon after sunrise, this morning, and he reports that the blizzard is as bad as ever. You wouldn't think so, here.”

“No; sure I wouldn't!”

“And you remember that the shaman said it would last five days—call it six. No matter if the weather did clear, I wouldn't stir a foot before then! There's not such a frantic hurry, now. In a way, we're not likely to have any serious trouble from here on. This forest—so I understand from Tapchuv—is like a great 'wood-lot' for all the villages south of here, and, until the Bolsheviks came and wrecked everything in the form of organization, paid forest guardians were kept here to see that each village got its share. As a result, there's a regular hauling trail from here to the river, and thence along the ice.

“No, for the moment, Spencer, I'm fairly easy in my mind. Our sledges can't get snowed in, here; there's no fear of losing any of our precious find. The ponies can find plenty to eat. As for food, the forest must be plumb full of game animals which have fled here for shelter. Even if we had to stay here all winter, there'd be no damage done.

“I doubt if that will be necessary, though. Quite

likely the surface of the snow will be hard enough for travel, in a week or so; blizzard-snow packs very hard, and drifts are the only danger. They're not very serious, either, to a party of our size, for a sledge and team can always be dug out.

"If the snow doesn't pack, why, the men will have to go ahead and break trail. We've got a long journey and a trying one before we get to Yakutsk, and again to the rail-head at Irkutsk, but there's no danger except from wolves and cold. Forty men, all with guns, can make short work of a pack of wolves. I only hope we shan't be forced to send men ahead to break trail; it's slow work."

"Pity we haven't got a live mammoth trained to walk ahead of the sledges. Wouldn't he break a trail, though!"

"Find me your live mammoth, Son! But, even then, I'm not sure that you'd be able to train him. If the mammoth had been suitable for domestication, Prehistoric Man would have domesticated him. Then the race of mammoths wouldn't have become extinct, but would have been preserved, like the Indian elephant of to-day."

"What did make the mammoths extinct, Father? I've asked you several times, but you've never told me."

“For a very good reason,” replied The Hunter.  
“I don’t know. Nobody knows.”

“Don’t the scientists know?”

“Not a bit of it!”

“Why not?”

“It’s quite a complicated question, Son. Each of the three scientific theories which is supposed to explain the extinction of the mammoth fails to explain it.”

“I’d always supposed that mammoths disappeared off the map because they were all frozen up, suddenly.”

“Just by a sudden cold snap, eh? Well, absurd as that sounds, you’re not the only one to think so. A good many paleontologists are of your opinion. Myself, I don’t see it. The Polar Bear, the Fox, the Elk, the Wolverine, and the Reindeer lived in this country during the days of the mammoth, and they get along in Northeastern Siberia quite comfortably, still.

“Why should the Hairy Mammoth of the North have made a fuss over a cold wave? He’d long hair, thick wool under that, a tough hide and a layer of several inches of fat; he and his chum, the Woolly Rhinoceros, were better off for clothing than any of the other animals, except, perhaps,

the Polar Bear, who can live happily in a refrigerator. The mammoth ought to have been the most comfortable of them all, and if the others survived it, why couldn't he?

"There's another thing, too. If the cause of extinction really were some sudden climatic change, as one school of scientists declares, why didn't the Cave Bears, and the Giant Elk, and the Sabre-Tooth Tigers and the rest of the mammoth's big contemporaries get frozen in, by the same methods? Not a single one has been found cold-storaged, not one!

"Consider this, too, Spencer. Some hundreds of thousands of mammoth tusks—millions, probably—have been found in the 'mammoth region,' but Science has only found the remains of twenty-one cold-storaged mammoths and four cold-storaged Woolly Rhinoceroses. I'll just mention, in passing, that none have been found on the tundra; all have been exposed by the erosion of gullies or ice-cliffs, just like ours, and are probably due to the mischance of a mammoth, weighing several tons, falling into a crevasse and being unable to get out. When the crevasse filled up, he was frozen in."

"I hadn't thought of all that," rejoined the boy, thoughtfully. "The mammoth ought to have been able to stand the cold."

“Of course he should; there’s no doubt of it! Then there’s the second theory that a more gradual change of climate caused a lack of food, and that all the mammoths starved to death. In company with Bassett Digby, I consider that theory just as absurd as the other, even though some eminent naturalists support it. Why suppose that a mammoth was such an idiot? You saw the size of his brain, the other day, when we dissected it. Suppose the climate did grow colder and food grow scarcer, couldn’t he trek southward in the direction of milder weather and more provision? Migrations, for food, are events of every-day occurrence to grazing or browsing animals, elephants, especially.

“When an African feeding-ground gives out, through fire and drought, and a large tract of browsing country is destroyed, do the herds of elephants sit down with the docile resignation of a group of Hindu villagers in a famine, and die? Take my word for it, they do not! They lumber off at a good steady trot until they come to a district where there is food, and plenty of it.

“From my point of view, Spencer, the starvation idea is not feasible. If there had been such a diminution of food in the north, the mammoths would have wandered southward, and the species would



simply have transferred itself to another part of Asia. Now, it didn't."

"How do we know?"

"Because mammoth remains occur in a very definite belt, and there is no evidence of such a trek to the southward. Besides all which, there is not the faintest evidence of any radical change in climate and alteration of the flora of Siberia. And every cold-storaged mammoth, which has so far been found, had his stomach well-filled and was fat."

"What do you think put an end to them, Father?"

"There's something to be said for the idea that Prehistoric Man killed them off. The extinction of animals by Man is something that we see every day. In our own lifetime, Man has made the buffalo almost extinct, save for a few semi-domesticated herds. The whalers have almost brought several species of whale to extinction. There's just one herd of European wild cattle left, in a nobleman's park in England. In the time of Julius Cæsar, the aurochs was as plentiful in Europe as the buffalo was in America in the days of George Washington, but there's not a single one left, now. It takes the paternal care of four governments to keep the fur seal from becoming extinct, and the sea otter has

disappeared forever during the last twenty years. Bounties on the heads of beasts of prey soon bring about extinction: Canada is exterminating the coyote; India, the tiger; and Tasmania, the Tasmanian Devil. The Norwegian bear is making his last stand. So is the wild boar of the Riviera hills and the camel of Southwest Spain.

“As Digby puts it: ‘Man merely asks the bird or the beast: Are you more good to me, dead or alive? If the former is the case—thumbs down! Live reindeer were more good to the Paleolithic Men in France; they were tractable and they have survived. Dead mammoths were more good to him than live mammoths; they were intractable and dangerous, so they were exterminated. The process took time, but it was achieved eventually.’”

“I can’t believe that, Father!” objected Spencer. “You’ve told me, yourself, that the world was very little peopled in the Stone Age. There must have been almost whole continents where there weren’t any Prehistoric Men at all, or, anyhow, where there weren’t enough of them to kill off all the mammoths!”

“There were, Son, and I’m pleased that you’re sharp enough to think of it. I can’t agree with Digby entirely. His argument that Primitive Man

hunted the mammoth for food—not with bow-and-arrow, of course, but by means of pitfalls—may be true enough, it probably is; but that doesn't explain the vast number of mammoth bones and tusks in regions where there is not a shred of evidence to show that human beings ever lived there. I'm willing to support his idea that the paintings and engravings of mammoths, done by Men of the Old Stone Age, prove that mammoths were hunted and that these designs were charms for the hunters.

“But when it comes to extinction, this theory simply won't hold water. To me it seems much more probable that the race of mammoths expired simply because its time had come. A species has its old age and its death, just like an individual. We might as well try to bring in the agency of Man to explain the extinction of the Dinotheres, which—since they lived millions of years before Man—is manifestly impossible.

“Species do not always merge into other species; many of them simply become extinct. Their knell is rung. Upon a race which was steadily diminishing, Man's efforts at destruction would hasten the end, there is little doubt of that, but Man, alone, cannot have exterminated the mammoths. They came to a natural extinction. You needn't hope to

find a living mammoth, Spencer, not even as a trail-breaker; there are no more! ”

The blizzard lasted exactly the five days that the shaman had prophesied, but the expedition did not leave the forest until a week later. Tapchuv went in advance to the nearest village southward to find nine ponies to replace those which had died from the blizzard trip. He brought back another guide with him, one who knew the surrounding country thoroughly and could determine where the deepest drifts would lie.

The journey, as The Hunter had said, proved long, uncomfortable, and trying. The cold was such as Spencer had never felt, and when, two weeks later, he reached the town of Yakutsk—the only town of Northern Siberia—the sight of houses and streets seemed too good to be true. There were even electric lights! These were very useful, for, at the time of year that Spencer reached there, the sun showed itself above the horizon for less than an hour each day.

The town numbered slightly under 10,000 inhabitants, mostly Yakuts, Lamuts, Yukaghirs, and Tunguses. Thirty Russian families lived in the town—excluding convict refugees—and it was thirty-two years since an American had visited the

place. Indeed, it is recorded that only four Americans have ever seen Yakutsk.

In many senses of the word, Yakutsk is the northernmost and uttermost point of civilization in Siberia, since it is the only link between the populated south and the desolation of the region above the Arctic Circle. The link is by the Lena River, a stream nearly three thousand miles long, which is navigable in summer between Yakutsk and Kirensk, a distance of some eight hundred miles. There is weekly steamboat communication between the two points. In winter, travel is by sledge on the ice of the river.

Leaving Yakutsk, Spencer and his father took a troika sleigh with high sides, deeply upholstered in furs, comfortable, smooth-riding and warm. For scores of miles together, the river ran between fairly high banks, especially on the southeastern side, and these banks protected the travellers from the biting winds of the almost perpetual night.

The two Americans found regular stopping-places on the river bank for every night's rest, but Ivan and Tapchuv always slept on the sledges, taking guard alternately. The caravan was coming down toward civilization, and honesty was no longer to be expected.

All the Tungus sledge-drivers, save Tapchuv, had been sent back from Yakutsk, Hunter Wolland having sold two loads of his mammoth ivory to pay them well and to reward them richly, besides. He did not sell it all, knowing that he could secure five times the price for it when delivered in the United States, especially as he trusted to be able to bring the fossil ivory in, free of duty, since it had been collected by a scientific expedition, and the proceeds of the sale were to be devoted to strictly scientific purposes.

A few minutes after leaving Vitim, a small and poverty-stricken village below the mountains of the Patom Plateau, Tapchuv stepped off the leading sledge, waited for the caravan to pass him, and, on the approach of the driving sleigh, signalled to his masters to stop. Though there was only a young moon, the reflection on the ice made it easy to see the native's signs.

Wondering what had happened, The Hunter drew rein, and the sleigh, with its tinkling bells, came to a stop.

“Young Master,” said Tapchuv, addressing himself to Spencer, as he always did, since the father could not speak a word of Tungus, “you are really Americans; yes?”

“Of course! Why?”

“I am Tungus, but I am Russian,” said the chief driver, “Tsarist Russian. I, of my tribe, am First Man. What is a country without a chief?”

The boy was a little taken aback at this unexpected introduction. It seemed strange that Tapchuv should stop the sleigh at the beginning of a day's travel to start one of his regular denunciations of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Government, which the Tunguses and the Yakuts always call “Chiefless Russia.” But he knew, from experience, that Tapchuv was less garrulous than most of his race, and that, when he did talk, it was because he had a plan to offer or a warning to give.

“Well, Tapchuv?” he queried.

“Tell me, Young Master. Are Americans always kind to Americans?”

“Yes! A thousand times, yes! Always!”

The Tungus chief looked around to make sure that he was not observed, though the frozen river, half a mile wide, would not have given hiding-place to a rat.

“It is thus that it is, Young Master. I will tell. It is important. In the sleep-time, while I was on watch and Ivan was asleep, I heard some one prowl-

ing about the sledges. I went back softly, very softly, carrying my gun. It was ready. My knife, too, was ready.

“ There I saw, creeping under the skin covering of one of the sledges, a small man, a very small man. He was so small that I took him for a Lamut. They are great thieves.

“ This small man was a thief, I was sure of that, but I could not see what he could want to steal. The ‘ giant rat ’ bones are not good to steal, they are not good to sell. One little Lamut cannot carry away a tusk! So I waited to see what he would do. It might not be a Lamut, it might be one of the Chiefless Ones (Bolshevists). It is bad to shoot them. Others find out, after.

“ I waited a long time, Young Master. Nothing happened. The little man had crept under the skin of the sledge and had stayed there. Softly, softly, like the white fox, I went very near. Then, holding my knife ready, I lifted the skin. The little man, as I had thought him, was fast asleep. With my knife at his throat I wakened him. He was not a Lamut. He was a white man boy, Young Master, not as old as you! ”

“ What? ”

“ A white man boy, ” Tapchuv repeated. “ When



I wakened him, he looked at me and said 'American! ' "

"What? "

This in an even louder tone than before.

"It is so, Young Master, as I tell it. Then I went and wakened Ivan, because he speaks Russian. We went back together. The Very Young Master was still there, but afraid, very much afraid, of my knife, as I think. We talked very long time. Ivan did not understand much. The Very Young Master is American. He has been imprisoned by the Chiefless Ones. I do not find out why. He escaped. He was followed. He got up here, hidden on a boat. He ran away to the woods. Winter come and he has no food."

"Where is he?" cried Spencer, wildly excited. "On the sledge, still? "

"No, Young Master. I was afraid. The Chiefless Ones might come and look. I sent him away, up the river, where we must pass. I told him to put stones like a grave, four stones at corners and one big one at top, three men's lengths out from the left bank."

"Well? "

"There are the stones, Young Master! What do you order to do? "

“Get him, of course!” and, stuttering in his excitement, Spencer repeated Tapchuv’s story to his father.

“What an extraordinary thing!” The Hunter exclaimed. “If there’s an American boy in danger, we’ve got to rescue him, there’s no doubt of that! But,” and he looked grave, “how about his passport? You know the trouble we’ve had, even with all our papers in strict order! The Bolsheviks will spot him in a minute.”

“I have thought in my head,” said Tapchuv, when Spencer translated this to him. “The Chiefless Ones are very hard and very much fond of blood, but they are not very clever. As far as Irkutsk, it is not difficult. I will kill a driver—he is only a Yukaghir—next sleep-time, and we will dress Very Young Master in his clothes.”

“But that’s murder!” protested Spencer.

“He is only a Yukaghir, that people is valuable nothing. It is also murder to let Very Young Master be taken and shot by the Chiefless Ones.”

“That’s true enough,” admitted Spencer. “But couldn’t you bribe one of them to change clothes and give us his papers?”

“There is less danger my plan. The dead ones do not talk very much.”

“No,” said The Hunter, who had guessed the Tungus’ meaning, “I will not have murder. But we can discuss that, later. We can’t delay, this way, now. Think, Spencer, that poor chap is hidden in the bushes over there, watching us, and probably eating his heart out wondering why we don’t make a move. Come along!”

He leaped out of the sleigh, closely followed by Spencer, leaving Tapchuv to hold the horses.

As they touched foot to ice, a figure, in tattered shreds of furs and clothing, stumbled out of the bushes toward them. His feet were bound in rags, and the rags were black with clotted blood. He tried to speak, but no words would come, only a burst of hysterical tears.

Spencer and his father helped him into the sleigh silently and gave him food and drink. They fed him only in moderation, for the boy was starving, his face like parchment and his stomach abnormally swollen by famine. Then, in broken gasps, he gave his name as Basil Taylor and told his story.

It was simple, as most tragic stories are.

Basil’s father had been the American agent for a big Chicago agricultural implement company, with offices in Moscow and in one or two important Siberian towns, such as Omsk and Tomsk. When

the World War broke out, he settled in Tomsk. Basil's mother had died during the first year of the war, and there was no way for little Basil to be sent to the States. Only military trains were running. Father and son had been unmolested during the first part of the war and during the Lvoff and Kerensky administrations.

A few weeks after the Soviet régime came into power, all the agricultural machines were seized, and all their property confiscated; and the father and his little son were turned out of their home and only, as a "courtesy," allowed to live in the fireless warehouse. Most imprudently, the father sent a letter to his firm in America, via Vladivostok, explaining that all the farm machinery had been seized, and telling the whole story.

The letter was intercepted.

One day, half a dozen Red soldiers came to the empty warehouse, where the American was sitting at his idle desk. Without a word of explanation, they fired. The father fell. As he lay dying, the Reds threw at his feet the letter he had written.<sup>1</sup>

Basil became an urchin of the streets, in Tomsk, living as best he could from the refuse of the gutters. (This was before the organization of the

<sup>1</sup> This is an actual occurrence.—F. R-W.

Child Brigand Bands in which as this book goes to press [1927] there are over 300,000 runaway and homeless children living as bandits in Soviet Russia.) Then Basil tried to get away by jumping a train on the Trans-Siberian, but he was captured. A Red Guard found on him the fatal letter—which he had taken as his only remembrance of his father and as a possible identification, if he ever reached America—and the nine-year-old boy was sent to the notorious penal settlement of Krasnoyarsk as a “political prisoner.” Thence he had escaped, as Tapchuv had said.

Only the barest outline of the story could be told, for Basil was very weak, but the two Americans of the expedition heard enough to show that, at all hazards—and the hazards were very great—the boy must be rescued. It was exceedingly dangerous, for, in Soviet Russia, to help a “political prisoner” to escape means execution without trial.

“I have thought of a better plan,” said Spencer, who had been thinking hard all the time that the boy was speaking. “Basil shall have my passport, and pass as me. As your son, Father, no one will question him closely.”

“And what about you, Spencer?”

“I speak the Tungus language. I can imper-

sonate a native a hundred times better than Basil can. I'll do the changing of clothes and go as a sledge-driver. There's no need to murder anybody; a powerful narcotic will do the trick just as well and he'll only suppose his clothes have been stolen. We'll leave his purse, with money in it, lying on the floor, as if it had dropped and not been noticed. We'll have gone on by the time he wakes. None of these new men we've just picked up at Vitim know me."

"But you'll have to live with them, sleep with them, run the risk of catching leprosy and who knows what other horrible disease!" cried his father.

"Somebody's got to run the risk," answered Spencer, gravely. "I can't pretend I like it, but we can't fail Basil, can we?"

Father and son clasped hands.

"It is good," agreed Tapchuv. "I shall take Young Master as my son. He will be Tungus boy. So, no one will suspect."

## CHAPTER VIII

### CAPTURING ELEPHANTS

THE story of the adventures of the journey homeward with the flesh-and-blood mammoth, of Spencer's arrest by the Bolsheviki at Irkutsk and his sensational evasion in a market-cart, of Basil's serious illness half-way to Vladivostok, of Spencer's narrow escape from a second arrest by Chinese Red troops who had been advised by telegraph to watch for him, of his voyage down the coast to Canton in a smuggler's sailing junk, of his hiding in the "foreign compound," of his trip thence to Hong-Kong by a British steamer whose captain defied China and all things Chinese, and so home to San Francisco and Detroit, would form a long book in itself. The boy seemed fated to adventure, and equally fated to find some way out at moments of extreme peril. He did not reach home until eight months after his father.

In order to carry on, as long as possible, the fiction that Spencer was Tapchuv's son, the Tungus chief had accompanied the party all the way to Vladivostok. There, The Hunter had provided the faithful guide with an ample sum of money, so

that, when navigation should be resumed in the spring, he could return by way of Okhotsk and so reach Yakutsk overland.

This meant a long and arduous journey, but, for that, Tapchuv cared little; he was returning to his home, the richest man in the tribe. True, he was very eager to accompany the Americans to the United States, as their body-servant, but The Hunter knew well that such a plan would only entail the Arctic native's speedy death, for neither the food nor the climate would agree with him. Polar peoples cannot be transplanted.

The Hunter had not been seriously disturbed concerning the safety of Spencer since the time of the boy's arrival at Canton, for a cablegram from there had reassured him. The rest of Spencer's journey, especially the crossing of the Pacific Ocean, had been delightful, the more so as he met an English teak merchant on the boat, a man who employed sixty elephants in his up-country lumber settlement, and who greatly stirred the boy with his stories of tame elephants. Spencer was, indeed, the hero of the boat, for every one had heard of the mammoth find, and the United States Government had already sent a stern note about him to the Soviet authorities.



“If you want to go elephant-hunting, Spencer,” the Anglo-Indian teak merchant said, when the boy had confided his ambitions, “it’s not much use for you to go to India or Ceylon, as you suggest. The time has passed for that, you know. There are plenty of wild elephants there, still, hundreds, thousands, probably, but the laws restricting the hunting of elephants are very severe. You see, Indian elephants are too valuable to be killed for their ivory, especially as the tusks are small. It is infinitely better to train them. Whether for sport or for ivory, the place to go is Africa.”

“I thought India was overrun with wild elephants, Mr. Beaverway!”

“India is a very populous country, and wild elephants are as little likely to be found in the cultivated valleys of the Punjaub as in the streets of Calcutta,” his informant answered, with a smile. “Even in the up-country districts, the right of hunting elephants is very strictly preserved. Most of that sort of thing, now, in India, is kept as a sport for royalty. It is exceedingly expensive, too, as the hunt is always carried out on a grand scale.

“It was not always so,” he continued, leaning back in his steamer-chair, and puffing contentedly

at his pipe. " Fifty years ago, in the southern part of the Peninsula, especially along the western ghats in the Wynad, Malabar, Coinmatore, Madura and Tinnevelly districts, wild elephants were so numerous that people would have paid you to go and hunt them!

" As a matter of fact, my boy, the Government did offer bounties for the destruction of elephants. Herds of them would come down and ruin a harvest in a single night. Why, there were whole districts driven into famine by the elephants! Shooting them was not only a sport, it was a duty, and one of the very things which reconciled some of the peoples of India to British rule was the Englishman's love of big-game shooting. He paid his bearers high prices to help him to do what they would have been willing to pay to have done, so desirous were they of having dangerous wild beasts killed.

" Naturally, the sport was conducted on very different principles then. It was not considered unsportsmanlike, as it would be now, to kill a cow elephant, though, naturally, the male was always preferred for the trophy his tusks afforded. Native shikarris, or hunters, hunted steadily during those years, either with or without Europeans. Guns,

too, became more deadly. The natural result was that the elephants were driven back to the remoter parts of the jungles, where they could not destroy whole plantations in an evening's stroll.

“As soon as they ceased to become troublesome, restrictions were put on shooting them, and establishments were organized in the jungle for their capture. Instead of being Man's masters, they became Man's slaves. Personally, I think there's just as much sport—and a great deal more danger—in capturing wild elephants than there is in shooting them, especially if the 'khoonkie' method is used, as it used to be in my younger days, and as it is, still, in up-country districts.

“Over the greater part of India, now, elephant-shooting requires a special permit—which is not easily accorded—and it is generally confined to one tusker, or to a 'rogue' which has been attacking men. These permits are highly prized, and most of them are granted to British officers of high rank, stationed in India. In Northern Burmah, naturally, beyond the zone of cultivation, the restrictions are less rigorous. In the native states of Travancore and Mysore, the Maharajahs grant occasional permission to hunters who come recommended from the British Resident or Advisory Governor.”

“For real elephant-hunting, to get tusks, I mean, you advise Africa, sir?”

“Advise? I should put it a good deal more strongly than that, my boy. I say that Africa is the only place for good elephant-hunting, now, and perhaps you may find Northeastern Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa as good a part as any. At least, I know a good many hunters who have been there, and they tell me there’s ivory enough in those parts to keep tusk-hunters going for a good many years, yet.

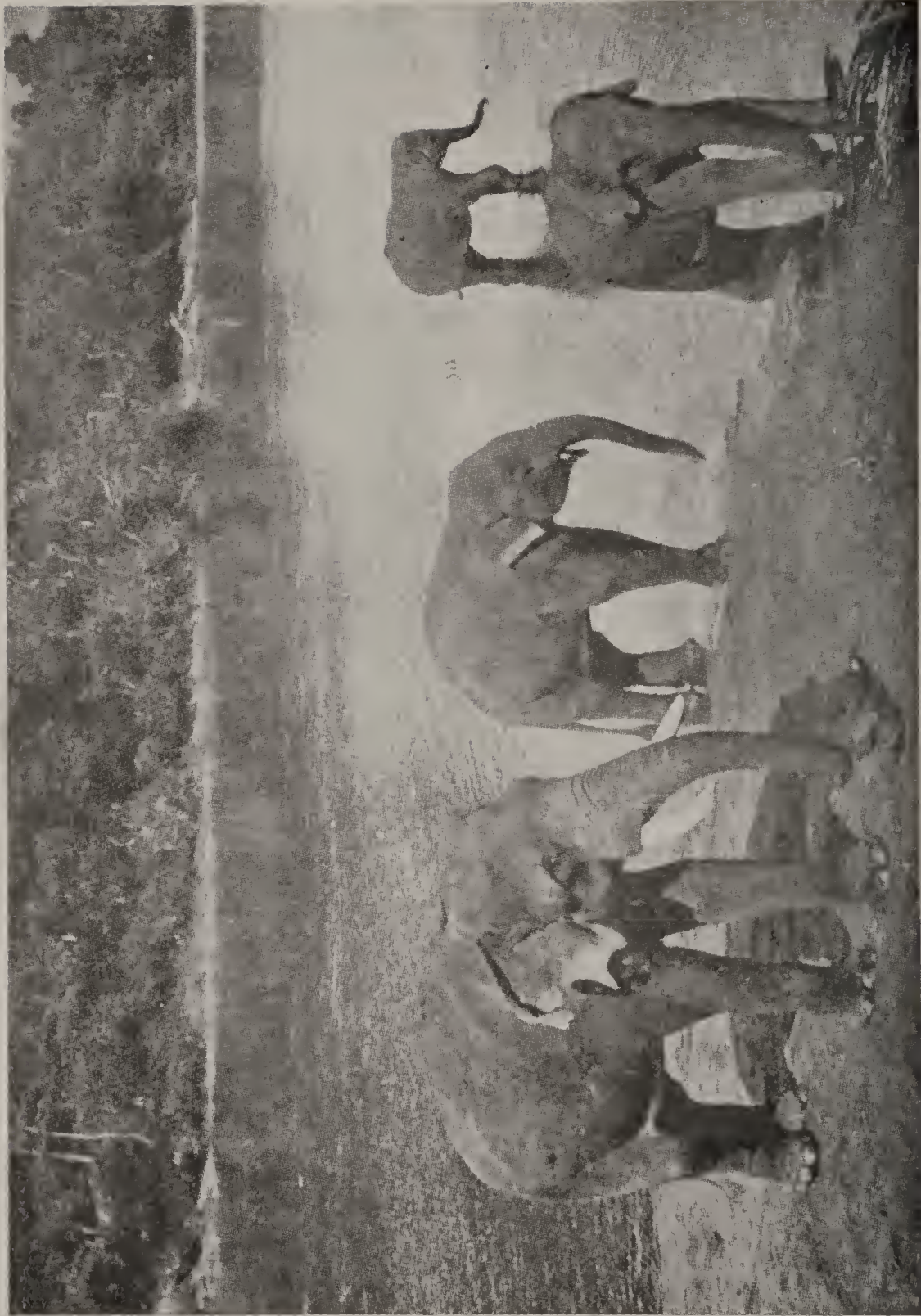
“But if you want to see sport in India, you’ll find all you want in the capturing of elephants, if you ever get that far into the interior. From your stories of Siberia, it seems that you can stand roughing it. If you are anxious to see some real doings with wild elephants in India, I can give you and your father letters to friends of mine, up-country, where the ‘khoonkie’ method is still used. You’ll find that a live bull elephant can give you just as much thrill as a dead mammoth, or I’m much mistaken!”

“What is a ‘khoonkie,’ sir?”

“Eh, what? You don’t know? No, I don’t suppose you would. Well, a ‘khoonkie’ is a high-caste cow elephant, which, from a very early age, has been



AN ELEPHANT KRAAL IN INDIA.  
Note the 'khoodkies' with their girths on, ready for the work of taming their wild mates.



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**INDIAN ELEPHANTS LEAVING THE WATER.**

trained to the work of capturing wild elephants. They're trained like race-horses, specially fed and constantly exercised to give them endurance and wind. There's quite a process of selection, for only the very fastest are kept for 'khoonkies.'"

"Can elephants run fast, sir?"

"H'm. You remember Kipling's phrase: 'An elephant can't run, but he can catch an express train.' That's about right, though it's not very often that an elephant takes the trouble to move quickly. He hasn't any need for it, you know; he doesn't chase anything for his prey and no animal is going to chase him.

"To return to our 'khoonkies.' I suppose the best way to explain is to tell you of a hunt I joined, myself, up near Impoora. It was more by good luck than good management that I'm alive to tell the tale."

"Please tell it, sir!"

The teak merchant smiled at the boy's excited interest.

"Well, story for story is fair, I suppose, and you've spun me as good a yarn about that mammoth-ghost of yours as I've heard for a long while. It happened this way:

"I'd had rather a nasty attack of low fever, and

so I went up-country to the house of a friend of mine named McCleary. He was one of those harum-scarum Irishmen that you meet all over the world, successful this year and a failure next. He could never settle down anywhere. He had a good tea plantation in Ceylon, once, and threw it up, one day, because he found it dull. He wasn't even going to take the trouble to try to sell it, because the first purchaser had dilly-dallied and annoyed him. So I undertook the sale, without letting him know, and put the money in the bank to his credit. It's kept him from starving, once or twice, since then.

“ Well, you know, McCleary tried all sorts of occupations—I'll tell you the yarn of his life, some time—but at last he got into this business of capturing wild elephants. That was lively enough, even for him, and now he has become one of the largest dealers in semi-domesticated elephants, with a magnificent house high up on the mountains. He heard that I was ill, and came and fetched me, swearing that I'd saved him, and he was going to save me. He didn't ask my permission, by the way, and I was too weak to throw him out. So I went.

“ In a few weeks I was all right again, and wanted to get back to my business, but McCleary wouldn't



hear of my going till I had seen an elephant 'round-up,' as he insisted on calling it. I think he had been a cowboy in your country, once. I'm fairly well acquainted with elephants and their ways, so I agreed. Indeed, I was curious to see how the affair was managed.

"We started off with ten 'khoonkies' and two very husky tuskers, used to the work, and very ready to prod a cantankerous captive into submission. You can realize for yourself, Spencer, that nothing less than an elephant will serve to handle another elephant. You can't slap a rambunctious bull elephant on the wrist and tell him to be good!"

The boy smiled at the idea, and the narrator proceeded:

"Nothing would satisfy McCleary but that he and I should each ride one of the 'khoonkies' on this hunt, and though I'll admit that I hung back a little, he finally stung my pride into agreeing. It was an insane thing to do, of course, but that was McCleary all over.

"Off we started for the grassy plateau where, the day before, McCleary's scouts had signalled a herd of wild elephants. As I said, we had ten 'khoonkies,' two tuskers to act as punishers, and half a dozen cow elephants with affectionate dispositions.

“ You needn't laugh, I mean exactly what I say: 'with affectionate dispositions.' You'll see why, in a minute.

“ The equipment of a 'khoonkie' when arrayed for a hunt is as follows: A stout rope is passed twice around the body to act as a girth, then under the neck and tail like a breast-band and crupper, and secured fast, close to the withers, for the sling to be attached. The rope is stout enough to hold a ship.

“ On the 'khoonkie' two people ride bareback. Near the neck is the mahout, or driver, always a man specially chosen and trained, and, on the withers, sits the assistant. They are not lashed on, although I thought, myself, that I should like to be, but there are short ropes for handholds attached to the girth. The mahout directs everything, and it is the assistant's business to keep the animal going at full speed, when necessary, by light blows on a place near the root of the tail where the elephant is especially sensitive.

“ This particular time, we did not have very far to go. When the herd of elephants was sighted, I got down from the saddle of my horse, with a sigh, for I was a great deal more comfortable there than I was going to be for the next hour or two. I was



THE MAHOUT DIRECTS EVERYTHING.



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**ELEPHANT STACKING TIMBER.**  
In the Bombay-Burma Timber-Yard.

hoisted by the elephant into the mahout's place, and took my lasso with decided qualm."

"A lasso!" exclaimed Spencer. "Do you lasso wild elephants?"

"You do—when you can! I did, that day, and felt inordinately proud of myself.

"Mounted on my 'khoonkie' and invoking my lucky star that all would go well, we started off after that band of elephants. McCleary had told me that he wanted none but half-grown or three-quarter grown calves, unless a specially fine young high-caste male should come handy, and our first duty was to separate likely animals from the herd."

"To cut them out, just as one cuts out a branded steer, on the cattle ranches?"

"Exactly. Since 'khoonkies' work in pairs, McCleary and I kept together. He had the mahout of one of the tuskers keep close behind us, as well as two of the affectionate cows, for he had spotted a fine young male, with tusks just showing, which would make a rich prize. So off we went.

"You asked me, just now, if elephants can run. 'Khoonkies' can, there's no doubt of that. When my man, behind, began to tickle up the beast, she went off like a locomotive running wild. How I

stuck on—standing up, of course—I don't know; I suppose it was because I was too much afraid to fall off.

“That plateau was covered with grass a yard high, and interspersed with shrubs and small trees. It was rough and crossed with little gullies, so that the ground couldn't be seen. I hadn't the faintest idea where we were going. All I could do was to hang on, wondering if my teeth weren't going to be jolted out of their sockets, as the elephant tore madly on at her topmost speed.

“The young bull elephant, ahead, was going a good thirty miles an hour, and we were tearing after him in full career, our two 'khoonkies' neck and neck, the tusker and the cow elephants plunging on behind. We pounded on, with violent disregard of anything like safety, through shrubs and underwood, over ditches, down slopes and up rises covered with thorn thickets, holding a straight line over and through everything. Every minute I expected to see my beast go heels over head, and my man, behind, was whacking the animal for all he was worth. I couldn't give you an idea of that frantic chase, barebacked, cross-country on a racing elephant! You see an elephant, at full speed, pays no attention to where he puts his feet; he depends on

violent lurchings of the body to regain his balance, and though he rocks like a mongoose, stumbles like a bear, and strides like a scared ostrich, he doesn't often fall. But the motion! A cork going down the Niagara rapids has an easy time of it compared with a mahout on a 'khoonkie' ! ”

“ It must be great! ” cried Spencer, his eyes shining.

“ Afterwards, maybe,” the man responded, dryly. “ At the time, you hang on, and thank Providence that you are still hanging on. You can't slack speed for a minute, for the wild elephant can go as fast as you can, for half-an-hour or so. Then, being grass-fed and untrained to speed, he begins to weaken, and the 'khoonkie' gains. You mustn't let your proposed captive get his second wind, or it's all off; you wouldn't overtake him before night-fall.

“ As the 'khoonkie' ranges close, nine times out of ten, the prize stops dead, but, as soon as you come near, he starts off again. That's the minute to lasso him! Grabbing tightly the hand-rope with your left hand, you drop the lasso over the wild elephant's head. It won't go over the trunk, of course, but as soon as the jungle animal feels the rope over his face, he curls up his trunk with an elephant's

natural sense of saving from harm his most delicate organ. As the trunk curls up, the rope falls under it, and you tighten up on the lasso, which, of course, is stoutly attached to the double girth on your 'khoonkie.' Then your mount stops, and puts her whole weight backwards and sidewise to resist the pull when the rope comes taut.

"You can imagine the jerk!

"Naturally, since the rope is around the wild elephant's neck, not around his feet, it doesn't throw him over, as you lasso a steer on the plains; it strangles him a bit, but he's plenty strong enough to charge ahead, dragging the resisting 'khoonkie' with him. But the 'khoonkie' has the weight on the girth, while the captive has it around the neck, so it's not long before the wild elephant begins to get half suffocated.

"The time I'm telling you of, my 'khoonkie' was a little faster than McCleary's, so I got to the young bull first. I missed my initial throw, but got him the second time. I was prepared for everything, except that first jerk. It lifted me off my feet as if I had been a stone shot from a catapult. Fortunately, I had the handhold in my left hand with a death-grip, and though I was sent flying, I didn't let go. My shoulder hit the 'khoonkie's'



head with a thump, and I scrambled back to place, though with my wrist badly strained.

“In a minute or two, McCleary’s ‘khoonkie’ ranged up on the other side, and he dropped a noose. Our wild elephant was captured! There was a good deal to be done, yet, however, to bring him to submission. As I had been carefully instructed what to do, I slipped off my mount, with the tether-ropes in my hand, and started to tie the wild elephant. Whether because of my strained wrist, whether McCleary was waiting for me or what, I don’t know, but I suddenly realized that the beast was free, at least, free enough to turn and strike at me. Of course, I should have slipped between my ‘khoonkie’s’ legs and got clear that way. I didn’t think of it, and started to run.

“Owing to the fact that the ropes had been thrown from behind, this gave the beast twenty yards of slack, more than enough to give him time to reach me, and one blow from those feet would finish me. Just at that instant, the big tusker, who had been pounding up behind, saw what was happening, and at the mahout’s orders, he charged. The head of the tusker, held low, countered the head of the young wild elephant with a shock that made me expect to see both skulls crushed in. The

young bull was thrown clear over, panting, and the old tusker stood there over him, his left tusk pointing slightly downward with a menacing gesture, ready to drive the vicious weapon into the new captive at the mahout's slightest order. There was no need. The tether ropes were put on him in a few seconds, and the young bull had lost his liberty forever.

“The next job was to take off the slip-knots from the half-strangled bull elephant, a piece of work which I did not attempt, since my strained wrist was now beginning to pain me a good deal. The ropes had cut deeply into the elephant's flesh, and this freeing performance is sometimes dangerous enough. But once the ropes were free, the young bull was allowed to get on his feet. He could not run fast, now, for his feet were hobbled.”

“You let him go, then!” exclaimed Spencer, in surprise.

“Absolutely free, except for the tether-ropes, or hobbles.”

“But what good would that do? He wouldn't follow you home, like a dog, would he?”

“Us, no! But that's where the affectionate dispositions come in that I was telling you about. As soon as the 'khoonkies' moved away, two or three

gentle-mannered cow elephants sidled up to the captive and explained to him, elephant fashion, how sorry they were for him and how much better off he would be if he accompanied them.

“I don't know the nature of their arguments, Spencer, but I know that the captive, in such cases, usually lets himself be persuaded. If he shows fight, and turns on one of his new-found affectionate companions, the tusker, who has been kept in readiness, will give him a prod in the ribs with a long, grimly sharp tusk. That brings him to his senses. Either sulkily or willingly, the captive submits, and with a tame elephant on either side of him, he is marched off to a temporary stockade, where the tame elephants keep guard. When half a dozen or so wild ones have been captured, they are taken to a permanent camp, where they are broken in.”

“And wild elephants, right out of the jungles, like that, can be broken in?”

“Quite easily. The Indian elephant is naturally docile, to begin with, and he is exceedingly intelligent, besides. For a third thing, the herd instinct is strong in them. Elephants—except ‘rogues’—seldom go alone. They travel in herds and in absolute obedience to a leader. When they find

themselves in a tame herd, they obey the new ways readily enough and, indeed, seem to enjoy work."

"Then there's no real difficulty in taming elephants?"

"Only at first. Generally, by the 'khoonkie' method, the captives are fairly well quieted by the time they get to the home stockade.

"But, in some cases, herds of elephants are simply stampeded into a keddah, or enormous strong stockade, which is approached by a V-shaped fence about two miles long and half a mile wide at the broader end. The stockade is built to stand the strain, but nothing could resist the pressure of a herd of elephants if once the animals got fairly started. When they try to break it down, or to dash through, they are stopped by sharp spears or blazing torches, the men being three deep outside the stockade. Generally twenty-four hours of this is enough to quiet the beasts. They've got sense enough to know when they're beaten.

"Then 'khoonkies' are sent into the stockade, the desired animals are taken and the older ones set free, to increase and multiply. Very rarely do domesticated animals, which have been caught half-grown, go 'wild' again. Once put in a place

where fodder and water are plentiful, the younger elephants become very easy to handle.”

“And isn’t the African elephant ever tamed?”

“Never; at least, not that I ever heard of. I imagine an African cow elephant might be handled by half a dozen well-trained Indian elephants, especially if there were a good tusker near by. But you must remember, Spencer, that African cow elephants, unlike Indian elephants, are heavily ivoryed, and might well be a match for the most aggressive Indian tusker. They are less intelligent, more savage, vastly more powerful, and almost invariably get ill-tempered as they grow older. As for trying to put them in stockades, I doubt if any construction could be made in the African jungles that an African bull elephant couldn’t put down.

“Of course, one can never tell, but all the hunters with whom I have spoken assert the intractability of the African elephant. He is good for ivory, and that is all. If you’re looking for adventure, my boy, go and ‘broncho-bust’ an African bull elephant. But insure your life, first!”

## CHAPTER IX

### A TRUNKED DEITY

A FEW days later, only a couple of hundred miles away from the Golden Gate of San Francisco, Spencer pleaded again for some more elephant talk, for, on this subject, he could never have enough.

“Mr. Beaverway,” he asked, “do elephants remember; have they real memories, I mean? Are they really faithful to their masters, as a dog is? Some books say they are, and some say not.”

“It depends upon the elephant—and on the master,” the Anglo-Indian replied, with a slight smile. “They make wonderful nurse-maids, and a little baby put in their care is ten times safer than with the most careful ‘ayah’ (nurse). There are plenty of cases, too, where an elephant has seemed to show an entire disregard of his master, but my experience has been that this occurs only where the man does not understand the animal. An elephant is exceedingly sensitive, and some of them appear to be possessed of an almost human intelligence, and their own second sight into the bargain.

“You’re hungry for stories, Spencer, I know. I’d



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**STRENGTH, INTELLIGENCE, FIDELITY.**  
Elephants towing logs in India.



*Courtesy of Hutchinson & Co. Drawn by Winifred Austin.*

**ELEPHANT HERD CROSSING THE ZAMBESI RIVER.**



tell you the story of Badshah, the King Elephant, myself, if it weren't that Colonel Brayce, over there, knows it far better than I do. Come, my boy, let us see if he's in the mood to spin you the yarn."

"Oh, he will, I'm sure," declared Spencer. "He's an awfully nice chap!"

"You know him already, do you? Is there anybody on this boat you don't know?"

"Everybody's been ever so nice on board!" the boy replied indirectly.

"Sorry to disturb you, Colonel Brayce," said the teak merchant, as they came near the old soldier's steamer chair, "but our young mammoth-hunter here can't sleep o' nights."

"Why?"

"At least, not until he hears about Badshah."

The colonel groaned.

"And I must stop an interesting book to tell him the story, eh? Why don't you tell him, yourself, Beaverway?"

"I don't like handling second-hand goods. And you knew Major Carrick well, better than anybody in India, perhaps."

The colonel looked at the boy with an air of mock despair.

"If I must, I suppose I must," he agreed. "I did

know Carrick. Well, draw up a chair, Beaverway, and prompt me if I forget."

"It's because the lad asked me if elephants were faithful," the merchant explained.

"A high-caste elephant," said the colonel, seriously, "has more brains than half a dozen ordinary men, and he possesses, besides, some kind of occult sense which far outstrips anything that our poor humanity understands. I'm not surprised that the Hindus made him into a god. Unless one accepts some kind of mystical theory, there's no explaining Badshah, and if you want to hear about a most uncanny case of faithfulness, why, Badshah's story is perhaps the most remarkable in the annals of India.

"This story happened during one of the perennial uprisings along the Northwest Frontier. For political reasons, I won't say exactly when, or where. The rebellion promised to turn into a very tidy little frontier war, which might easily have cost the lives of fifty thousand men, and it was put to an end by the almost supernatural brain and intelligence of a single elephant.

"Some of the happenings of that little war have been written long and large by an English novelist, Gordon Casserly, and his book 'The Elephant God' is very good reading. Although I knew Major Car-

rick and his famous one-tusker very well, there were a good many points about Badshah in that book which were new to me. Casserly may have invented them—I don't doubt that he did—for purposes of romance, but the background is certainly true. It may seem strange for an old military man to be fond of novels, but I'll confess that I've read that book several times, mainly, I'll admit, for the sake of Badshah. To avoid confusion, I'll set the scene where Casserly did, near a fort on the Bhutan frontier; its name is of no importance.

“Major Carrick, Commandant of this fort, was jungle-wise, in every sense of the word. There are men who are born that way. His fame as a shikarri (hunter) was widely spread. Fellows said that his luck was uncanny, but no one ever denied that he was a sportsman of the first water. He was a good soldier—I never had a better officer—and he would have made a prime statesman if he had not entered the Army. The natural consequence was that, when a Bhutan uprising was suspected along the line of the Terai Forest, Carrick was sent there on the double duty of Commandant of a small fort and as a secret Political Agent. You see, as a famous hunter, he would soon win the esteem of the natives, and would be able to travel into out-

lying parts of the jungle to get big game and information at the same time."

"What fun!" exclaimed Spencer.

"Yes, for those who know how; but it's a quick death in the darkness for those who don't. Carrick was one of those people that romancers tell you about who bore a 'charmed life'; myself, I've generally found that the men of that kind are those who have their heads most firmly screwed on their shoulders. There was—but I won't tell you that tale. We will come to Badshah.

"Not very long after his arrival at his new post, Carrick discovered the presence of a most amazingly powerful elephant, a single-tusker. This magnificent animal was being employed for ordinary work, but Carrick, knowing elephants as few white men ever come to know them, realized at once that the great beast was a Maharajah among his kind. There is a regular elephant aristocracy, I might mention, among Indian elephants at least. Perhaps," he added, with a smile, "the Brahmin caste system may have infected them.

"In any case, Carrick and Badshah chummed up from the start. The great elephant, that had always ignored white men with supreme contempt, accepted Carrick—I was going to say as an equal.

As a matter of fact, it was something very much like that. The two became inseparable. This, as Fate willed—for no one can live long in India without coming to believe that there is some queer kind of Fate—was of the greatest service to Carrick. Being able to dispense with a mahout (driver) he could go out into the forest, alone, bareback, on Badshah, and his expeditions were rarely fruitless.

“Now Badshah—the name means ‘The King’—had only one tusk, the right one; the other had never grown. Such animals are not very numerous, but such as do reach large size are especially revered by the natives, since Gunesh, their God of Wisdom, is always pictured with an elephant’s tusk, the right one. When, moreover, such elephants are high-caste, when, in addition, they show those special powers which the natives call the ‘two-sight sense,’ then the Hindus are very apt to confuse the difference between the animal and the god.

“It would make too long a story to tell you of all the apparently miraculous doings of Major Carrick and Badshah. He told me himself—hard as it was to screw anything out of him—that Badshah had saved him from the charge of a ‘rogue’ elephant, and that the ‘rogue,’ on realizing in whose presence he was, had fled with a squeal of terror.

It is on record, too, that, in return, Carrick saved Badshah from the attack of a hamadryad, or king cobra, seventeen feet long, the only snake which will wantonly attack. And, fast as an elephant can run, a snake can go faster.

“If you want to read of Carrick’s amazing ride to the elephant cemetery, where all the aged elephants go to find their death in peace, read Casserly. Carrick never told me anything about it, and though nine persons out of ten believe in elephant cemeteries, I’ve never met any one, white or native, who has seen one. The story may be true, for all that. What I do know a little about is the part that Badshah took in putting down the trouble along the frontier. I couldn’t very well help knowing that; Carrick was bound to report it. The story was almost incredible, but the facts were beyond dispute.

“The Bhutanese, backed by the Chinese, who, in their turn, were backed by the Russian Soviet Government, had been busy for a couple of years in sowing disaffection among some of the smaller rajahs of Bengal. One of the most active was—I will give the fictitious name—the Rajah of Lalpuri. His hatred against the English was especially venomous, so I have been told, because an English

girl refused to marry him, in spite of all his wealth; quite naturally.

“It’s not my business to spin you a love story—though Carrick married this very girl eventually—but it is worth noting that when some Bhutan raiders attacked the plantation where this girl was living—presumably some scoundrels in the Rajah’s pay—and carried her off, Badshah tracked the raiders and enabled Carrick to rescue the girl. There’s really nothing so extraordinary in that, for an elephant’s scent is preternaturally keen, and, as a tracker, he is beyond compare. What Badshah did is quite possible.

“The sensational part of the story comes now. One night, Badshah broke loose from his pickets—as was his habit, occasionally. When Carrick went out to see what was the trouble, and to order Badshah back to the lines, the elephant promptly set the man on his back and started off into the jungle on some spree of his own. He travelled fast all that night, and all next morning, into a part of the forest where Carrick had never been. By noon Badshah reached a grassy valley, where—apparently waiting for him—there was a herd of wild elephants, all bulls, over a hundred in number. Later figures—those of the natives—put this herd at several hun-

dred, but I doubt it. A hundred wild elephants at a time is enough.

“These elephants—don’t forget what I told you about aristocracy—at once and without question accepted Badshah as their leader or king. The single-tusker stood motionless while his subjects filed in review before him, and each one touched Major Carrick lightly with the tip of its trunk, elephant fashion, to get the scent for later recognition. To all intents and purposes, the wild elephants accepted the man as a sort of co-partner of their King. Doesn’t sound possible, does it?”

“I’m beginning to think that anything is possible with elephants, sir,” the boy responded.

“That’s a sane point of view to start on. Skepticism is a thing which does not sit happily on any man’s shoulders.

“Well, I asked Carrick about this, of course. He pooh-poohed my way of putting the question, but he did not deny that the thing had happened. And, of course, the history of what comes after proves that it must have happened. I’ll get on with the yarn a bit faster.

“On more than a score of occasions, villagers in the most remote districts had seen Carrick riding on Badshah. Three several times, the herd of wild



elephants had been seen following the leader and his driver. Badshah being a Gunesh elephant, the report spread far and wide that Gunesh, the god, was actually wandering in the forest, in the guise of an elephant. It certainly was noted that, after Carrick's visit to any village, if riding on Badshah, the villagers thereafter were left in peace and no wild elephant molested their crops. This one fact, alone, kept the peoples of the Terai Forest in subjection, and the fear which his presence produced enabled Carrick to secure a vast amount of most valuable secret information.

“The conspiracy proved to be infinitely larger than it had seemed at the first. All the Pathan tribes along the frontier were blood-hungry and especially loot-hungry. The Afghans, armed by the Soviets and officered by Russianized Germans, were threatening the Khyber Pass. The Chinese were pushing the Bhutans forward, and sending some semi-disciplined troops themselves. In the Punjaub and the Bengals, sedition was, as usual, the order of the day.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” Spencer interrupted, “but is India always like that?”

“On the Northwest Frontier, it is, most of the time. And, all through India there is a very strong

‘Nationalist’ sentiment, as the politicians call it. That may be the right name, but you see, my boy, a soldier is bound to look only at one side, so I call it ‘sedition.’ There always was, always is, and always will be sedition in India. It is not necessarily more against British rule than against any other. There are too many different races, too many languages, too many religions, too many castes, too many conflicting interests for any government to be able to satisfy them all. India, returned to native hands—never matter whose—would not be a government at all; it would be bloody chaos. At least, that’s my opinion.

“Well, with the Afghans threatening down the Khyber Pass, with the Chinese pushing the Bhutans forward, with Soviet Russia and Germany behind both, and with a great deal of disaffection in India itself, you can see that Carrick’s position was certainly one of honorable danger.

“Not very long after, Carrick was saved—so the story runs—from a plot against his life devised by the Rajah of Lalpuri, saved because a ‘rogue’ elephant, an outlaw from Badshah’s band, recognized him. The assassin who had been hired to manipulate the affair fell into such superstitious terror, and became such an abject worshipper of Badshah

and his rider, that he blurted out all the details of the Rajah's plot. These details fitted in with other clues which Carrick had secured and with private information which we possessed at headquarters, thus enabling us to get a general grasp of the whole movement.

“Some secret documents which fell into our hands—the international conspiracy which they revealed is well known to Beaverway here—gave us the opportunity to put down with great promptitude the outbreaks of revolt in the Punjaub and the Bombay Presidency. That revolt”—the soldier smiled contentedly—“lasted just exactly one afternoon. But there is no doubt that we should have been quite in the dark had it not been for Carrick and Badshah. And, for the North—remembering Kipling's famous line—‘guns, always guns’—we sent up some mountain artillery to the frontier. But though we were in some measure prepared, we did not know that the expected invasion would take place as early as it did.

“Chinese regulars and hordes of Bhutanese—good fighting men—rushed the frontier fort where Carrick and Badshah had their headquarters. The fort held out gallantly for three days against overwhelming odds which ought to have taken it in

three hours. No reinforcements could be expected for ten days at least. Some one must try to get through. Two attempts had been made, but both messengers had been caught and tortured to death.

“Carrick held all the threads. If he could win, he could be more useful than any other man. In the dark of the night, he mounted Badshah, and, in one wild burst of speed, dashed through the enemy’s lines. Guards were posted, but that did them little good. The sentries never knew what had happened. Three were pounded to death under Badshah’s feet and the fourth died next day. So Carrick got through.”

“Great stuff! I’d like to see that Badshah!” cried the boy.

“You will notice, Spencer,” the colonel continued, “that, save for the acceptation of Carrick by the wild elephants as a sort of co-king with Badshah, the story so far runs along natural lines. But I’ll give you something, presently, to feed your appetite for wonder.

“Having got through the enemy’s lines, Carrick turned Badshah toward the nearest fortified post and bade him run. But Badshah, most obedient of elephants, paid not the slightest heed to the master whom he usually obeyed at a word, or even an un-

spoken thought, for there was a strong telepathy between the two.

“Disregarding pressure of hand and knee—Carrick never used an ankus, or steel goad, on his elephant comrade—Badshah struck off at an entirely different angle. Ignoring paths, he cut straight through the low forest, and, after five hours of swift going, crossed the clearings of a frontier tea plantation, where he knelt abruptly for Carrick to dismount.

“This was directly in front of a bungalow, against which a small body of rebellious villagers was advancing to the attack. The major dashed in, at once, adding one more defender to the little group of half a dozen white men who were there to resist the assault.

“Badshah, without even so much as a contemptuous look at the rebels, lurched to his feet, turned, and sped into the forest even faster than before. When an elephant chooses to go, he can make thirty miles an hour through dense forest growth, twenty-five miles, quite easily. And no one has ever seen an elephant get tired.

“Dawn came, three hours later. Thanks to Carrick’s leadership and marksmanship, the rebel villagers—who had been stirred to revolt by seditious

Brahmins—were beaten back. They had little stomach for serious fighting.

“Toward noon, however—remember that Badshah had left nine hours before!—the entire ‘army’ of the Rajah of Lalpuri arrived, including a body of well-armed irregular cavalry. It was the Rajah’s intention to seize the plantation and use it as a strategic base, then to march upon the fort which Carrick had been defending and take it from the rear, to annihilate the small garrison of British and loyal native troops there—no difficult matter since the fort would be caught between two fires—and thus open the whole of that part of the frontier to invasion.

“The plot was well conceived and neatly timed—the Rajah’s son was an Oxford graduate, and the commander of his troops was a Germanized Bulgarian who had been on the staff of a German army corps during the World War. Had the plan succeeded, it would have taken us a good three years of constant fighting to regain the Pass, to say nothing of the loss of prestige, and prestige is the strongest of all weapons when dealing with native peoples.

“The Rajah offered conditions of surrender, for he was anxious not to be delayed. Of course, being a soldier, Carrick refused; the British Army does

not surrender to rebels. The enemy charged, the cavalry leading, but were beaten back. Successive small charges were repulsed, but to do so entailed a terrible drain on the ammunition, which was the reason that General Satchich—I think that was his name—sent the men forward. It was only a matter of time until all the ammunition of the defenders would be exhausted, and that would be the end, for the attackers were several hundred to one.

“But, before the rebels could push their advantage, a miracle came to pass. No, that’s not too strong a word!

“Suddenly, the rush halted. A paralyzed silence fell on the whole of the Rajah’s motley following. Every man turned his eyes away from the bungalow and gazed at the forested hills sloping slowly upward beyond the plantation. There was reason to look.

“‘From the far-off forest,’ Casserly describes it, ‘bursting out at every point of the long-stretching wall of dark undergrowth that hemmed in the wide estate, wild elephants appeared. Over the furrowed acres they streamed in endless lines, trampling down the ordered stretch of green tea-bushes. In scores, in hundreds, they came, silently, slowly; the great heads nodding to the rhythm of their gait, the trunks swinging, the ragged ears flapping as they advanced. Converging as they came, they drew

together in a solid mass that blotted out the ground, dark, relieved only by flashes of gleaming white. For on either side of every massive skull jutted out the sharp-pointed curving ivory.

“Of all save one!

“For the leader that led them, the splendid beast that captained the oncoming array of Titans, under the ponderous strokes of whose feet the earth trembled, had one tusk, one only. And, toward the place where the Rajah of Lalpuri and his officers stood, he moved unerringly, the immense earth-shaking phalanx following him.

“The awestruck crowds of armed men, so lately flushed with the fanatical lust of slaughter, stood as though turned to stone, their faces set toward the terrifying onset. Their pains unheeded, their groans silenced, the wounded staggered to their feet to look. Even the dying strove to raise themselves on their elbows from the reddened soil to gaze, and gazing, fell back dead. Slowly, mechanically, silently, the living gave way, the weapons dropping from their nerveless grip.

“Nothing was heard, save the dull thunder of the giant feet. Then, from the village, the high-pitched shriek of a woman pierced the air and shattered the eerie silence of the terror-stricken crowds. Murmurs, groans, swelled into wild shouts, yells, the appalling uproar of panic: and strong and weak, hale men and those from whom the life-blood dripped, turned and fled. Fled past their dead brothers, past the little group of leaders whose power to sway them had vanished before this awful menace.

“Petrified, rooted to the ground as though their quaking limbs were incapable of movement, the



Rajah and his satellites stood motionless before the oncoming elephants. One, the renegade Hindu who had betrayed the plantation, raised a pistol in his trembling hand and fired at Badshah. The next instant the huge tusk caught him. He was struck to the earth, gored, and lifted high in air. An appalling shriek burst from his lips. He was hurled to the ground with terrific force and trodden under foot. The Rajah screamed shrilly and turned to flee. Too late! The great phalanx moved on faster and passed without checking over the white-clad group, blotting them out of all semblance to humanity.' Such was the end of the Rajah of Lalpuri and his plotting, so ended the principal head of that many-headed snake of conspiracy which menaced India."

"And it was Badshah, sir, all alone, who had got the wild elephants and organized them, like that?"

"All wild elephants are organized into herds. All will follow and obey their leader. All will take as personal enemies, the enemies of their leader. But can any one explain how Badshah knew that the plantation was menaced, or how he knew that the enemies of his master were marching toward the place in numbers too strong to be resisted? How does news travel in the jungle? Who can tell? But Badshah knew!"

"And the fort—you have forgotten the fort, Colonel!" Beaverway suggested.

"There was nothing especially mysterious in

that. No sooner were the Rajah and his followers smeared on the ground, as a man smears a noxious insect on the ground with his foot, than Badshah placed Carrick on his back for all to see, and Carrick led his wild elephant army northward to the beleaguered fort. By some extraordinary mixture of heroism and fate, it still held, although the ammunition was all but exhausted. The few survivors of the doomed post watched. The attackers slept; they could afford to wait till morning, the end was sure.

“But most of that army of Chinese and Bhutanese never saw the morning. At dead of night, a hundred, two hundred, several hundred wild elephants—nobody knows how many—came ponderously rushing out of the forest on that rebel camp, came to slay and to slay. Few, very few, lived to tell the tale. The tusks of a hundred elephants were reddened to the sockets, the huge legs splashed to the thighs in blood. There was no mercy shown that day.

“Into the farthest recesses of the mountains, the wild elephants pursued their human prey, and, for a week after, any trembling fugitive might find a monster fury following on his track. Those who did escape, perhaps two hundred out of as many

thousands, bore back to China and to Bhutan a tale which will hold the frontier quiet for many a year to come.

“ But Badshah, his duty done, remained quietly at the fort while Carrick nursed the wounded and resumed command of the tiny garrison which had held firm to the last shot. Badshah had done honor to his elephanthood. More, he had shown his friendship to his master. To his master, no! To his brother and his equal! ”

## CHAPTER X

### GORED TO DEATH

“THERE is not any ‘best’ rifle for elephant-shooting, Mr. ‘Hunter’ Wolland, as you know very well, and when this young gentleman says that he wants a gun that will stop a charging bull elephant, I have only one reply to give.”

“And that is?”

“That you can stop an elephant with a squirrel rifle—more or less—if you strike the exact spot, and that you cannot stop him with a cannon-ball if you do not.”

The speaker, standing in a dingy little shop in a side street just off Oxford Street, in London, was a man whose name is well-known to the fraternity of big-game sportsmen all over the world. Although Spencer and his father had brought American rifles with them, “Hunter” Wolland knew better than to pass through London without taking counsel of the veteran gun-maker.

“There are two kinds of elephant-hunting,” he went on to say, “or, gentlemen, if you prefer it, two kinds of elephant-hunters. One is after ivory, and the other is after sport. The first seeks as

little adventure as possible, the second, if I may say so, more than any man ought to risk."

"But is there much risk in modern elephant-hunting?" queried the boy. "I've been told that, with modern weapons, you can grass an elephant at half a mile."

"The day you succeed in doing that, young gentleman, I shall have great pleasure in making you a gift of the finest gun in my shop! I am not a hunter, myself, but I think I may say that I have had the honor of knowing nearly all, if not all, the elephant-hunters of the last forty and fifty years. By far the greater part of them would never have fired a shot, if it were not for the risk; the danger lends the thrill."

"But have many hunters been killed by elephants?"

"Yes, a great many, that is, in proportion to the men engaged in the sport. Of my personal acquaintance I can remember fifteen or twenty men killed by elephants."

"Always when wounded?"

"I can only recall a single instance happening to a well-known elephant-hunter, when an animal charged, unprovoked, excepting, always, that very rare exception, a man-killing 'rogue.'"

“And what was that one, Mr. Nisser?”

“It was one of the adventures that fell to the lot of Major C. H. Stigand, and he enjoyed—I say ‘enjoyed’ deliberately, for he seemed to enjoy them—more extraordinary adventures with wild animals than any other hunter I have had the honor to know.

“It happened in the Lado Enclave, Soudan, a good many years ago. An elephant, perhaps a ‘rogue,’ but not so known, had been raiding the native crops, and Major Stigand, wanting to see whether or not it were a beast worth shooting, strolled out past the mealie-patches, after supper, to take a look at the animal. He was so imprudent as to go without his rifle. As soon as the animal saw him, it charged and knocked him down, driving one of its tusks through the fleshy part of the thigh. Then the elephant picked up Stigand with its trunk and threw him some fifteen or twenty yards away. Generally, in such cases, an elephant is satisfied with that, but, in this case, the beast followed up to the place where its victim had fallen. Knowing that his only chance was to remain perfectly still, Stigand controlled every nerve, and, after smelling him with its trunk, the elephant went away on the run; a ‘rogue’ would have gored again.”

“And he got better?”

“Who? Major Stigand, you mean? Oh, yes; he was badly smashed up, but, the year following, he was back again in Africa, elephant-hunting.”

“But I thought elephants always trampled on their victims!” exclaimed Spencer, thinking of the story of Badshah’s herd.

“On the contrary, I believe it is very rare, except when an animal is enraged. African elephants, at least, pierce with their tusks, pinning a man to the ground. Nearly all the fatalities to elephant-hunters, in Africa, have been of this character, and nearly all are due to the fact that the hunter’s first shot did not strike a vital point.

“It is a curious thing, Mr. Wolland,” he added, turning to Spencer’s father, “and I should like to know whether you have noticed it, that, if the first shot is not fatal, an elephant seems to be able to support later shots without collapsing immediately, even though the later shots are vital.”

“I’ve had that experience twice,” said The Hunter, “but, luckily for me, both times the animal swerved at my second shot.”

“Yes, I am told that is the rule: ‘stand your ground and shoot!’ But even that is not certain. A very good hunter, Mr. Johnstone, as I remember,

was killed in Nyasaland, by an elephant bull which he had wounded, apparently vitally, with a solid bullet from a powerful black powder Express rifle. He gave the animal a second shot, as it charged, and this reached the heart, but, for some reason or other, this second shot, although vital, failed either to turn or to stop the charging bull.

“The animal came straight on, knocked Johnstone down with a front kick of the forefoot and pinned him to the ground. The bull then drove its tusks clear through the hunter’s body, and struck, apparently, a stone or rock beneath. The bull staggered on and fell dead, fifty yards farther.

“As was found out, afterwards, both shots had struck vital points, and, by all the rules of shooting, that bull should have fallen in its tracks, but it didn’t. When Johnstone’s beaters brought in his kit and the tusks, the ivory was all stained with blood, and one of the tusks was splintered from the force with which the bull had pinned its victim to the ground.”

“Do elephants kick, then?” exclaimed the boy, surprised. “I didn’t know that.”

“So I am told. Mr. James B. Yule, another well-known hunter, was kicked and then killed in the



same way. Certainly, he did not lack for experience, and, from all accounts, he was a very pretty big-game shot. He wounded an animal which charged him with a scream—a rather unusual proceeding, for an animal intent on harm generally comes silently—and which kicked him down and then perforated him with one of the tusks. The beaters declared that the elephant, after transfixing its victim, paid no further heed to him but looked around for the rifle, which it stamped on and threw into the bush.”

“That doesn’t sound probable,” commented The Hunter, dubiously.

“My own thought,” agreed the gun-maker. “If an Indian wild elephant had done so, I should not have doubted the story, but such an act presupposes an amount of intelligence which most hunters would not allow to the African elephant.

“Generally, when a white hunter is killed by an elephant, it is a little difficult to find out the exact details, for the native bearers or ‘boys’ scatter as quickly as they can, to get into cover. Quite an interesting account of the killing of a hunter, however, was given of the death of Mr. H. Schmarsow, also in Nyasaland. Mr. Denis Lyell, himself a representative hunter and a writer of several books—

noteworthy for their freedom from exaggeration—found out the details from the bearers.

“ ‘Schmarsow was a German who lived, I think, at Chiromo in Nyasaland,’ Lyell wrote. ‘I believe he had shot quite a few elephants and a good many other animals. He had gone to Mashinjiri, a place I know well, to look for elephants, as they often used to roam round that part. It seems he had got up to a herd composed only of females, which became frightened and ran off. Schmarsow and his “boy” followed, and came on a bull, which he had not seen before, and, close to it, an elephant cow with her calf.

“ ‘He is said to have shot at the bull with a .400 cordite rifle, missed it, and wounded the cow on the trunk. Another shot seems to have missed, and the animals made off.’ ”

“Poor shooting!” commented Spencer.

The gun-maker turned a shrewd eye on him.

“That remark, young gentleman,” he said dryly, “proves that you are not a good shot, yet. Experienced hunters and canny shots are not at all ashamed to admit that they may miss.”

Properly rebuked, Spencer kept silence, while the old man proceeded with the story.

“ ‘Schmarsow followed and climbed an ant-hill ——’ ”

“An ant-hill!” the boy interrupted.

“The ant-hills of the termites, or white ants—which are not ants nor always white,” interpolated Spencer’s father, “are sometimes fifteen feet in height. Termites are insects of extraordinary interest, Son, I’ll tell you about them some day. Excuse my interrupting, Mr. Nisser! Please go on.”

“Certainly, certainly! Well, when Schmarsow got on the ant-hill, the elephant cow, which had stopped, apparently saw him, for she charged at once; and Schmarsow, instead of shooting, ran for some thick cover about fifty yards away.

“‘The native “boy” who was with him said afterwards that the elephant cow rapidly overtook the hunter, catching him up within thirty yards. She shot out her trunk, seized him by the waist, and dashed him to the ground. Then she drove her tusks through him, and the ‘boy,’ who was watching from some cover in which he was crouching, said that she seemed to thrash the body on the head with her trunk in her rage.

“‘After spending some minutes smashing him about, she ran off, leaving a piece of her tusk twenty-seven inches long sticking in the victim’s body; she had broken it when she drove it through the body into the baked ground. After the elephant had gone, the “boy,” who had seen the catastrophe, went with one or two others to their master’s body, but found him dead.

“‘There is little doubt,’ comments Lyell, ‘that Schmarsow lost his life by running away directly in

front of the elephant, for that, alone, is enough to make an irascible animal charge. The only thing to do in such a case is to shoot, and to keep on shooting as long as a cartridge remains in the rifle. That is a very good reason why a magazine weapon is infinitely more reliable than a double or single-loader rifle.' ”

“ You agree with that, Mr. Nisser? ” queried The Hunter.

“ I make guns and I sell them,” said the veteran, “ and I have done so for nearly forty years, but I make it a point never to volunteer advice about guns to an experienced hunter as to the weapons he should use. The issue is too critical; it is the hunter's life which is at stake. Besides which, big-game sportsmen are more fanciful and more fussy over rifles than any other man or any woman upon any subject on earth!

“ If you ask my opinion, however, I should say that for a powerfully built man, who is not afraid of carrying weight, any weapon of the character—say, of a .416 magazine Rigby rifle, or a Westley Richards double .577 nitro rifle—is very deadly. But these run to ten pounds in weight, and most of the men I know are agreed that eight pounds is as great a weight as most men will carry on a long day's tramp in the tropics.

“The whole trend, nowadays, is toward the small-bore rifle with greater penetration, such as the .311 Mauser, the .318 Mannlicher, the .318 Westley Richards, and the many excellent weapons of that type. Such men as Stigand, Bell, Sharpe, Lyell and a host of others have shot elephants with entire satisfaction with such a small-bore as a .275 or even a .256. To my mind, that is a little too light for elephant work, while a .318 magazine, by any absolutely first-class maker, should be heavy enough for cool shot.”

“The really big guns aren’t used any more then, Mr. Nisser?” queried the boy.

“O dear, yes! The Boer hunters still remain faithful to the old 4-bore muzzle-loaders, called ‘Roers’ and still load them with a handful of black powder. I have often wondered at what must be the anatomy of the shoulder of some of those Dutch hunters, for the ‘Roer’ has a kick like that of a discontented mule.

“Mr. F. C. Selous, perhaps the greatest of all the great African elephant-hunters, had a nasty accident with an old ‘Roer’ gun. The gun had misfired, and Selous passed the gun on to a native, with instructions to recharge it. The ‘boy’ loaded it again on top of the old charge, and, to make sure

that it would go off, put in an extra quantity of powder.”

“My hat!” exclaimed Spencer. “I should think it would kick!”

“It did, young gentleman; it did. Here is what Selous wrote about the accident:

“‘This time the gun went off: it was a 4-bore elephant gun, loaded twice over, and the powder thrown in each time with his hands—and I went off, too! I was lifted clean off the ground, and, turning round in the air, fell with my face in the sand, whilst the gun was carried yards away over my shoulder. At first I was almost stunned with the shock, and I soon found that I could not lift my right arm. Besides this, I was covered with blood, which spurted from a deep wound under the right cheek-bone, caused by the shock of the gun as it flew upward from the violence of the recoil.

“‘The stock itself—though it had been bound round, as are all elephant guns, with the inside of an elephant’s ear put on green, which, when dry, holds as firmly as iron—was shattered to pieces, and the only wonder was that the barrel did not burst.’

“But it does not follow that the newer rifles were better than the old ones, when they were first manufactured. A. H. Neumann, who is the only elephant-hunter of the old time to compare with Selous, was badly mauled by a cow elephant owing to the fact that a new .303 jammed. As Neumann

had killed several hundred elephants, with the old-style gun, he did not bless the new one. Afterwards, however, he had to adopt the lighter rifle, for his injuries were such that he never regained his former strength. That did not keep him from further elephant-shooting, however.

“He seems to have been a very cool shot. It is on record that he once bagged fourteen elephants in one day, and on another day eleven. He hunted mainly in British East Africa, and probably got out more ivory than any white man who ever handled an elephant-gun in the bush.”

“Was he killed at the end, too?” queried the boy.

“No, he gave up in disgust when game preservation was started in that part of the world. He felt that, as the pioneer, he ought to have been given special privileges to get his ivory out—since most of it was shot in districts where he was the only white man who had ever been there—but the authorities could not permit any evasion of the law. I never knew exactly how many elephants Neumann shot, but it must have been well over a thousand.”

“That must be the record!”

“No, there was a Major Rogers, in the days of the muzzle-loaders, who bagged over 1,500 ele-

phants, all good tuskers, and that in the space of a dozen years or so. Remember, young gentleman, that, in those days, the elephants were much nearer the settlements than they are now, and they were much less afraid of man. At the present time, the smell of a white man—which an elephant has no difficulty in distinguishing from that of a native—will send a herd off at a run. Elephant-hunting, these days, requires a good deal of stalking. Elephants are wise, you must remember.”

“Above all,” commented Hunter Wolland, “it requires steady shooting.”

Knowing that this was intended for him, Spencer put in a word.

“I got fourteen bulls’-eyes out of twenty, the other day,” he boasted.

The old gun-maker smiled.

“A crack target shot usually makes the very worst kind of elephant-hunter,” he said. “I shall not mention names, but one of the winners at Wimbledon—what you American gentlemen would call a world’s champion—went out with a good elephant-hunter in Portuguese East Africa a couple of years ago. Both times he encountered elephants—for he only tried twice—his bullet failed to reach the fatal spot. His life was saved on both occasions by his



partner, and, on the second occasion, the charging bull dropped to the ground not more than three yards away from him. The partner who, like most hunters, was superstitious, refused to risk taking him a third time.

“You must remember, young gentleman, that a target shot has trained himself to perfect steadiness and endeavors to acquire concentration. He has plenty of time and there is no danger. The big-game shot has trained himself to quickness on the snap, and the ability to receive impressions from without. He must always act quickly, and there is always danger. It is a very different thing to lie at full length on a rifle range, and take careful aim, from what it is to bring a rifle to bear when one is hungry, thirsty, probably fevered, the arms and legs tired and aching from a ten-mile tracking of an elephant under an African sun, knowing that if the bullet swerves the fraction of a degree in its angle, your own immediate death may be the consequence!

“And, if you will permit me to give a warning, you must not depend upon the cartridges which remain in your magazine rifle. They may be necessary, but, to be sure of your prize, the first shot must kill. A well-known elephant-hunter in British

East Africa, Mr. Fuller Maitland, was killed by a charging bull after having put eight bullets into the animal.

“ Mr. Denis Lyell, a very good authority, declares that this is due to the physiological fact that, in certain circumstances, a bullet may cause a paralysis of the nervous system, which makes subsequent wounds appear innocuous, although the later shots might have killed instantly if they had been the first. This is also true of the buffalo, I am told, but not of the lion.”

“ Do you find it the general opinion of most of the big-game men, Mr. Nisser, that the Cape buffalo is more dangerous than the elephant? ”

“ I should be inclined to say ‘ Yes,’ though it is—and probably always will be—a subject of heated discussion wherever sportsmen meet. Selous, who shot more than two hundred Cape buffalo on foot, considered them less dangerous than either the elephant or the lion. Such men as Judd and Sir F. J. Jackson, whose words carry weight, declare the Cape buffalo to be the ugliest and most vicious animal to hunt in all the realm of big game. It is, of course, less frequently hunted than the elephant, for it has not the attraction of ivory. That excludes all the professional hunters. But I do know

of eight or nine sportsmen who have lost their lives to a Cape buffalo."

"It isn't like our buffalo, is it, Father?" queried Spencer.

"No, Son," came the reply. "I shot four, when I was in Africa, a good twenty years ago. The Cape buffalo looks ten times uglier than the American buffalo, or bison, and he is as ugly in character as he looks. The massive weight of his body, the great breadth and thickness of his heavy horns, and especially the savage expression of his bloodshot eye make a Cape buffalo bull a creature of ferocious appearance. Like all creatures, without a single exception, they will run from Man, but a wounded bull buffalo will invariably charge, and he is exceedingly difficult to stop.

"I was out hunting with A. M. Naylor, in 1896, and he told me of one of his experiences a couple of years before. He was out, alone, save for his two native boys, on the Manamtoi Plains, when he came across a herd of fully seven hundred Cape buffalo, together with Burchell's zebra, some blue wildebeest, and hartebeest, each species keeping pretty well together. Not being in need of meat, so Naylor told me, and having all the trophies that his bearers could carry, he walked forward toward the

dense mass of animals, without any intention of firing a shot, merely to try their reaction on the approach of men. The zebra were the first to run, then the hartebeest and the wildebeest, but the Cape buffalo remained motionless, their evil-looking heads and wicked wide horns forming a solid phalanx."

"I should have been scared, Father!" declared Spencer.

"Bad thing, if you had; all wild animals can sense, by telepathy, when a hunter is afraid."

The gun-maker nodded his head.

"Quite true, Mr. Wolland, all my clients say so. I could tell you a story about that, but I must not interrupt. You were saying——"

"Naylor, of course, knew what he was doing, and he walked on quietly, hesitatingly followed by his two 'boys.' At 120 yards the buffalo wheeled, suddenly, all together, the horns disappeared, and nothing was to be seen but their rumps and waving tails rapidly retreating in a cloud of dust.

"A few weeks later, the camp being in want of meat, Naylor, with one 'boy,' started out to see if he could land some game. From the top of an ant-hill he sighted five buffalo on a small patch of short grass, feeding toward some heavy thorn and

palm scrub where they probably intended to lie up during the heat of the day. He determined to have some of them.

“Naylor ran through the long grass and came to within forty yards of them, without being seen, naturally approaching up wind. I think he was using a double .500 bore Express, with a soft lead solid bullet.”

“A fair weapon,” commented the expert, “but there are plenty better.”

“With his first barrel he dropped a cow stone dead, and, seeing a finely horned mature bull, close by, he let it have the other barrel. The bull fell motionless, also, for Naylor was not the sort of man to miss a shot. He was a very cool hand. He reloaded and went forward carefully, for he knew that a fallen buffalo does not always mean a dead one, and a charging wounded buffalo is a thundering menace of death.

“I might digress to mention that there is nothing on this earth more dangerous than to try to follow up a wounded Cape buffalo, which is still able to keep on his feet. It possesses a malignant cunning which can only be compared to that giant of the weasel family, the Indian Devil or the wolverine. It seems to know that it will be followed,

and it has an unpleasant little habit of running back parallel to its tracks and lying in wait, ready to charge when the hunter comes opposite. There is no escape, then, for the hunter has scarcely time to raise his rifle. Major Price escaped once, simply because the buffalo gored the 'boy' first. What is more, even if you do not trail a wounded buffalo, he may trail you, in a spirit of revenge, and his sense of scent is marvellous.

"I knew a case of a hunter who was charged in his camp, four hours after he had wounded a Cape buffalo. He escaped death by running around a tent, and the animal stumbled in the cords. Even so, he had his arm slashed open by a sidewise turn of the horns, and he would undoubtedly have been killed if a 'boy,' who had an axe in his hand, had not brought it full on the animal's nose. This stopped the brute for a second, and the hunter's partner, snatching out a heavy revolver, fired point-blank just behind the shoulder, thus reaching the heart. The spread of the horns was just half an inch less than four feet.

"To return to Naylor. After having reloaded, he went forward to make sure that both animals were dead. The cow was dead, without a doubt. But, on getting within twenty yards of the bull, the ani-

mal scrambled to its feet and charged. Twenty yards is not far! But Naylor was an old hand and knew how to handle his weapon quickly. A hurried shot aimed at the nose—the only place to aim when a buffalo is charging—hit the base of its left horn and the bullet glanced off with a loud hum; the second barrel drove a bullet through the nose, chest, and intestines, smashing the heart, killing it instantly, and causing it to turn a complete somersault. The rump of the animal hit Naylor a heavy blow in the face and brought him to the ground with a bloody nose and cut lips. All this happened in about ten seconds, so you see, Spencer, quick shooting was necessary.”

“And shall we go buffalo-shooting, too, Father?”

The Hunter shook his head.

“No,” he said, “I don’t think so. The main haunts of the Cape buffalo are in tsetse fly or sleeping-sickness districts, and I see no use in running ourselves deliberately in such a risk. As you know, Spencer, the Detroit Museum has asked us to secure a family of elephants, from the youngest baby to the oldest of all old patriarchs, so we sha’n’t have the time for much promiscuous big-game hunting. Of course, I shall take specimens of all the fauna that come our way.”

“ You are going to the Zambesi region, Mr. Wol-land? ”

“ I plan to make for that belt of thorn-bush and scattered timber which extends to the west of the Shubanga Forest. I am told that elephants have been very little disturbed there, and, as I am more anxious to make a study of their habits than I am to secure ivory, I don't mind a bit of rough country.”

“ And your son accompanies you? ”

“ Rather! ” declared Spencer. “ And I'm counting on shooting a big bull elephant, all by myself! ”





*Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons.*

**ELEPHANT FARM IN THE BELGIAN CONGO.**

An unsuccessful effort to tame the African elephant. In this picture, all the elephants are female calves.



*Courtesy of G. P. Putnam's Sons.*

**ELEPHANT-TRACKERS FROM THE BELGIAN CONGO.**

## CHAPTER XI

### INTO THE JUNGLE

IN Spencer's impatience to find himself actually following the spoor or trail of an elephant, the journey from London, through the Suez Canal and down the whole of the East Coast of Africa to Chinde, at the mouth of the Zambesi River, seemed endlessly long.

He heard many hunting stories on the way, for those steamers are the regular means of communication for African big-game sportsmen, and the boy pumped every man he met. Some of the yarns he heard were briefly told and obviously true; but others were recounted with a richness of imagination and a flavor of romance which tickled the boy's fancy greatly. These latter were generally corrected, or denied, afterwards, by the boy's father.

One traveller gravely informed the lad that the Unicorn was still to be found in the wilder parts of Africa, and when Spencer refused to believe it, declaring that every kind of wild animal which could possibly exist was already known to Man, the boy was reminded that it is less than thirty years ago

since Man first discovered that antelope-like giraffe, the okapi.

An old trader said—and believed—that once, when travelling in the jungle, he had seen the famous and dreaded songouee, a green serpent seven feet long with a head like a rooster, and which possesses the faculty of understanding human speech, in every language. This belief is held by a great many tribes in Africa, especially those in the region of the Upper Zambesi. No white man has ever seen the songouee, but nearly all native bearers hold it in especial dread.

The same man—he was a shrewd Scotsman, too—declared that he himself had been present at a Council of Chacma Baboons, where those strange creatures held a parliament, made speeches, and elected chiefs and judges. As is well known, many negro tribes believe the baboons to be human beings who have succeeded in keeping secret the fact that they know how to talk, lest the white men should enslave them and put them to work. The trader reminded Spencer that, in the Sixteenth Century, a Portuguese explorer, Luis d'Antarillo, gravely brought to Portugal a cargo of baboons and had them baptized as Christians, declaring them to be human beings possessed by demons.

Yet another old-timer in Africa warned Spencer that there were whole stretches of the jungle where it was unsafe to travel, because of poison-trees and poison-bushes. Remembering how virulent a bad case of ivy poisoning can be, even in populous settlements in the United States, Spencer thought the existence of the fabled Upas-tree to be quite possible. He did not believe, however, that the pods of a certain bean can throw off fine hairs which float in the wind and which can work themselves through the clothing and set up a really terrible and poisonous itching; yet this, later, he found to be perfectly true, and the "chitaizi" bean proved one of his greatest torments in the days to come.

Finding him equally hungry for information and for marvels, various passengers told Spencer of jungle terrors, and others of jungle delights; some warned him of fever and the dreaded tsetse fly that gives sleeping-sickness, while a few declared that health and happiness were only to be found in the recesses of the forest, far, far from civilization. The result was that the boy could scarcely contain his eagerness to find out for himself.

As Spencer had not quite expected that the shore of Africa would be peopled by elephants, Cape buffalo, and lions, clear down to the water-front, he

was in no way disappointed by his first sight of a truly African city, Zanzibar. It is still—though much changed during the last twenty years—the most characteristic capital of negro Africa. No city on the continent contains so great a variety of negro races, and there is an Arab proverb: “When you play the flute at Zanzibar, all Africa, as far as the lakes, dances.”

Yet, while the color and bustle in the streets charmed the boy, while he never wearied of asking his father questions as to the tattoo marks, the scarred faces, and the varied costumes which were to be seen in the streets, he was a trifle disappointed to learn that Zanzibar, being on an island, seventeen miles from the mainland, had no big-game fauna. He could not stroll out and kill a few wild elephants before breakfast!

Great was his delight, therefore, when he heard that there was a very respectable herd of hippopotamuses on the western shore of the island, in the swampy district of the lowlands. He begged to be allowed to go to see them, and to take the magazine rifle which he had bought from the veteran gun-maker in London. As yet, he had not even had a chance to fire it. This latter plea met with a decided refusal.

“If, some time, the camp is short of meat,” said The Hunter, “I make no objection to your shooting a young hippotamus, for the flesh is as tender as lamb, and roast hippo tastes even sweeter than the best roast pork—which it somewhat resembles in flavor—but that is the only condition. Hippos are grass- and reed-eaters, pure and simple; they are inoffensive creatures, and ask only to be let alone.”

“So do elephants,” retorted Spencer.

The Hunter frowned.

“I know, I know,” he said. “You expect me to answer that elephants are sought for their ivory, and you would counter with the question whether billiard-balls and piano-keys are so essential to the human race as to justify the threatened extinction of one of the finest races of animals in the world. We have talked of that before.

“You know my personal point of view. It was because I came to disbelieve in promiscuous slaughter, for the sake of sport or gain, that I took up scientific work. But the shooting of a hippopotamus, save in need for food—hunger justifies anything, since it is self-defense against starvation—is something that I will permit no one in my party to do. Take a boat and study the hippos as much as you like, but do not go too near.”

“You said they were inoffensive.”

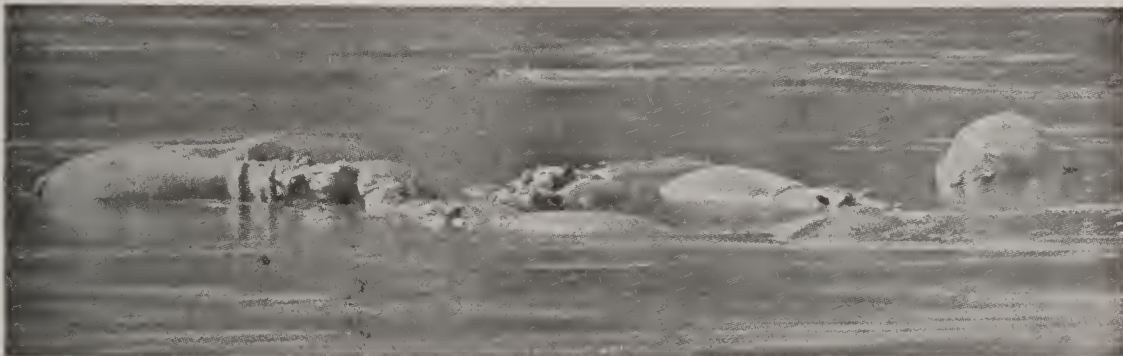
“They are, but there is no reason deliberately to annoy them and to awaken their suspicions by going too close. There are such things as ‘rogue’ hippopotamuses, though they are comparatively rare, and never, under any circumstances, are they found with a hippo family.

“Quite often, boats are upset by herd hippos, and there are several cases on record where an upset canoe has been crushed into splinters by a crunch of the hippo’s huge jaws. But I’ve never heard of even the angriest herd hippo undertaking to attack a man thrown into the water. I said a herd hippo, remember, not a ‘rogue.’ And, in any case, even if you were upset, you couldn’t shoot while swimming. No, Spencer, leave your rifle here; you’ll have plenty of chance to use it, later.”

The hippos, indeed, when Spencer came to them, looked quite peaceful. There were twenty-two of them, a moderate-sized family group, and, as the boy arrived at the swamp just at sunset, he found the huge animals wakening from their daily sleep in the water—their noses only above the surface—and beginning to come to dry ground for their nightly feed.

A hippo can eat the third of a haystack at a meal,





HERD OF OLD HIPPOPOTAMUSES.



IMMATURE HIPPOPOTAMUSES.  
Note the tick-birds on their backs.



HIPPOPOTAMUSES AT SUNSET.  
The spray, resembling the whale's "blow," is made by the animal as it comes to the surface.



SQUARE-MOUTHED RHINOCEROS.

Taken by telephoto from a distance. The tick-birds on the animals' backs have not yet given warning of the approach of enemies.



A SNIFF OF THE MAN-SMELL.



RHINOCEROS CHARGING.  
Taken at fifteen yards.



*Courtesy of Wm. Heinemann. Photographs by A. Radcliffe Dugmore.*

FORCED TO SWERVE.

This charging rhinoceros has been hit by a low, raking shot. The photographer is only seven yards away.

so that, if by any chance a family of them does come across growing crops, it can do a great deal of damage, not only by what is eaten but also by the trampling. Hippos do not like the presence of men, however, and have a great objection to fences.

Hippos prefer well-known feeding-grounds, and keep to their own trails. Many of these trails are centuries old; wide double trails which are of immense value to travellers who may chance to be following the course of a river. Along parts of the Zambesi, there are well-beaten hippo paths several miles long.

Rather to Spencer's surprise, the canoeman paddled quite close to the herd, at least within thirty yards, so that he was able to get a really good look at the first hippopotamus he had seen outside a zoological garden. One of the largest of them let out a loud trumpeting bellow which fairly scared the boy, and the sight of one, yawning—the hippopotamus has the largest mouth of any land animal in the world—was distinctly disquieting. One old bull hippo gruntingly clambered to a mud-bank and stared at the canoe with solemn displeasure, but it showed no sign of wanting to make a charge.

This giant pig—for a hippopotamus is second cousin to a pig—was almost five feet high at the

shoulders, and thirteen feet long, and thus looked formidable enough, despite its peaceable air. The hippo has none of the wickedly vindictive appearance which distinguishes the rhinoceros. Full-sized hippos are very rarely seen in zoological gardens, their terrific weight making transport difficult.

As the canoe turned homeward, the moonlight disclosed a solitary hippo browsing in the marshy grass along the shore. This time, the boatman sheered off and made a wide detour. In response to the boy's questions, the headman replied that it might be a "rogue," soured by solitude and dangerous, even to the point of attacking without provocation. Spencer was glad that he had not brought his rifle with him, for the temptation to shoot a "rogue" hippopotamus might have been too great to be resisted, and his father was not the man to overlook disobedience.

From Zanzibar, Spencer and his father, with a Matabele guide and interpreter, named Mbumbwe, continued on a coast steamer to Chinde. This place is a comparatively modern seaport on the Chinde mouth of the Zambesi River, the only navigable entrance of that many-mouthed flood.

At Chinde, Mr. Wolland hired a flat-bottomed boat, the after part of the hold of which was ar-

ranged for the two Americans, and the forward part by the crew. Mbumbwe lived forward, naturally, but he spent most of his time aft. He was a famous Matabele hunter and interpreter who had done little else, all his life, but act as a guide to white elephant-hunters. He spoke English fairly well, knew all the negro languages, had a great reputation as a tracker, and was a deadly shot. His rifle—which two thousand dollars would not have bought—was the gift of an English sportsman whose life he had saved.

To Spencer, Mbumbwe was a never-ending delight. The Matabele had a vast store of jungle lore at his fingers' ends, hunting information of the most precise type, and legends by the score. He liked nothing so much as showing off his knowledge. From the point of view of the expedition's aims, Mbumbwe was a treasure. It was exclusively with the hope of being able to find him that Hunter Wolland had gone to London, to interview a famous big-game sportsman who engaged the Matabele guide for a season, every alternate year.

As the Lower Zambesi is navigable for 400 miles up, as far as the Kebrabaza Rapids, Spencer had plenty of opportunity to see as many hippos as he wished. He counted several hundred of them, dur-

ing the first few days, and then gave up the enumeration. Crocodiles, of course, there were galore. The distant roaring of lions occasionally rumbled through the half-silence of a jungle night, and, twice, a black rhinoceros was sighted among the reeds of the bank.

It was the last day but one of the trip up river that Spencer beheld a sight which he was never to see again, which his father had never seen before, and which even the captain of the little flat-bottomed Zambesi boat had seen but twice in his life.

This was a python swimming!

The huge snake, which, though but half the size of his Asiatic cousin, was some fifteen feet long, was swimming in midstream, strongly and well. The powerful reptile was crossing the mile-wide river on a long angle, going against the stream, and kept at a very fair speed. Occasionally the long wave-like line, glinting metallic and burnished in the sunlight, disappeared beneath the surface of the water, and only a widening ripple told where it had been, but, ten or twenty yards farther, the snake emerged again, and swam on, unconcernedly, its powerful head held high out of the water.

“Quick, Father!” cried Spencer.

“Quick what?”

“Shoot him!”

“What for, Son?”

“A specimen!”

“Very good!” agreed The Hunter. “I’ll promise to shoot him, if you’ll promise to dive to the bottom of the Zambesi after him, and run your risk of being taken for a quick lunch by a crocodile.”

“Oh! Wouldn’t the body float?”

“No, Son; it would sink like a stone. Snakes are very heavy in proportion to their surface area; they have to be, since it is the friction of their bodies on the ground which enables them to crawl. Not that I consider ‘crawling’ a very good word to describe a motion which may be as fast as an elephant can run! I don’t mean the python, particularly, he’s rather a slow goer, but the Mamba, for instance.

“I’m every bit as anxious as you are, Spencer, to get a good specimen of a good-sized python, and that fellow, over there, seems to be full-grown. But it will have to be shot on land, where we can handle the skin. Snake’s skins, too, are especially hard to prepare so that the scales don’t fall off.”

“Oh, yes, Father; I wanted to ask you about that. How are we going to preserve our specimens and all that sort of thing? You haven’t brought a single thing with you, so far as I know.”

“No. I thought I had told you. Dunbar is going to meet us at a point on the Cape-to-Cairo Railway, or, at least, he is going to establish a camp at Tbinba’s Kraal should we have passed there before he comes. We could have gone by rail that way, Spencer, for it’s a great deal shorter, but I had to go round by Zanzibar in order to pick up Mbumbwe. It’s nearly twenty years since I did any actual preparing in the field, and I don’t know the modern methods at all. Thanks to that mammoth ivory we sold, money is no object to this expedition, so we got the best man we could find. Dunbar is certainly the finest taxidermist in the Middle West. He’s a photographic expert, too, and is bringing the cameras and chemicals.”

“Is he a hunter, too?”

“A big-game hunter? No. It doesn’t seem to appeal to him, and though he’s very wiry and can stand a lot of exposure, he’s a small man and not an athlete in any sense of the word. He’ll stay in camp, mostly. It’s an exceedingly good thing to have one reliable man in charge of a main camp.

“Moner, the museum ornithologist, is coming with him, but Moner scorns everything that hasn’t wings, though he condescends to a certain interest in insects. He will make entomological collections,



as well. They'll work on their own. For the big game, Son, the Museum is depending on you and me. But, remember, we're after specimens, not slaughter!"

Not far from the lower swirl of the Kebrabaza Rapids, the flat-bottomed boat came at last to a rough wharf, behind which there stretched a fairly large but widely scattered native village, with one or two traders' stores near the wharf.

Here, thirty porters and bearers were engaged, as well as two "boys," one for Spencer and one for his father. Both were experienced, and had attended white hunters before. The camp equipment, reduced to strict necessities, was made up into packages tied tightly with water-proofed canvas—especially against the morning dews—and, at sunrise the next morning, the party set forth.

Spencer was in a fever of excitement. They were off for the jungle!

On through the village, out beyond the patch of cultivated land, to the far edges of the fenced pastures with their hurdled kraals, and thence into the wild scrub. Toward noon, the road, wide and easy of travel, forked to the right, following the river bank, but Mbumbwe turned to the left along a native trail, so winding that it was rare to be able

to see the path for a dozen feet ahead, and so narrow that one could not walk in it at all without crossing the feet one over the other.

“Is this the jungle?” queried Spencer, as the trees and undergrowth grew thicker.

“Almost,” said his father, “though it is very far from being dense jungle. Wait! Mbumbwe is making for an old elephant road, which skirts a bit of real jungle. It has been unused by elephants these twenty years and more, but there has been enough travel along it to keep it open. It is not the shortest way, but I shall avoid these native trails whenever I can, until my feet get used to them again.”

Spencer rubbed his ankles ruefully.

“It’s like ballet dancing, this crossing one foot over the other all the time!” he complained.

“Keep your shoe-laces loose, especially at the top,” his father advised. “Your feet will swell enough, anyway. But you’ll have to get accustomed to these trails, Son; after all, they’re better than thorn-scrub. It’s a good thing you’re a sturdy walker, for there’ll be few days that we don’t make twelve to twenty miles a day, especially if we get on elephant spoor.”

“I can’t walk like you, Father!”

“Perhaps not, but, being younger, a night’s sleep will recuperate you better than it will me. That evens up! I’ve no fear of your quitting, Spencer. If you hadn’t shown me, in Siberia, that you’ve got good stuff in you, well, you wouldn’t be here, now.”

“There’s a difference in temperature, anyway,” grinned the boy.

“There is; and, in dense jungle, it’s a good deal hotter than here.”

An hour later, the narrow winding trail, scarcely wider than the print of a foot, entered the old elephant trail. This had been trodden for ages past, and was beaten down to a depth of seven inches below the level of the surrounding ground.

“This trail will lead us into real jungle, probably,” The Hunter commented, “for elephants almost invariably come to water to drink, during the evening, feed at night, and then find some dense shady bush for a ‘standing place’ during the day.”

“Do elephants sleep standing, as the books say?”

Mbumbwe, who was walking directly in front, turned and answered the question.

“Bull elephants quite almost always standing sleep,” he said, “or leaning ant-hill against. Cow elephants, small calves with them, lie down sleep, calf lie down sleep, too, between legs of mother ele-

phant. Bulls, tuskers, no! I track a herd of bulls, one time, more than one moon; not one spoor where bull lie down sleep. Very, very old bull lie down sleep, sometimes."

"Is that really so, Father?" queried Spencer.

"Quite true, from all that hunters and naturalists say. People used to believe, you know, in the olden days, that an elephant had no joints in his knees and couldn't lie down. But he not only kneels very often, and lies down sometimes, he also rolls; eh, Mbumbwe?"

"On sand, beside rivers, elephant rolls. Yes."

"Oh, look!" cried Spencer, breaking off in admiration as the old elephant road plunged into the real forest.

It wound upward in a slow gradient between the tall, straight stems of parinaria trees, from which hung and twined and twisted dozens of different forms of lianas and those cable-like vines which are known as "monkey-ropes," giving the forest the appearance of having been taken in hand by some monstrous irregular-web-making spider; huge baobabs, squat and pale, twenty feet in diameter, stood like solitary columns that suggested the ruins of an antediluvian temple built by giants; borassus palms lifted their ever-moving fronds high above the

rigidity of the stunted ironwoods; swaying bamboos, sixty feet high, made of their narrow and sharp-pointed silver-green leaves an arrowy lace-work against the sky; the graceful acacia and ever-flowering mimosa gave a grateful shade on the edges of the clearings; masses of huge euphorbias splashed the middle ground with their striking flowers, scarcely less vivid than the fitting crimson butterflies and the swooping painted bats.

“ More strikingly colored, more strangely shaped than any of these, seeming, indeed, like lustrous moths in their hues and like vampiric insects in their unwholesome beauty, orchids of every blazing tint and pattern gleamed in the crotches of tree-boughs or dropped on invisible threads. They vied with the huge iridescent beetles of the tropics, whose hard coats flashed back the sunlight like the facets of vari-colored jewels, and with the glittering dragon-flies, with bodies of ruby and of emerald, six inches in length, poised on their ever-quivering wings of mother-o'-pearl.

Yes, this was the jungle!

A whole orchestra of sounds pervaded this forest. Highest of all, perhaps, was the steady hum of myriads of insects, from the high-pitched shrill of the Uganda gnat to the deep bourdon of the black

wild bees. The grating sound of the "white ants," or termites, resembling the scratching of a file on iron, told of the destruction of some piece of fallen timber, eaten with a rapidity that nothing—not even fire—could surpass. The red-tailed grey parrots whistled squawkily from the nearest water, not with the harsh and violent chorus of dawn, but with more confidential chuckles. From the same direction came the raucous note of the fishing eagle, watching from his eyrie to pounce upon some frightened fish which was leaping from the water to escape the pursuit of a hungry crocodile. The "tcha-tchaa" of the tick-birds told that a rhinoceros was not very far away, and the snowy egrets sailed away over a tiny clearing wherein was a muddy pool, with a clear high note as musical as their forms were graceful. Over all, rose the continuous cooing of the woodland doves.

This was the music of the jungle!

Nor were there lacking deeper sounds, though, in the daytime, most of the loud-voiced hunters are asleep. A hippopotamus bellow—which will carry for a mile or more—was evidence that the Zambesi was not far away. The little Samango monkeys chattered ceaselessly—no gossips ever have so much to say—and, by their very numbers, gave

sonority to their tumult. The porcupine rattled his quills, but hurried into cover suddenly when he heard the shrill bird-like chirp of a forest ichneumon or African mongoose. From the lower grass-valley came the lowing of the Cape buffalo. On all sides came the punctuation of the grunts of the wart-hog, that most hideous of wild swine, whose tough hide and foot-long tusks make him an awkward customer for almost any carnivore to tackle, though the python finds a young wart-hog a toothsome meal.

This was the undertone of the jungle.

Suddenly—all things happen suddenly in the jungle—a venomous yapping was heard in the distance, coming nearer rapidly.

“Hunting-dogs!” cried Mbumbwe.

Spencer reached for his rifle, which was being carried by his “boy” since they were not hunting, only travelling, but, before the weapon reached his hands, a magnificent sable antelope, the size of a roe deer, with superb twisted and ringed horns, dashed across the trail. The superb animal was closely pursued by eleven ugly creatures, the size of a mastiff, large-eared, irregularly spotted white, yellow and black, leaping noisily.

The boy fired, barely having time to get the piece

to his shoulder, but his aim was true, and one of the dogs rolled over, mortally wounded. Without a second's hesitation, two of its companions stopped, so suddenly that they almost went head over heels, and with savage growls tore their still living comrade to pieces. Such ferocity the boy had never seen.

The other eight African hunting-dogs went on, unchecked, after their quarry.

"How far before they catch him, Mbumbwe?" questioned The Hunter.

"Half an hour walk, one hour, not more!" the guide answered. "Sable very tired, I see nostrils flat."

Spencer gaped at this precision. He had barely seen the antelope for the fraction of a second, yet the Matabele's trained eye had noticed this minute detail.

"Follow up, Mbumbwe, the porters can wait, here. The skin will be worth nothing after the dogs have got him down, but the sable had a fine pair of horns."

The tracker's sense of distance was exact. In about forty minutes they came to the scene of the tragedy. Two of the dogs were dead, killed by the sable's powerful twisted horns; two were so



wounded that they would serve as a meal for their fellows, later; yet they, with their four unscathed comrades, were tearing the magnificent antelope to pieces. The creature was half devoured, already.

The dogs snarled and showed no sign of willingness to abandon their prey, as the hunters approached. Using their lighter rifles, Spencer, his father, and Mbumbwe fired. Two dogs fell dead and the two others, followed by their wounded companions, leaped away into the bushes.

“Poor old chap,” apostrophized Hunter Wolland, as he came forward and stood by the half-devoured but still warm remains of what had been one of the finest animals of the African wild, less than an hour before, “you’d have had a better chance even against a lion, wouldn’t you?”

“Are the hunting-dogs so deadly, then, Father?”

“All hunting creatures are deadly. Here, in the forest, there is nothing but hunters and hunted. Death lurks at the shoulder of every living wild creature from its birth, and Life is nothing but a continual series of terrors and escapes.”

Yes; this was the life of the jungle.

## CHAPTER XII

### AMIDST A HERD

DUNBAR and Moner not yet having arrived with the special supplies for the Museum Expedition, Hunter Wolland left word at Tbinba's Kraal that they should establish camp, there, as soon as they came, and that he would return, with Spencer, in a month's time. He was exceedingly anxious to strike across the corner of Northeastern Rhodesia, for Mbumbwe had heard from a native who had accompanied a Dutch ivory-hunter, some little time before, that several herds of wild elephants were roaming the broken mountain country near the border.

This section of Rhodesia is little visited by hunters, for it is necessary to cross two tsetse belts to reach it, and, in one of these, sleeping-sickness is known to exist, as well as "nagana" or tsetse fly disease. In consequence of this barrier, so the information stated, the elephants had not been hunted and were less timid there. It would be easier for Hunter Wolland and Spencer to observe the habits of an elephant herd in such a region than

in those parts where elephants have become shy and timorous from constant hunting, and where the herds are smaller.

During the two weeks of rigorous and constant marching which were required to take the party into these almost unexplored wilds, Spencer had begun to learn how to handle himself in the jungle. Rather to his father's disappointment, the boy was not naturally endowed with the qualities necessary to make a good big-game shot. He was too anxious to take exact aim, and, as both Mbumbwe and his father reminded him, hunting aim—while necessarily accurate—must become instinctive rather than deliberate.

“Jungle shooting,” explained his father, “must become a natural reflex. Suppose an elephant is charging you, a hesitation of two or three seconds may make the difference between your death or that of the elephant. Not only that, but it is essential to good shooting that will, hand, and eye should act simultaneously. That will come, in time, I hope, but until it does, Son, don't run the risk of wounding any animal capable of attacking you in return, if wounded!”

“I did shoot the koodoo!” declared Spencer, in justification.

“ You did, without a doubt, and a pretty shot it was; I couldn’t have bettered it, myself. You were in luck, too, for it’s not every hunter in Africa who can boast of a koodoo trophy. Then, since I know that the Detroit Museum already has a fine specimen, the Trustees may be willing to let you keep the skin and the horns for yourself. But, Spencer, if you hit the koodoo, you missed the Zambesi leopard, entirely! ”

To this remembrance, the boy made no reply. It was rather a sore point with him. He had missed the leopard exactly for the reason that his father criticized—hanging a little too long on his aim.

It was just at the end of this two weeks of marching that there came what was, to the boy, a never-to-be-forgotten day. This was the day on which he saw a wild elephant spoor, or track, for the first time.

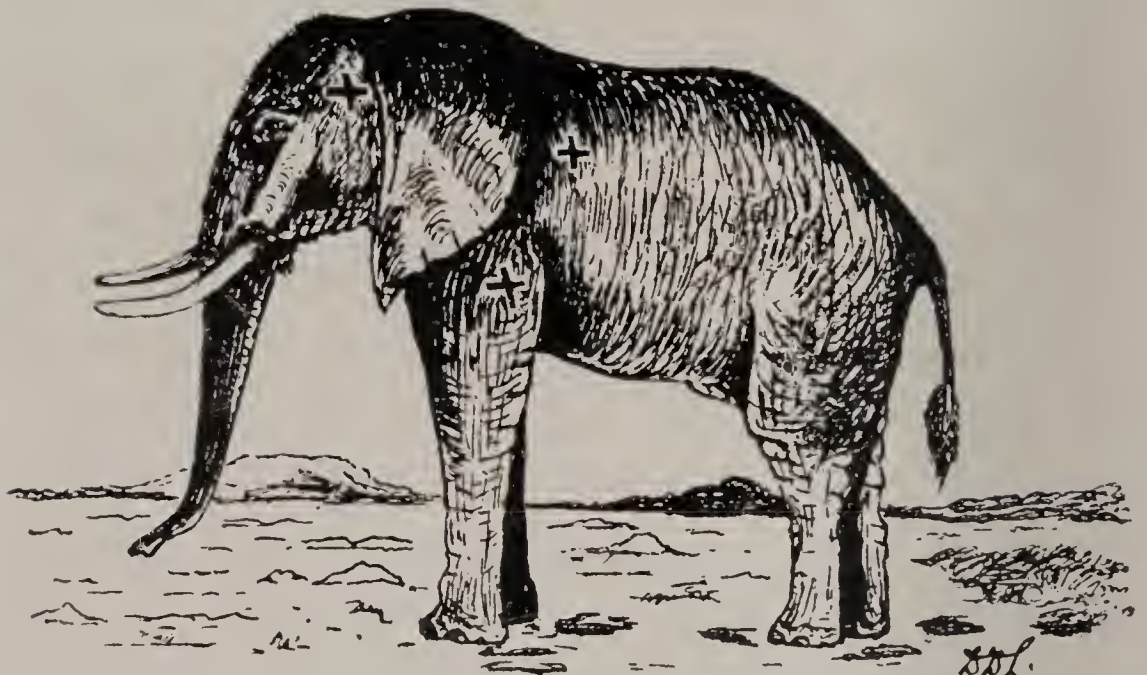
The ground was not very soft, yet the imprint was deep enough. Almost round, with only slight indentations to show the five stumpy toes, the spoor was a few inches over a foot in diameter. Carefully measured with a tape-line, it was four feet three inches in circumference.

“ Whew! ” whistled Spencer. “ He must be as big as a house! ”



*Courtesy of Heath Cranston, Ltd.*

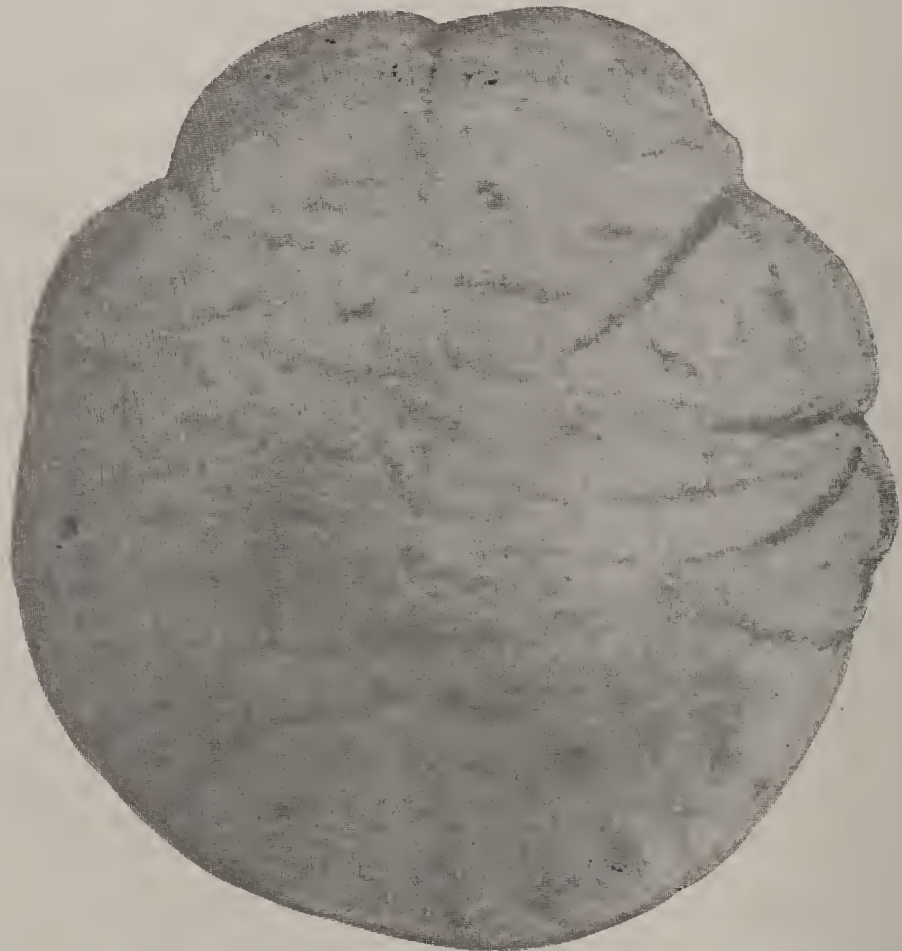
**A MASSIVE BULL ELEPHANT.**  
Shot in Northeastern Rhodesia,



VITAL SHOTS FOR AN ELEPHANT.

Crosses show correct spots for the brain, heart,  
and lungs.

S.S.L.  
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*Courtesy of Heath Cranton, Ltd.*

A BULL ELEPHANT'S SPOOR.

Scale, one-sixth actual size.

“Not very big, not big,” said Mbumbwe. “Much bigger I have seen.”

“What’s the biggest spoor you ever saw?”

“Fifty-eight inches,” replied the tracker.

“That beats my record,” commented The Hunter; “fifty-six and one-half inches is my best.”

“And you say, Father, that twice the circumference of the spoor gives the height of the animal?”

“That’s the hunter’s rule. It’s not always exact to a few inches, for it may happen, sometimes, that a very bulky elephant which may not be especially tall at the shoulder shows a large spoor. But, within very narrow limits, this measurement is pretty sound.”

“Then this chap is more than eight feet high!”

“He is sure to be that, and more. Eight feet is not high for an African bull elephant. I should rather doubt if he were full-grown, just because of that spoor. Plenty of elephant bulls run between ten feet and eleven feet. A beast running over twelve feet or even reaching twelve feet would be unusual.

“After all, Son, the size of any animal race is largely a matter of averages, just as it is with human beings. A man between five feet ten inches

and six feet is a normally tall man. There are, occasionally, men who reach a few inches more, but they are rare. You wouldn't be justified in taking their measurements as showing the tallness of the human race. An African bull elephant, standing ten feet at the shoulder, would be representative, one of eleven feet would be tall. Anything over eleven feet six inches might be considered abnormally tall."

"Well, that's big enough, in all conscience! You never see them that size in Zoological Gardens!"

"No, for the very good reason that you never see a full-grown African bull elephant there! How would you get him there? And how would you keep him, after he was there? The African elephant does not submit to handling."

"Wasn't Jumbo an African elephant?"

"He was, but he was brought up in captivity from calfhood, and his docility was a rare exception. Even that didn't keep him from charging an express train. The shock killed Jumbo, you remember, but it crumpled up the locomotive, too. The elephants you see in circuses, without exception, are from Indian or Ceylonese domesticated herds."

"And any African bull elephant is normally as big as Jumbo!"



“At least. You see, Spencer, an elephant takes plenty of time to grow. He isn't grown up until he reaches forty or fifty years, and then he is apt to live on for a hundred years or so, more.”

“You mean that elephants live to be a hundred and fifty years old!”

“The average is probably higher. Of course, there are fabled stories of animals which have lived twice as long. That is possible. There are rare cases of longevity, just as there are rare examples of extreme size. But I should be inclined to think that two hundred years was the limit to the life of a wild elephant, corresponding, say, to ninety years of age in the life of Man. This elephant, whose spoor we are looking at, is probably a mere youngster of thirty years old or thereabouts.”

“Are we going to follow up this spoor, Father?”

Mbumbwe, who had been following the conversation with great interest, tapping the ground with his long-handled axe from time to time in token of approval, undertook to answer:

“Too small. Young elephant. Herd not very far off. Boss say, ‘Find baby calf, first.’”

As usual, the Matabele had judged the district accurately.

A couple of miles farther on, they reached a re-

gion where all the evidence showed that a herd of elephants had passed. The path of their passage was strewn with saplings trodden down, with young trees broken off short and a litter of boughs and branches. Much of the ground was ploughed up, and the undergrowth was trodden flat. Some fair-sized trees, especially the Mauni-trees and the Masuko-trees—the fruits of which are greatly esteemed by elephants—measuring as much as twenty-two inches in circumference, were broken off at a height of a little less than four feet from the ground.

Everywhere was elephant spoor, and, among the tracks, were the imprints of numerous little calves.

“Cow herd. Find them soon,” said the tracker, observing the recency of the droppings. “Take guns.”

But The Hunter held him back.

“No, Mbumbwe,” he said. “I want to watch the herd, to-night. The ivory can wait. Get down wind. A few hours’ sleep will do none of us any harm.”

The sun sank slowly. Spencer woke toward evening.

With the coming of dusk a new spirit thrilled through the forest. Most of the greater beasts of

the African jungle are nocturnal, and the wilder part of the life of the jungle is always its night life. It is in the dark that most of the timid creatures venture out to feed and to drink; it is then that the great carnivores hunt for their food. The grim battle of tooth and claw begins with nightfall.

The first living evidence of the oncoming of Night was the sudden rush of the African Spectre Bats and the False Vampires. These large naked-winged creatures of baneful presage and hideous appearance are universally detested by all beasts of the wild, but by none so much as by elephants. A large swarm of bats will stampede a herd, for the wild elephant hates a bat as much as the tame elephant does a mouse. The reason for this repugnance is unknown.

The next sure sign of coming night was the first cry of that haunting chorus from which no part of the African jungle is ever free: the "Mbwee, mbwee" of the jackals, ever hungry, ever despised, slinking through every alternate patch of shade and light to snatch a meal—either of carrion or of flesh—to stay the demands of a stomach which cries famine within an hour after complete repletion. The digestion of a jackal is one of the wonders of Nature—but it is not an agreeable one.

One such jackal, reddish-brown in the fading light but with the lateral black and white stripes on his lean and sinewy flanks showing up clearly, galloped lazily past the hunters. He smelt the presence of Man, but, though he is the most cowardly creature that breathes, he has not the same fear of Man as have the lordlier animals. No one—not even the natives—desires a jackal's hide or a jackal's meat.

Spencer noticed that this particular animal ran limpingly and he judged that the wounds were recent. In this the boy had judged correctly, for, that very afternoon, the jackal had ventured into a zebra herd, in the hope of snatching a new-born foal. This was a daring venture for him, a sign of hunger, for he had found no carrion the night before and his only meal had been a mouthful or two of small monkey which he had snatched from the talons of a night-owl. But the zebras have little fear of a jackal, and the stallion leader of the herd had driven him away with a well-placed kick.

As he trotted past the hunters, his plaintive "Mbwee, mbwee" cried aloud his hunger, as he vanished into the growing darkness.

Half an hour later, the hunters were on the move.

There was a young moon, but the sky was covered

with a thin film of high cirrus-cloud which rendered the moonlight diffused and ghostly. This greenish-silver gleam threw up in the strangest fashion the drooping orchilla lichen—which resembles distantly the Spanish moss of the southern United States—and made the twining and snake-like lianas seem like writhing coils of horrendous serpents. Where tree-growth cut off the light, deep shadows and sombre patches of darkness suggested, to Spencer, the hiding-places of mysterious dangers. In those shadows lurked the lion and the Zambesi leopard, either one of which could tear him to pieces in a moment. Under those bushes lay coiled, or crept, pythons, boas, and other serpents, to say nothing of the venomous puff-adder and the cobra. As for the teeming insect life, well—it was preferable not to think about it.

The boy did his best not to be afraid, for both his father and Mbumbwe had told him that the larger animals of the forest fear nothing, except Man, and that Man need have no fear, at all, in the jungle. Not a single wild animal, of any sort whatsoever, will ever voluntarily attack Man. All will flee at the hated man-smell, and the elephant quickest of them all. Man-eating lions and man-killing rogue elephants—both very rare exceptions

—are found only on the fringes of civilization, where game is scarce and where cultivated crops are tempting; in the jungle, they keep to their normal habits and their normal food.

Presently, as they crept forward, Spencer heard a curious rumbling, gurgling sound, something like water being poured out of a narrow-necked bottle. It carried a long distance. Almost at the same time he heard a cracking and splintering of branches.

Mbumbwe stole forward, softly, alone, testing the direction of the faint breeze with the down from owl-feathers, which he kept in a small bag, after the fashion of the Makorikori tribal hunters. Under his leading, the hunters approached, up wind, to a forest glade.

The silver light gleamed calmly upon this glade, and, as he looked, with a suddenness that was almost spectral, a huge elephant cow drifted into Spencer's sight. The word "drifted" is exact. It came, it became visible, it disappeared, melting into the shadows. Astounding as it may seem, nothing in the bush is more difficult to see than an elephant. Another came, and yet another and another.

Spencer felt a light friendly touch on his shoulder.

Mbumbwe was already climbing, and his father



AN AFRICAN ELEPHANT PUSHING THROUGH THE JUNGLE.



*Courtesy of Heath Cranston, Ltd.*

**TREES BROKEN BY AN ELEPHANT.**

These trees are from 25 inches to 35 inches in circumference.



pointed to a large tree—one too big for an elephant to push down or uproot, should any of the herd be hostile.

With the sound of his climbing covered by the noise of snapping branches, Spencer went upward nimbly. He felt as though he were running away, and, foolishly, would have liked to stand his ground. He had sense enough to know, however, that what his father and Mbumbwe thought wise must be good enough for him.

The rumblings now sounded below him, and on all sides, up wind. They were the formidable gurglings of the stomach and intestines, characteristic of the elephant, sometimes a very useful sign to the hunter, as enabling him to locate an animal's presence in bush so thick that the huge bulk cannot be seen.

More elephants came, or, more exactly, seemed to materialize. They made plenty of noise, but they were extraordinarily invisible. Dark, dim, ponderous, moving shadows magnified by the diffused moonlight, they fed along the glade. Many of them prodded up the ground with their left tusks—always the left—to get roots and bulbs; others shook small trees to get at the bitter-sweet greenish matonga fruit with its large seeds em-

bedded in the pulp, or gathered the brown-gold mbura, of date-like flavor, which lay beneath magnificently branching trees. The tamarinds and the acid quajas attracted others, but the bulk of the feeding was on the tips of young trees or the young shoots at the ends of branches, to secure which whole trees were uprooted ruthlessly and big branches torn away with a single pull of a mighty trunk. There were about seventy of the animals, all of them cows with calves. There was not one bull in the herd.

The humming call-note of the cow elephants—one of the three noises which is made by blowing through the trunk and is not to be confounded with the screams and roars from the throat—bidding the calves keep well to heel, reached Spencer's ears, though he was not wise enough in elephant lore to know its meaning. Yet it is all-important. Foolish is the calf who wanders a little distance from the herd, especially at night; the lions and the leopards are on the watch! At each humming call, the little ones snuggled close to their mother.

The boy sat there, bewitched, fascinated. The sight of the elephants, by moonlight, so near that he could have thrown a stone into their midst was extraordinary, magical!

The elephants roamed carelessly, recking no harm, for the full-grown elephant, whether bull or cow, has no jungle foe to fear. But the leader of the herd, an experienced cow long beyond the years of calving, a leader who knew the jungle and all its ways, chancing to come to windward, caught a suspicious whiff. Up went the trunk, instantly, for a determining sniff. Yes, it was the dreaded man-smell!

A single trumpet-blast was enough. With a celerity that seemed amazing, the shadows disappeared. There was a pounding on the ground, a sound of crashing undergrowth. The elephants were gone.

In the near distance, a leopard, crouching on a tree-branch over a game-trail, waiting for some juicy morsel to pass below, coughed. Some intimate jungle-sense told him that the elephants were running; ten seconds later, he was but a sulphur-colored patch in the brush, making away in long bounds. The signal had been given by the elephant herd-leader and all the wild knew it. Every creature was on the alert.

Mbumbwe, himself almost a child of the jungle, was at once aware of the change. He knew that there is never a need for any animal to be warned

twice. This was evidenced by the fact that he spoke, calmly, in his natural voice, not in a whisper.

“Elephants walk till daylight, now!” he said, and clambered down the tree.

An hour's walk took them to the camp, and, five minutes later, Spencer was fast asleep, dreaming of elephants a mile high.

At sunrise, they set off on the spoor. Having winded Man, the leader of the elephant herd had travelled most of the night at a swinging gait. Having been little hunted, the elephants evidently were not very greatly alarmed, since they had fed as they went along, but they had not stopped to feed.

Following the spoor was tough going. The line that the elephants had taken was intersected by small brooks. These were easily fordable, but in each brook and for a considerable distance on either side of it, were belts of “mataiti” reed. This plant is almost—if not quite—as bad as the “wait-a-bit” thorn. The point of every blade is as sharp as a stout needle; it is exceedingly dangerous to the face and eyes, since it grows to just about a man's height, and it is cruel to the bare arms of the bearers.

Spencer would have liked to put his hands in his pockets and to give his gun to his “boy.”

Ak'dibombo, to carry, but that was against hunting rules. Each man must carry his rifle when following up a spoor. Elephants are afraid of Man, it is true, but a hunter does well, also, to be on his guard against wild elephants. Without a rifle, a man is as helpless as a rabbit.

The day was terrifically hot, and, in the dense jungle, there was not a breath of air stirring. Spencer felt like giving up, a dozen times, that morning. They had passed some burnt country, and he was as black as his own "boy"; his eyes, ears, and nose were full of charcoal dust. His clothes stuck to his back and his feet were chafed and sore. The flies were deadly and he was so tired as to lack the energy to brush them away. Besides which, he had a touch of fever and a blinding headache. Tracking elephant in the African tropics is not child's play.

Had the boy been alone with his father, he would have begged for an hour's rest, but Mbumbwe, Ak'dibombo and Kamshengi, The Hunter's "boy," trudged on, each carrying an extra rifle, and showed no signs of fatigue. The Hunter kept to the steady grinding gait, as well. Though fagged and nearly dropping, the boy did not want to show the white feather, and he dragged himself on, though his rifle

seemed to weigh about a ton, though black spots were dancing before his eyes, and his arms and legs were trembling as though with ague. This was hunting speed, was it? The boy could not have hit a house-cat at a distance of five yards.

The noon halt was called at last. Spencer flopped to the ground, and lay motionless. He was done out, but he kept the knowledge to himself grimly. He thought no one had observed it, and he did not know that the noon halt had been called by his father a good half-hour before the time. Mbumbwe knew it, too, and understood. By common consent, all agreed to seem not to have seen the boy's distress, so plucky had been his endurance.

Hot, sweet tea, jorums of it, gave him a swift pick-me-up. Thanks to his youth, appetite triumphed over fatigue and he made a good meal of impala antelope steak. A good wash, a bath for the feet, and fresh socks—every wise hunter takes this precaution—freshened him wonderfully.

When Mbumbwe gave the word to take the trail again, he got up obediently. There was a crick in his back and all his joints seemed stuck together with glue, but he said never a word. Fortunately, they had not far to go.

Less than an hour later, the hunters came out of

the forest to the edge of a "dambo" or nearly circular plain, some fifteen or twenty acres in extent, covered with grass about three feet high. On the further side of this was a dense green patch: large trees looming above a wilderness of thorn. The grassy level sloped down easily to a small river, its presence revealed by a high growth of reeds.

"Elephants in there," said Mbumbwe. "Can get a shot, soon."

"Look to your rifle, Spencer!" warned his father. "But, whatever you do, don't fire unless I tell you. On, Mbumbwe!"

They drew near to the elephant herd.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A RHINOCEROS FIGHT

IN order to stalk the elephants without disturbing and stampeding the herd, Mbumbwe, using his owl-feather down, tested the wind, and found that, in order to approach the patch of green vegetation, up wind, it would be necessary to make a detour around one-third of the circumference of the dambo. This brought another side of the clump of trees into view, and gave Spencer a most unexpected sight.

Some thirty or forty yards from the timber a young elephant calf was romping about, gaily but clumsily—his mother, probably, being asleep. Calves between one and two years old are apt to roam by daytime, for they learn to take green food for some months before being weaned. Like children, they are hungry all the time, and need a snack every now and then. Besides, their sense of smell and their experience are not sufficiently developed for them to be able to distinguish between wholesome and unwholesome foliage on a dark night. There are many trees in the jungle which a wise



elephant leaves strictly alone, and the ground plants are still more dangerous. Euphorbias, for example, will give any baby elephant a nasty stomach-ache.

This calf elephant, however, was more adventurous than he should have been; he was more than that, he was disobedient, and disobedience, in the jungle, usually brings its own penalty, for the rules have been made on the strict basis of life and death. There was no need for the little fellow to have come a-wandering, food was plentiful inside the clump of trees, where he would have been in safety under the protection of the herd.

“Good calf!” whispered Mbumbwe. “You want?”

“Perhaps,” answered The Hunter, in the same low tone, “but I had wanted a smaller one. Still ——”

He was about to put rifle to shoulder when a sudden movement in the reeds beside the river, far to the left of him, bade him look around. A hunter needs eyes on every side of his head.

The reeds parted.

A large “white” square-mouthed rhinoceros, two-horned and menacing, came trotting out with an air of annoyed hurry that was quite unusual.

The rhinoceros does not feed as he goes, like the elephant. He has his special feeding-grounds, well known to his preference—he is very fond of young thorns—and he reserves his appetite until he is quite ready to make a good feed.

In all probability, his dinner-table was that thorny scrub in that well-shaded clump where the elephants were. That meant little to him. For elephants, the rhinoceros had neither love nor dislike; he did not foregather with them, but neither did he go out of his way to avoid them. On the contrary, the elephants would be more likely to move away. They disliked, intensely, the attentions of the tick-birds or Red-beaked Rhinoceros Birds, which invariably are seen perched on the back of a rhinoceros and which feed on the parasites which inhabit the thick skin of the beast, an attention for which the rhinoceros is grateful.

The elephant calf, in all probability, had never seen a square-mouthed rhinoceros before, and he did not understand this formidable beast, not so very much smaller than a half-grown elephant and, in its way, every bit as powerful. If a wart-hog boar is perhaps the most hideous animal in the African jungle, the “white” or square-mouthed rhinoceros certainly bears off the palm for ferocious

appearance. It was little wonder that the elephant calf was scared.

Certainly, he was frightened, for he trumpeted for his mother in a whining little pipe. Even from where the hunters lay, crouching, it could be heard distinctly, and its note told that the little fellow was alarmed.

With a hoarse roar—one of the throat cries—the mother elephant dashed from the clump of trees. She had been asleep—as much so as an elephant ever is—but she had heard the calf's shrill pipe. And, as she emerged from the forest, she saw the huge rhinoceros trotting in a straight line direct for her little one.

Now, a rhino will pay no more attention to an elephant calf than he will to any other beast. He is a rigid vegetarian, very much accustomed to mind his own business and very well able to see to it that no one interferes with it. But the cow elephant, just awakened and troubled by her calf's cry of peril, was standing there, on the edge of the dambo, angrily lifting one forefoot after the other, swaying her head and tossing her trunk crossly. The rhinoceros, despite his small brain, shared with all other beasts of the wild the telepathic power of recognizing hostility.

To add to all this, the rhino, himself, was in an exasperated state. Once in his life he had been shot at and wounded, and, just a few minutes before Spencer and his father saw him coming out of the fringe of reeds, a falling branch had struck ground near him with a sudden crack that resembled the crack of the rifle he had heard, ten years before. He was excited and restless, as was shown by his darting here and there, as he ran, after the fashion of his breed, when alarmed.

The rhino's suspicion, in the same psychological way, communicated itself to the cow elephant, though she had no knowledge of the cause, and this added to her irritation. Though there was no reason for any of this hostility, the situation was tense with mutual distrust and anxiety.

On this grassy ground, what was more, the white rhinoceros was absolutely sure of himself. Standing fully six feet in height and eleven feet in length (this species has never been seen in captivity) weighing a couple of tons and more, with a disproportionately large and powerful head armed with sharp and stocky upcurving horns of which the front one reaches nearly two feet in length, the square-mouthed rhinoceros is a match for any creature living.

This one, a fair specimen of his kind, feared nothing on earth except the smell of the white man. Natives, he ignored. As he was trotting forward, in this state of exasperation, suddenly something struck him with added annoyance, probably a whiff of the hunters, for he stopped, whirled round with an agility that seemed scarcely possible for a creature of his bulk and looked straight at Spencer and his father with his low-set pig-like eyes. A rhino's sight, however, is as poor as his scent and hearing are keen, and even if the hunters had not been hidden it is doubtful if he would have seen them. But his sense of smell could not play him false, and he had no doubt that something very threatening was toward.

At this most inopportune moment, the little calf squealed again. This time, the little fellow had ample cause, for the mother had given him a sharp slap with her trunk as punishment for his disobedience in wandering away; elephant training is strict, and a trunk forms a most effective "slipper."

The rhino wheeled again at the squeal. No, this was too much! Too many annoying things were happening in this dambo. He would get out of there; he would go where there were peace and quietness, at least, and where a rhino might eat his

lunch, undisturbed. He set off again, but the change of direction which had been caused by his momentary wheeling to face the hunters led him straight in the direction of the cow elephant and her calf.

The elephant paid absolutely no attention to the huge beast which was rapidly nearing her, but she gave the calf another slap.

Why should she heed the rhinoceros? He was nothing to her, nor she to him. She had seen hundreds of rhinos in her life, but they had ignored her, as she had disregarded them. There was no reason to suppose that this one would behave any differently from the others.

The rhinoceros, with an occasional angry snort, trotted across the grass at a ponderous run.

What particular streak of ill-temper was it that decided him to be vicious? He did not know, himself. It was a case of nerves.

With a little squeal of ferocity, he charged straight for the towering bulk of the big cow elephant. To his small brain, she seemed to be barring his way. The elephant had scarcely time to turn, in order to escape a slashing rip from the formidable anterior horn of the rhino, for a rhinoceros can deliver a blow little less deadly than that

of the elephant, and the slashing fashion of it deals an ugly wound, worse than that of an elephant's tusk.

"That was the moment," writes A. Herbert, describing a similar combat, "when a wise elephant would have spirited herself away, but this mistaken female considered her prestige at stake, and resolved on battle.

"The rhinoceros pulled up and stood still, trying to get the wind of other possible adversaries—the rest of the elephant herd was out of sight among the closely growing shrub—and peered about him cunningly with his low-set eyes.

"He looked what he was—invulnerable!

"Seen square on, the hinder horn, so much smaller than the front one, was not visible, but the powerful front horn, standing up twenty inches from his armored nose, looked vindictive. The terrific thickness of the skull bones of the rhino, and the smallness of his brain cavity, made him as impervious to frontal attack as the elephant herself."

"Is he going to charge again?" whispered Spencer to his father.

"No, not likely. He'll go on about his business."

In most cases, The Hunter would have been in the right in such a judgment, for the rhinoceros is an animal that is interested only in his own affairs. But the cow elephant, as Herbert has told in one of her many fine pieces of jungle writing,

deemed herself mortally offended by the rhinoceros' attack. Trumpeting, and raising her trunk aloft, to keep it out of danger—always an elephant's chief concern—she rushed at the enemy.

“On the first impact,” writes this eye-witness, “the greater weight of the cow elephant bore the rhinoceros down and carried him forward in a protesting slide. Her tusks, sharp and powerful as they were, could not pierce that armor-plated shoulder, and, as her impetuous charge carried her forward, the angry rhinoceros detached himself, and, recovering his feet with a nimble agility, wheeled and made a sideway feint which gave him an instant advantage.

“His thick sharp horn got her between the ribs, and, in a titanic struggle for supremacy, the warriors went down. Sometimes the elephant had the advantage, but, more often than not, the laurels lay with the smaller and wilier animal.”

The rhinoceros had a terrific advantage over his foe. His own vitals were fully protected by his battleship-armor back, and it was next to impossible for the elephant's tusks to pierce that, while her own vital parts were just within easy reach of her enemy's formidable up-raking horn.

Despite the deep and jagged wound in her ribs, the elephant got to her feet, gave a stride and kicked forward. The powerful blow caught the rhinoceros fair. It would have punched a hole in a



steel plate. The huge grey beast went rolling, and, her tusks gleaming, the cow elephant turned her head sidewise and lunged down.

Had the tusks struck absolutely fair and true, they might have gored, even through the rhinoceros' hide, but, though the rhino had been sent spinning and several of his ribs crushed in, his blood was up and he was not one to care for the blow even of an elephant's foot. Any fight, in the jungle, is a fight to the death.

There is nothing slow about a rhino when he chooses to move, and, in the second which elapsed between the kick and the tusk-thrust, the rhinoceros was already rolling clear. The gleaming tusks slipped on his moving body. Had the nearest tusk been but a foot or two farther forward, it might have found the vulnerable point near the shoulder and the rhinoceros would never have moved again.

Sure, absolutely sure that she had pinned her enemy to the ground, the cow elephant stayed stock-still, her tusks deep in the earth, then she drew them out and stood there, a second, down-stooped, before kneeling on what she supposed to be her prostrate foe, in order to squash him to death.

She had misjudged, miscalculated!

The rhinoceros was not pinned down by those tusks. Though wounded and battered, he was on his feet, so filled with fury that he was unconscious of pain.

Backing up a yard or two, he charged again with all his tremendous force, two tons of muscle behind a battering ram.

The two horns caught the elephant under the shoulder, but the wounds did not reach the vitals.

They proved just as dangerous.

The elephant, already off her balance by her stooping position from the tusk-thrust, was felled to the ground by the rhinoceros' maddened charge, and lay for an instant on her side.

Before she could move, before she had a chance to rise, the furious rhino battered her with continuous blows of his mighty two-horned head, blows as tremendous as the elephant's own.

An elephant cannot leap to the ground with all four feet, but must rise slowly; each time she heaved herself to her knees, the rhino crashed her down again. The short, sharp horn gored in a dozen times at least. There was not an instant's pause in the savage attack; that unwieldy head swept sickle-wise or lunged forward with a frenzied quickness and power that were irresistible.



Courtesy of Hutchinson & Co. Drawn by Winifred Austin.

**A RHINOCEROS ATTACKING AN ELEPHANT.**



*Courtesy of Wm. Heinemann.*

SQUARE-MOUTHED RHINOCEROS IN SHALLOW STREAM.

Once, indeed, trying to rise, the elephant heaved herself full to her knees. In a second she would have been up. But, in so doing, she exposed her throat, and the rhinoceros plunged in under the gleaming tusks and ripped all the arteries away. The blood spurted out in tremendous jets.

The cow elephant bellowed frantically, but it was her last effort. Death came instantly after.

For fully two minutes the rhino pounded the body, until, having satisfied himself that his enemy was dead, he set off again, running in the jerky lines and short curves that a rhinoceros foolishly adopts when trying to evade pursuit.

The cow's death bellow had been heard!

A minute later, the leader of the herd dashed out to the rescue.

One look at her dead comrade told her what had happened, and the sight of the disappearing rhinoceros explained the rest. She ran a few strides forward, planning revenge, and then halted. After all, the cow elephant was dead. What was to be gained by further fighting? Yet, conscious of her duties of leadership, she trumpeted defiance.

Though wounded, battered, and sick, the rhinoceros turned. Not that he wanted to fight; he had had more than enough. But there was only this

one stretch of flat grassland in the immediate neighborhood, and the great grey two-horned beast knew well that if the elephant were to pursue him, he would have little chance in the brush. He stood his ground, head lowered, but he did not advance to the charge. Nor did the leader of the elephant herd.

While in this state of mutual indecision, a wandering gust of wind, shifting slightly in direction, blew the hated man-smell to them both.

At that, neither of the animals hesitated an instant. Deeper than either revenge or rage was the fear of Man. The rhinoceros wheeled and trotted on toward the river, while the leader of the elephants, mindful of her first duty to the herd, rushed into the scrub to gather them together and to stampede them away.

In the frenzy of the discovery that Man was near them, she did not think about the calf who had been the origin of all the disturbance, if, indeed, she had noticed it at all.

A few seconds later, both rhinoceros and elephants were gone.

Spencer was panting with excitement. He was only brought to a realization that all was finished by the sound of his father's voice.

“Do you want to shoot the calf, Son?” The Hunter asked, quietly.

“Shoot him, Father? Poor little beggar! What for? He didn’t do anything!”

“We undertook to get a specimen of a calf elephant for the Museum, you know.”

“But—but, Father, he’s an orphan!”

“That’s just exactly why I suggest it.”

“Why! I don’t see!”

“Don’t you? The elephant herd has smelt us, that was clear from the way they ran. They won’t stop under twenty miles. That little chap could never catch up with the herd.”

“You mean he’s lost?”

“Oh, he’ll probably try to follow until nightfall, and then ——”

“And then?” echoed Spencer.

“Then a lion or a leopard will get him. You can be sure he won’t be alive by two hours after sunset. That’s the way of the jungle!”

“Well, in that case ——”

Spencer raised his rifle and aimed. But he did not fire.

“I—I can’t!” he said. “A poor little chap like that!”

The calf whimpered, put up his little trunk feebly

and turned broadside, as though to go in search of his dead mother.

The Hunter fired, and the elephant baby fell without a sound.

“The brain shot,” he said, explainingly; “death was instantaneous, Spencer.”

There was a lump in the boy’s throat. Somehow, the tiny elephant had seemed so helpless, so much in need of protection.

His father put a hand kindly on his shoulder.

“Don’t get wrought up, Son,” he said gently. “It may seem cruel, but it’s certainly kinder than leaving him to be mauled horribly and eaten by a lion!”





*Courtesy of Wm. Heinemann.*

CHIEF AGBASHAN OF OBAN.

This chief is supposed to be a "were-elephant," half human and half elephant. His home is in West Equatorial Africa, and at certain seasons of the year he lives alone with the wild elephants.



*Courtesy of Wm. Heinemann.*

WITH THE TROPHIES OF THE CHASE.  
Native hunters awaiting the blessing of the witch-doctor.

## CHAPTER XIV

### FACING A LION

THEY made a temporary camp on the dambo. By digging a deep hole not far from the stream which ran beyond the belt of reeds whence the square-mouthed rhinoceros had come, pure drinking-water filtered in rapidly, and Spencer drank ravenously, till he was told to stop. His father had grasped the availability of the site for a camp, at the first glance.

Game trails entered and crossed the wide clearing in all directions, and the forest through which they had passed was full of game. Guinea-fowl and wood pigeons make good fare, the ant-bear is a delicacy, and roasted porcupine, done Zulu fashion, is a dainty dish. There might be fish, too, in the stream. Salt could be found, in plenty, at the base of the termite ant-hills. Toothsome roots and tubers could be found in plenty. There was fruit for the picking up.

There would be four days to wait. It would take that length of time for a runner to reach the nearest village and to come back with porters to carry

to Tbinba's Kraal the skin of the elephant calf and the tusks of the cow elephant. The Hunter's "boy," Kamshengi, an Achikunda warrior and absolutely fearless, was quite ready to go back alone through the jungle, if given a rifle and plenty of ammunition.

These arrangements were made with clear precision but with the utmost speed. The Hunter was feverishly anxious to be off on the trail of the victorious rhinoceros, for he judged that the battering the animal had received would make its travel slow. The hunt would be distinctly dangerous, for the rhino was already wounded and enraged, and Spencer was told to stay.

"I don't like leaving you alone, Son," said his father, "though Ak'dibombo is an experienced hunter and knows the ways of the bush. But a white square-mouthed rhinoceros is a rarity, and I shouldn't be doing my duty to the Museum if I neglected such a chance. I don't think he will have gone very far, and it's imperative for us to catch up with him before it's too dark to shoot. After night-fall, he'll be able to smell us and we won't be able to see him.

"Now, listen carefully, Spencer. Let the two of you gather all the dry wood you can between now

and dark. You'll have to work like blazes, mind, sun or no sun! Have your shotgun handy and pepper any vulture that comes near the carcasses. If you get an Adjutant-bird, so much the better.

“ Before it gets dark, light two big fires, in semi-circles, Ak'dibombo will know how, outside the animals, leaving a good twenty yards between the fires. You'll get a lot of smoke from one or the other of them, but you'll have to put up with that. It's perhaps an extreme precaution, because, usually, one central fire is enough, but, since I'm not going to be here, myself, I'd rather feel that you were safe.

“ Keep the fires going! Watch, rifle in hand. I don't think there's anything to be afraid of, but, after all, the African jungle isn't a city street! There's no danger if the fires are kept going; there may be, if you let them out.

“ Keep awake! If you feel that you are being overpowered with sleep—and you were pretty well exhausted this morning—go and take some tea-leaves from the caddy and chew them. That'll keep you awake. Remember! A big fire, your rifle never out of your hand after nightfall, and absolute wakefulness. Good luck, Son. We're off! ”

During the minute or two that his father and

Mbumbwe were still in sight, Spencer hardly realized what was before him, so quickly had the arrangements been made. But when the reeds hid them, the sense of his being alone came over the boy in a rush, alone save for Ak'dibombo, who knew not a single word of any language but his own. The native knew just what was to be done, for Mbumbwe had translated The Hunter's orders, word for word, as they had been given to Spencer.

Ak'dibombo needed no urging. He knew, just as well as any one, the value of a fire, for wild animals fear it as much as they are attracted by it. With entire willingness he tore and dragged out of the brushwood fallen dry branches and young trees broken off by elephants on a previous visit. Despite the grilling heat of the sun, on that open space, he slaved at the work and Spencer helped him as much as he could, though the boy was conscious that the morning's march had sapped his strength. At least, the work kept him from brooding.

It was all very well to say that wild animals do not attack Man. It was comforting, to a certain degree, to be assured that no wild animal is so recklessly daring as to leap over a fire. All rules have exceptions, and jungle rules not less than most;

lions have done that very thing, as the workers on the Cape-to-Cairo Railroad found to their cost. The European cemetery at Nairobi, capital of British East Africa, contains over a hundred graves of men who have been mauled to death by lions.

These were not pleasant thoughts to the boy, and he rather wished that he had not heard these tales, when coming down on the steamer. His nerves began to play him tricks. The truth was that, as it drew toward evening and there was no sign of the return of his father and Mbumbwe, he got frightened, horribly frightened.

The presence of the vultures was not calculated to make him any easier in mind, they always seem a hideously evil omen. Within half an hour of The Hunter's departure, Spencer saw a dozen black specks circling in the sky. One of these, more daring than his fellows, dropped like a plummet, opening his ragged black wings not more than three yards above the ground and coming to earth with an arrested swoop, running a yard or two with featherless neck outstretched, wings outspread and yellow beak ready to hook and tear. That vulture never closed its wings. A charge of heavy shot took it full, while running. Spencer was determined that none of the foul carrion-birds should touch the cow

elephant which had put up so good a fight, or the little elephant who had died in his babyhood as the result of a few minutes' disobedience.

Two other vultures came hurtling down—in spite of the presence of Spencer and Ak'dibombo—but, more prudently, they remained some forty or fifty yards away. That was annoying, for they were hidden in the dense grass, and their presence prevented Spencer from going to the help of the native "boy" in securing firewood. So Ak'dibombo ran out into the grass and scared them up. Vultures rise slowly, on a long straight slope, and Spencer got the two of them with a right and left shot.

An African Adjutant-bird, with his long bill, swooped down also, with his characteristic diving flight, and perched on a low ant-hill that peeped just above the grass. Where vultures dare not venture, he would not go. Time enough when the other carrion-birds were there. They would give way readily enough before the threat of his pick-axe bill. He shared the same fate as the vultures.

Spencer had taken no chances of being fireless. From the very moment of his father's departure—save for the time necessary to dispose of the vultures and the Adjutant-bird—he and Ak'dibombo had dragged dry wood from the tree-clump, dragged



it and piled it with feverish energy. Better have too much than too little. Though Ak'dibombo was known as a "boy"—as all gun-bearers are called—he was, in truth, a wiry hunter in the prime of life, ineradicably lazy like all natives, but able to work furiously hard in a single burst. He needed little urging, for he knew, just as well as the white hunter, the need of fire when fresh-killed carcasses are near.

It was Ak'dibombo's idea, too, that Spencer should walk, several times, in a wide circle, at a considerable distance from the carcasses, thoroughly to impregnate the ground with the white-man-smell. In fact, the boy made a double circle, thus. If the glare of the fire should attract curious beasts to the dambo, this circle of man-smell might keep them from coming too close.

Not very long before sunset, Ak'dibombo called Spencer and pointed out to him the slinking form of a jackal, moving, cowardly-wise, just under cover, on the further side of the clearing. The boy reached for his rifle, but Ak'dibombo put out a restraining hand. As he could not speak English, he could not explain why he disapproved, but Spencer was satisfied to obey. In jungle matters, the "boy" knew more than he did, that was sure.

Ak'dibombo lighted the two fires well before the

light failed, content in the assurance that there was fuel enough for the whole night. The native's watchfulness went further to convince Spencer that the vicinity of fresh-killed meat was a dangerous stand. In a regular camp, it is less so, for the man-smell for a long distance around is so strong that jungle beasts are apt to keep away.

At sunset, or a little after, the night cries of the jungle began. Chiefest of them all, and nearest, was the well-known chorus:

“ Mbwee, mbwee! ”

The jackals were there, a score of them, at least, to judge by the cries. What a feast awaited them, a whole cow elephant and her calf!

A little later, there came another cry. This was more like a dog's howl, a hound baying the moon, but it ended in a sudden run down the scale, like hysterical laughter. It was queer and terrifying. Spencer had never heard it before, during all his three weeks in the jungle, but he knew what it was, at once. There is no sound comparable to the diabolic laughing howl of the large spotted hyena. A carrion-eater, like the jackal, the spotted hyena is a more powerful and less cowardly beast.

Far, far away, the whine of a hunting cheetah sounded in the forest, but of this beast there was

nought to fear, for, like his larger cousin, the leopard, the cheetah scorns a prey that he has not killed.

As darkness came on—an old and waning moon would not rise until shortly before daylight—Spencer could see, in the ring of gloom just beyond the range of the firelight, numerous pairs of yellow eyes, glaring hungrily. There must have been a couple of dozen of them, and from the circle rose continuously the hunger cry:

“ Mbwee, mbwee! ”

Ak'dibombo paid them absolutely no concern. He knew the arrant cowardice of the jackal, even in packs, and Spencer, taking courage from the native “ boy's ” indifference, tried to ignore those pairs of eyes, moving and shifting about, but glaring at him constantly. Do his best, though, they made him feel uncomfortable. The feel of his rifle in his hands gave him a sort of strength.

Then, absolutely silently, out from the darkness and above the fire, two lamp-like eyes came plunging down at him, exactly like some great beast at the end of a tremendous leap.

Spencer yelled in sheer terror, snapped his rifle to the shoulder and fired at the eyes which were not half a dozen yards away.

A white, ghost-like creature fluttered, wheeled, and fell upon the ground with a resounding thump, pierced through and through with the big-game bullet. It was an eagle-owl, the most luminous-eyed creature of the jungle.

All was well, and the boy tried to laugh at his own fears. But he did not feel like laughing, just the same, and it was quite a long time before his heart came back to beating normally. He wondered if his father had heard the shot, for the crack of the big-game rifle was very different in its sonority to the short, sharp bark of a shotgun.

After the shot, there had been silence. Only the squeaking bats, flying overhead, paid no heed. A night-jar, in the clump of woods, uttered his screech, like the creaking of a rusty wheel.

But, ten minutes or so later, the jackals began their famine cries, and the eyes came and went again outside the glow of the fire. The spotted hyena howled again, nearer this time, and the laughing horror was repeated from a little further away. The carrion-eaters were gathering to the feast and growing angrier as they found there was a barrier to their approach.

Far in the distance, there came a low moaning cry, which seemed like some one in pain, and the

hairs on the boy's head prickled at the thought that this might be his father. But, as the moaning continued for some seconds, rising and falling, rising higher and falling again, with a sort of sobbing purr, Spencer recognized it as the satisfied roar of a Zambesi leopard which has made its kill. He had heard it twice before, when camping in the jungle.

“ Mbwee, mbwee! ”

The jackal cries irritated him, got on his nerves. Would they never stop? Their numbers had increased, and, in spite of himself, he could not help picturing a sudden rush of the animals through the two narrow outlets between the fires. He remembered the hunting-dogs, and a jackal's jaw-strength is little less powerful. As for the spotted hyenas, he knew that their teeth go through the hardest bone. Against a pack, in the uncertain fire-light, two rifles would be of little avail. But the fire burned bravely on.

Suddenly the cries of the jackals stopped.

One whimper, and all was still.

Everything was silenced.

The eyes that surrounded the fire faded away and disappeared in the darkness.

Ak'dibombo, who, until that moment, had shown

no sense of trouble, reached out for his rifle. The movement was significant.

Then ——

From somewhere, so deep that it seemed to come from underground, there came a low moaning, rising rapidly, dividing into several tones simultaneously, growling and whining in one, heart-shaking in its fearsomeness, then, swelling, rising higher, and suddenly breaking into roars so tempestuous, so terrible, that the ground vibrated and trembled. Again and again, until the menace deafened. Then it decreased rapidly, ending in a series of grunts, with a hiss of the breath at the end.

“M’kango! Lion!” cried Ak’dibombo, and threw a heap of dry wood on the fire.

Spencer leaped to his feet, rifle ready.

The lion was standing, not crouching. The tremendous bulk of his head and fore-quarters, almost doubled by his bristling mane, gave no hint of the long, lithe body behind. His yellow, angry eyes glared at the fire, and the ruddy glow was reflected back in them.

Rifle went to shoulder.

At that moment, Ak’dibombo seized a dead branch, thrust it into the fire, whirled it about and raised a shower of sparks.

The lion gave a low growl, angry and defiant, but gave back a step.

Spencer, his fears all gone, his nerves surprisingly tense and firm, held his aim. For the first time, he felt the astonishing clearness of mind of the true big-game hunter. He saw what to do. He knew what to do.

The lion still stood his ground, motionless save for the tip of his tail, which was switching nervously, as is the habit of all the cat tribe. Spencer watched the tail, thankful for all Mbumbwe's teaching. Should the lion throw his tail up in the air, straight and stiff as a bar of steel, there was not a second to be lost in firing. It is one of the signs preparatory to a leap.

The boy's aim was steady, just below the jowl and in the chest. Owing to the lion's pose, head low down between the shoulders, he dared not aim for the heart; he must be content with a lung shot. An experienced hunter, perfectly sure of himself, might have tried for the brain, but, in the uncertain firelight, the bullet might run an inch too high and glance off the skull.

Spencer longed to press the trigger, he was convinced of the sureness of his aim, but he had been warned again and again of the danger of wounding

any animal powerful enough to do him harm, and he knew that, though the lion does not possess great vitality against wounds, almost invariably he lives for a few seconds after a vital shot and those few seconds give time enough for a death-spring and a fatal crunch. Those graves at Nairobi!

For as much as a minute, perhaps two minutes, they faced each other, boy and beast, with the fire between.

Ak'dibombo, holding his rifle in one hand, piled more and more dry wood on the fire with the other hand, till the upleaping flames showed the lion as clearly as though a ruddy sunlight were playing upon his rufous hide.

A hungry lion, or an old solitary lion, is a daring animal and will take almost any risk; but a well-fed lion, in the jungle, is not given to recklessness. Zebra, young buffalo, or antelope is his favored meal. The prey is always seized from behind, and only should the first bound fail will the lion spring from the front, at the throat. It is thus that the sable antelope has, at times, driven off a lion with his long twisted horns, but, in every case, the antelope has been too badly mauled to live. No creature can tear more cruelly than a dying lion.

Here, in the far hinterland of the jungle, with



game on every side, with eland on the plains and water-buck in the lowlands, the lion had no need of desperate tactics. The fire cowed him, and, with the telepathy of the creatures of the wild, he felt that the two Man-things, on the farther side of the flames, were not afraid of him. In that case, it might be well for him to be afraid of them; that is jungle logic.

With a mighty and disappointed growl, he leaped sideways into the darkness, and Ak'dibombo, at the top of his voice, roared out a high-pitched native song of triumph.

Not very many minutes later, Spencer heard again the hunger cry:

“ Mbwee, mbwee! ”

He welcomed the jackal's howls, now. They knew better than he. The King of Beasts was gone.

The hours passed calmly, then; only the jackals and hyenas remained near. The night-sounds of the jungle did not slacken, but Spencer's mind was at ease. The worst had threatened, and he had faced it. He was tensely strung, nervous, and all his senses were at their highest power. Never had he seemed to see so far in the dark, to hear with such acuteness. The intensity of the big-game hunter was beginning to come to him.

It was nearly midnight when a distant "Coo-ee!" told him of the return of his father, and, a few minutes later, he saw the two figures coming into the circle of the firelight.

"Any adventures, Son?" his father queried.

"Oh," replied Spencer, with an assumed air of indifference, "there was just an old lion around!" But the break in his voice betrayed the strain of the excitement.

"So!" exclaimed his father, in surprise. "You didn't fire?"

"No, I was going to, oh, for ever so long. But he went away, at last."

"H'm, that's queer. Lions do eat carrion, if it's freshly killed, sometimes, but I'm surprised at their doing so, here, where there's plenty of game around. Tell me about it!"

The boy recounted the adventure, as calmly as he could, for he knew his father's dislike of sensationalism. In return, The Hunter told of his shooting the rhinoceros, just before sundown. As he had expected, the quest had been a dangerous one, and Mbumbwe had escaped only by the narrowest margin.

"I was lucky," said The Hunter. "My heart shot didn't stop him and he was within about five

yards of Mbumbwe when I risked the brain shot and got him fair."

"Mbumbwe was luckier!" commented Spencer.

They chatted on for a little while, The Hunter deliberately carrying on a quiet conversation to give the boy's nerves a chance to relax.

"But why did you leave the carcass of the rhinoceros?" queried Spencer. "Won't the jackals get him?"

"I built a big-enough fire to last most of the night, and, anyway, jackals can't do very much to a rhinoceros' armor-plated hide. Spotted hyenas might, but they're notoriously afraid of fire. You see, Son, I plan to skin the elephant calf, first thing in the morning, and to drag it to where the rhinoceros lies. We can't pull the rhino here! As for the cow elephant's tusks, they won't run away.

"What's that, Mbumbwe? Tea? Good boy! Where's your pannikin, Son?"

The hot liquid finished the task of soothing the boy's nerves, and he had hardly drunk it down before a terrible sleepiness overpowered him. He sidled over, his head on his arm, and, in a moment, he was asleep. Lions might come or lions might go; he cared nothing. His father and Mbumbwe were there.

## CHAPTER XV

### SHOOTING THE OUTLAW

NEARLY a week elapsed at the camp on the dambo before the rhinoceros' hide, the calf elephant's hide and the cow elephant's hide were ready for transport to the main camp at Tbinba's Kraal, where, assuredly, the other members of the Museum Expedition must have arrived by this time.

Hunter Wolland had thought, at first, of accompanying the porters, but so much enticing news of fresh spoor had come in, so many elephant herds were in the vicinity, that The Hunter decided there could be no better time or place to carry on his studies of elephant life, and to secure for the Museum at least one heavily-tusked bull. Spencer was more and more enthralled by the jungle and gave his father and Mbumbwe no peace with his questions.

"Look here, Son," said his father one evening, "let me tell you the life story of an elephant, from start to finish, then you'll know it, once for all, and you won't plague me with questions about things you ought to know."

Spencer made no reply to this, he was too anxious

to get his father to talk, for there were a thousand things about elephants which, as yet, he did not know.

“The life-story of an elephant,” his father began, “is really one of the simplest kind. Unlike most beasts of the wild, he is free from that perpetual strain of the jungle—the beasts of prey to hunt their food, the preyed-upon to escape with their lives, as long as they can. The elephant knows no kind of danger after he is half-grown, though the early years may be perilous, if he wanders from the herd.

“An elephant baby is fairly small, when born, not quite three feet high, and his skin is as smooth and pink as that of a young pig. For three days after birth, the mother does not stir an inch from the white-tufted feather-grass which is the baby elephant’s first bed. Though an elephant must feed almost continuously, the mother elephant endures this enforced fast, stripping to nakedness every growing thing within reach of her trunk, save the little patch of grass where the baby lies.

“Drink is a more imperious necessity. On the second day, the baby elephant has been helped to his feet, but on the fourth day, he must make shift to walk, at least as far as the water. He goes ahead

of his mother, guided by light touches of her trunk upon his back, protected against every sort of harm by the gleaming tusks overhead. There is never very far to go, on this first walk, for a mother elephant takes good care to be near water when baby-time approaches.

“At such times, a mother elephant seeks solitude, and woe to any creature which comes within reach of her trunk! She knows no mercy, then, and no discrimination; every living thing, from the tiniest lizard to the hungriest old lion, keeps well out of the way of a cow elephant with a new-born calf. She cannot be tempted away from her calf by any feinted attack—such as spotted hyenas love to try—for she knows that all the carnivores, large and small, ask nothing better than a dinner of tiny elephant calf. Such a dainty dish, however, is usually beyond their hopes.

“After a couple of weeks or so, when the little elephant’s pillar-like legs are less shaky and trembling, the cow elephant leaves the region which she had chosen for its loneliness and begins her search for a good-sized herd to which to join herself. Elephants are thoroughly social beings, and have the herd instinct very strongly.”

“Do the herds run big, as a rule, Father?”

“The one we saw, that first night, was a fair example. In this part of the country, a herd of cow elephants, with their calves, may run from fifty to sixty animals. Herds of bull elephants are very much smaller, from half a dozen to twenty, as a rule. I have never seen the spoor of any larger number, travelling together.”

Mbumbwe, who was listening carefully, tapped his long-handled axe on the ground, in approval.

“You have often heard, Spencer, that elephants sleep standing, or leaning against a large tree or a termite ant-hill. This is very generally true, as Mbumbwe told you, but the cow elephant, during the first few weeks of her little calf’s life, nearly always lies down, in order that the little one may lie down also, closely guarded between the crooks of his mother’s huge and low-set knees. Neither the most reckless lion nor the most treacherous leopard will dare to attack there, and, in any case, in the daytime both the lion and the leopard are asleep.”

“What about the hunting-dogs, Father? They hunt by day. Wouldn’t they like a taste of elephant calf?”

“I don’t doubt it for a moment, but I should be sorry for a pack of hunting-dogs which dared come near a cow elephant at such a time. An elephant

can kick with any foot in either direction, and you saw for yourself, a few days ago, the power of that kick! A blow which can break a rhinoceros' ribs would smash a hunting-dog to pulp. What is more, though an elephant has a great objection to using her trunk as a weapon, in such a case you can be sure that blows would rain to right and left, and each one would break a dog's spine. Have you ever heard of hunting-dogs attacking an elephant calf, with its mother, Mbumbwe?"

"No, Bwana; dogs too much know."

"Exactly! Well, to return to our story. A cow elephant and her calf will wander far and wide until they meet with a herd which they can join. Such a herd is always led by an old cow elephant, past the days of calving, well versed in the lore of the jungle, authoritative in manner and perfectly able and willing to prod any unruly member of the herd into submission. It is not often that there is need of such form of discipline, for a leaderless elephant herd does not exist, and obedience to the leader seems to be instinctive.

"Sometimes, it is true, a vigorous mature bull may have five or six cow elephants, and their calves, in his train, and he may admit the arrival of new followers. Such an arrangement rarely lasts long,



unless the bull is a natural leader and wants a herd of his own, although he is not yet old enough or strong enough to be able to boss a herd of his own sex. Many great herd bulls have gained their experience this way.

“In general, though, bull elephants and cow elephants keep apart, except during the mating season. Even then, though paring may induce some animals to remain together for a few weeks, the herds do not mingle. Old cow elephants and old bull elephants are never together; there is no ‘Darby and Joan’ in the elephant world.

“You will notice, Spencer, that I spoke about experience. While elephant life is simple, in its essentials, because of the absence of foes, a good deal of jungle craft is needed for the leadership of a herd. Everywhere, even in the furthestmost districts of the jungle, little villages of native huts are to be found; where there are native villages there are also native hunters, well-skilled in the primitive ways of elephant-hunting—and very effective some of them are! A herd leader must be experienced enough to detect the presence of the most cunningly-covered pitfall, or to detect, almost by instinct, the string-trap of the weighted poison spear poised above an elephant trail.

“She—or he, as the case may be—must have a highly specialized knowledge of the lie of the forest, and a pertinacious memory for mucky or swampy places in which elephants might be mired after a heavy rain. She must know in which parts the fruits are at their ripest and juiciest at every season of the year. She must be able to judge which parts of the forest are apt to be swept by forest fires after a prolonged season of drought. She must know all the tracks to water, for elephants are thirsty creatures, and, when the streams are dry, she must be able to dig the huge sloping holes, deep, deep in the bed of the stream, to get the little water that may remain. When even this resource fails, she must know the regions rich in the ntamba creeper, the stems of which possess a fresh water which is delicious to the elephant and which will assuage the pangs of thirst, or where grows the large mbuie fruit, also succulent and thirst-quenching. She must know, too, where is to be found the medicinal mud which elephants require as an antidote to fly-bite and jungle accidents.

“A herd leader must know the tsetse fly belts, and it is her duty to lead the herd out of them as quickly as possible, and to see that mud-baths are not neglected immediately afterwards; while from

an elephant-fly region, a herd with little calves must immediately be led away. She must be in advance at any point where danger is suspected, the first to swim a river, and it is her part to scare the crocodiles away."

"Will crocodiles attack elephants, Father?"

"White hunters declare that they will not, but a good many native trackers affirm that they do. Certainly, it happens, sometimes, after a herd has crossed a stream, that one of the smaller elephants is found to be missing. That cannot be by drowning, for an elephant swims with absolute ease, though he looks as though he were deep in the water.

"I suppose you know the story the Zulus tell of how the elephant punished the audacious crocodile?"

"No, Father!"

"It's a very simple story. It is said to have happened on the Limpopo, the 'great, grey-green, greasy Limpopo River all set about with fever-trees' of Kipling's immortal story, which you probably know by heart."

"'The Elephant's Child'? Oh, I know that one!"

"I thought so. Well, this is a Zulu story, as I

said. In the old, old days, after all the elephants had got their trunks—perhaps in the fashion that Kipling describes, or, perhaps in the manner that I taught you, Spencer, in evolution from the *Moeritherium* to the *Paleomastodon*, and so on—a good-sized herd of elephants was crossing the greasy Limpopo. But, just as the last elephant was sludging up the muddy bank of the stream, a particularly daring and hungry crocodile swished forward under water, and, setting himself firmly in the mud, grasped the elephant's leg with his teeth.

“Now, a full-grown crocodile is no light weight, and his jaw-muscles are tremendous, but they are as nothing when compared with the muscular power of an elephant's leg. The big bull just kicked forward, violently, and the crocodile was sent sprawling on the bank, with half his teeth broken out from his jaws.

“Before he had time to realize where he was or what had happened, the angry bull elephant just wrapped his trunk around that crocodile so quickly that the dazed saurian had no time to snap. Then he swirled his trunk upward, and held the crocodile high in air, ignoring the clacking jaws and the whipping, scaly tail. Thus the elephant marched on, trunk in air, for a mile or two, until he found

a hollow tree into which he stuck the crocodile, head-first.

“The monkeys, who had followed the whole performance with huge glee, shrieked with laughter, and they carried the tale of the crocodile’s discomfiture far and wide over the forest. All the animals came to have a look, for there was not one who had any pity for the crocodile.

“The leopard purred with satisfaction, and the hyena laughed himself into hysterics; the antelopes leaped for joy, and the blue wildebeest with the big head nodded it until he got a headache; the lion roared his pleasure, and even the gloomy Cape buffalo admitted that the deed was very well done. To cap everything, a full-grown wart-hog boar tried to smile, but this was such a fearful and hideous thing to see, that all the animals ran away. They left the crocodile stuck there, and went and mocked every crocodile they met on every river they saw. Ever since then, so say the Zulus, a crocodile keeps away when he sees a full-grown elephant, for very shame.”

“A true story!” commented Mbumbwe.

“To this day,” continued The Hunter, “an elephant-herd leader always trumpets loudly, when he comes to a wide stream, as a signal to the crocodiles

to keep away. Even so, when younger elephants have to swim broad streams, they do so, usually, with an older animal on either side to act as a convoy of crocodile-destroyers.

“An elephant calf remains very closely beside his mother for the first three or four years, until the cow elephant leaves the herd at some mating time. Then he remains, a little more independent, but still absolutely dependent on the protection of the cow herd, for a good many years more. As I said at the beginning, Spencer, it is a very simple life. One week is like another, feeding, drinking and traveling by night, sleeping in the day.

“By the time he has reached seven to ten years old, a young elephant gets to be about six feet high, and his permanent tusks are developing. He is beginning to be able to take care of himself. He soon comes to scorn the company of the cows and calves, and, in nine cases out of ten, he joins a herd of youngsters of his own age, generally led by a young bull of some fifteen to twenty years of age, who has assumed the responsibilities of leadership.”

“How do they pick their leaders?” queried the boy. “Do they fight for it, and the best one wins?”

“Not at all! Elephants only fight seriously to-

gether during the pairing season. Leadership seems to be instinctive. There are animals who are born with a definite sense of leadership, a natural dominance in which the others acquiesce. I have seen herds in which the leader was not by any means the biggest tuskèr.

“Yet this position of eminence is a very precarious one. It is maintained by merit, only. Any herd leader who has led his or her fellows into danger, or who fails to lead them to regions where food is plentiful and water is easy to find, is simply turned out. There is no trouble about it, no fighting. The old leader is disobeyed, that is all, and some new self-appointed leader is obeyed. It would be no use for the disgraced chief to fight. The spirit of the herd would be against him. He is made to feel that he has failed and is no longer wanted. There is no protest. The will of the herd is supreme.”

“And the big bulls are managed by a leader in the same way?”

“Exactly the same. Generally, age, size and dominance tell the tale, but it happens, sometimes, that a herd leader becomes too tyrannical, and, in punishing another elephant, the younger one rebels. This is a personal matter, and a fight to the death

ensues. Occasionally a rejected and defeated herd leader may recover from his wounds, but never does he seek to regain his lost position. Usually he becomes an 'outlaw,' which, in regions near to the settlements, is often very much the same thing as a 'rogue.'

"Before the elephant outlaw there are two paths. Either, when pairing-time comes, he may answer the cooing call of some lonely cow elephant, and fight all comers successfully for her sake, thus beginning a new family of his own which may grow into a herd, little by little; or else he may scorn all tender blandishments, he will resent the company and presence of every other elephant, and he will live in a solitary state, growing more savage and vicious every day. For some reason, as yet not understood, outlaws are generally among the biggest elephants and carry the heaviest ivory."

"Straight words, Bwana!" interjected the surprised Mbumbwe.

"Well, we shall have a chance to see," responded The Hunter. "I was going to tell you, Son. This morning, the extra porters for whom I had sent, to carry the rhinoceros hide—it's a terrific weight!—reported to Mbumbwe the discovery of the spoor of an immense solitary or outlaw elephant. Two



hand-spans in breadth, they make it. That's a vague measurement, of course, but a native is not likely to be mistaken as to the comparative size of a spoor. Native knowledge is very restricted, as to range, but it is peculiarly exact concerning the things they know."

"And we're going to follow that spoor, Father?"

"At dawn."

"Am I going?"

"I'd thought of taking you. Why not? You're quite rested, now. So far, we haven't seen any real tuskers, and I'm not going back to the States without a ten-foot pair of tusks!"

"Ten feet! Why, we've seen nothing like that!"

"You're forgetting! We've only seen cow elephants, so far, and there's no comparison between male and female ivories. The record tusk of an African cow elephant is only six and one-half feet long, and weighs only thirty-six pounds."

"And bull tusks are so much heavier?"

"Incomparably; three or four times as much. The heaviest tusk known is in a museum in London. It weighs two hundred and twenty-six and one-half pounds, and is over two feet in circumference. It is ten feet two inches on the outside of the curve.

“The longest and finest pair of African elephant tusks in the world is in our own National Museum at Washington. The longest of the two measures eleven feet five and one-half inches on the curve, and the pair weigh two hundred and ninety-three pounds. Think of that, Son! Eleven and a half feet long! That’s pushing the mammoth pretty hard.”

“And Indian elephants’ tusks are smaller?”

“A great deal. The longest one on record is only eight feet nine inches on the curve, and the heaviest one weighs one hundred and sixty-one pounds. You see, Spencer, the difference is enormous. People don’t know what an African elephant is like. As with the square-mouthed rhinoceros, they’ve never seen one.

“No, I don’t think I’m putting my standard too high, when I demand a ten-foot tusk. There ought to be a score of bulls in these parts with ‘teeth’ like that.”

At sunrise, they started on the spoor. There was no doubt but that this was a herd outlaw, for at no time did his spoor join that of a herd. Shortly before noon, the hunters found the spoor of a small herd of bulls, all of big size, which had crossed the track of the outlaw, a short time before. The herd

spoor was much more recent, and the tape-measure of the imprint showed that at least two of the bulls would run to eleven feet high, full-grown bulls, evidently. For all that the hunters could tell, there might be just as heavy ivories in the herd as in the outlaw whose spoor they were following.

Mbumbwe's advice was for following the herd of nine bulls.

"Bwana," he said, persuasively, "rogue elephant's teeth perhaps old and broken. More chance with herd."

This was an argument that carried some weight, but, with the "hunch" that most jungle-lovers possess, The Hunter negatived the suggestion.

"We can pick up that herd again, any time, Mbumbwe," he said, "now that we know where to follow the spoor. No. Go on. I want to see that big fellow, at least!"

They tracked the outlaw for three days of hot, rough marching. That he was a beast of unusual size was made evident by the thickness of the trees he had broken down, that he was vicious was shown by his destructiveness, for he broke down three or four times more than he needed for food.

Mbumbwe was an excellent tracker and never lost the spoor, a far from easy task, for an ele-

phant's feet are spongy and leave no impression on hard grass-land.

It was early in the morning of the fourth day that Mbumbwe, who was leading, dropped back.

“Bwana! Nkhlovu! (Master! Elephant!) Tusks, three-man load!”

Spencer's excitement went to fever height with a jump. In native parlance, this meant the biggest kind of tusks, for tusks under sixty pounds are counted a one-man load, tusks up to one hundred and twenty pounds are counted a two-man load, and a three-man load implies anything over.

The light feathers of owl-down, dropped from Mbumbwe's hand, floated directly behind the hunters. They were exactly right for the wind. They moved forward silently. Spencer wanted to pass the word to his father, who was just behind, but he knew the elephant's keenness of hearing and did not dare to speak.

As nearly always happens, the stalkers came on the elephant suddenly. One moment, there was nothing. The next, not forty yards away, directly in front of them, loomed the form of the herd outlaw.

In size, he was enormous, and though his worn and roughened tusks—ten-footers, without a doubt

—showed signs of age, they were not broken and the tips showed white and glistening. His vast body no longer possessed the elasticity of youth, and the big bones showed under the gnarled and seamed hide. His ears were tattered, but they did not curl at the tips. He was old, more than a hundred years, certainly, but he had not reached old age. He looked the outlaw that he was: a dangerous beast.

As it chanced, Spencer was following directly behind Mbumbwe, his father having stopped, a few yards back, to remove a thorn which had wedged itself into his trouser leg, under the crook of the knee.

Suddenly, ignoring all caution, Mbumbwe shouted:

“Shoot, Young Bwana! Mwari! Quick!”

This was the first time that Spencer had heard Mbumbwe call on “Mwari” (God) and he knew that the word was used only in great crises. Mbumbwe saw some peril that he could not see, himself.

The elephant was broadside on, a perfect shot.

As Mbumbwe shouted, the outlaw's trunk went up, for a sniff. His bleary red eyes glinted wickedly. He would catch the man-smell, momentarily, and if so, he would charge.

The danger was imminent, for, if the outlaw wheeled, it would be tenfold more difficult to stop him, since, owing to the convexity of the African elephant's skull, the head shot, from in front, is terribly risky.

As when facing the lion, that queer calmness and decision which is known as "hunter's nerve" came to Spencer with the suddenness of an electric shock.

Almost without thinking, certainly without consciously aiming, the boy raised his .303 magazine rifle and fired at a point four inches forward of the ear-hole just below a line with the eye, allowing a half-inch or so for the fact that he was not as tall as a full-grown man and hence his bullet must follow a slightly different angle.

The crack of his rifle was followed, scarcely three-quarters of a second later, by his father's gun. The Hunter, being about six yards behind, had fired for the elephant's heart, at a point about six inches behind the curve of the great ear—allowing for the tattered edges—and on a line from that point to about three inches below the eye.

Both shots went home, but, though vitally wounded by both bullets, the vigorous old outlaw wheeled and charged.

For one flash of an instant, Spencer struggled

with the natural desire to run. But: "Stand your ground and shoot!" was a piece of advice that had been dinned into his ears so often, that he obeyed. His magazine rifle giving him the chance, he fired a second, a third, and finally a fourth shot. As it turned out, only one of these found its mark.

The elephant charged on, but scarcely the maddest outlaw elephant can prevent swerving with the crack and flash of a rifle directly in front of him. The Hunter's rifle spoke at the same time, piercing the lungs. Though bent on killing, the outlaw was forced to swerve. Then, when nearly opposite Spencer and at not more than six yards distance, all of a sudden the huge beast collapsed with a fearful crash. He fell kneeling, his trunk bent under him, his tusks buried deep in the ground.

He had not screamed. He had not made a sound. After he fell, not a muscle quivered.

Brain and heart shot had both been perfect.

The outlaw's solitary life of ostracism from his fellows was at an end. Never again would he see the herds from afar and know himself to be a thing apart, without a friend. He would not spend long years in loneliness, with old age making his burden ever more bitter to bear. Death had come swiftly, and without pain.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE PLACE OF PEACE

ON the third day of their spooring after the outlaw, Mbumbwe had noted the track of a very old elephant, also a solitary, making his lonely way in the direction of the supposedly inaccessible rock-valleys that lie far to the north of Katumbi, and which frown above the narrow defiles that lead by intricate windings into Lake Nyasa.

Mbumbwe had stopped and looked at it a long time.

“Bwana,” he said seriously. “One goes to Ghost-Land!”

The Hunter had remarked the spoor and taken careful note of the phrase, for he knew well to what the Matabele referred, but he had made no answer, for his heart had been set on following the spoor of the outlaw, the tracking of which had been so splendidly successful.

Now, that he had secured for the Museum the skins of a baby elephant, of a cow elephant, and of an outlaw with ten-foot tusks—the longest tusk measured a trifle over three inches more—the re-



membrance of the spoor of the aged elephant tempted him sorely. It would complete his collection to a marvel.

Without explaining all his reasons to the Matabele tracker, The Hunter sent back to the camp on the dambo for porters to skin and carry the outlaw's hide and tusks away. Spencer rejoiced in advance, for African natives always make a riotous feast over a dead elephant, with much singing and dancing, and the boy never grew weary of watching the native ceremonies in all their wildness, for, in this far-off corner of the jungle, there was no touch of the white man's influence. What stories he would have to tell, when he got home!

This feast proved to be the most spectacular of all, for it was thought to be the last. Besides, as it turned out, the big outlaw was known to be a man-killer. Spencer's bullet had put an end to the chief menace of the tribe, and satisfied revenge made the savages all the more delirious in their joy.

The feast lasted three days, and, on the fourth, the caravan of porters left for its long journey to the main camp at Tbinba's Kraal.

When they were gone, The Hunter suggested to Mbumbwe that he proposed to follow the spoor of the aged elephant which was making its way up

into the hills. For the first time, he encountered mutiny. Positively and emphatically, Mbumbwe refused to go.

“Track real elephant, Bwana, yes; everywhere. Old spoor, new spoor, I find all. I not track ghost-elephant, Bwana, no!”

“Nonsense!” declared The Hunter. “How can he be a ghost-elephant? Isn’t that a real spoor that we saw, Mbumbwe?”

“Real spoor, Bwana, true. Old elephant not dead; dead, soon; following ghost-elephant leader. True!”

Mbumbwe’s fears were genuine, and they were not his, alone. Ak’dibombo refused with equal definiteness, and even Kamshengi, the Achikunda hunter and as fearless a native as ever stepped, turned pale at the mere thought of following that ghost-led spoor. Bribes, promises and threats were of no avail, and The Hunter knew that he dare not use force in such a case, or the whole camp might desert him, without notice. That had happened to white men, before, and an expedition, without guides, in the farthest African jungle, faces considerable danger.

Finally, an appeal to Mbumbwe’s pride resulted in a compromise. Stung by a taunt on his man-

hood, the Matabele agreed to spoor the elephant for them, "every morning Jungle-Cock crows."

"Now, what the deuce does that mean?" queried The Hunter.

"I tell," said Mbumbwe. "Very old story. Big Man, First Man, one day very hungry. Go in forest, with woman, get palm nuts. Climb up palm, begin to cut. Black Fly buzz in his eyes, nose, all over face. Big Man drop knife. Wife see knife dropping, jump aside. Knife not hit her.

"Wife jump aside over little Brown Serpent. Serpent frightened. Serpent run down hole of Striped Rat. Serpent ask water. Striped Rat frightened, run out of hole, up tree. Stop near nest of Plantain-Eater Bird, with chicks. Plantain-Eater Bird frightened, raise war-cry. Black Monkey frightened by war-cry, jump on Ntun-fruit. Ntun-fruit too ripe, fall off tree. Ntun-fruit fall on head of Elephant. Elephant frightened, run away. Elephant run so fast, not see big rope-creeper Mfinn. Mfinn catch Elephant by neck. Elephant more frightened, try to break Mfinn by running twice round ant-hill. Ant-hill smash all over nest of Jungle-Hen, break all eggs. Jungle-Hen angry, tell Jungle-Cock not to crow. Never any more day.

"Three days, and nights, all dark. Sun fright-

ened. Not dare come till Jungle-Cock tell him world safe.

“Big Man, First Man, frightened. Ask Jungle-Cock why not tell Sun to come. Jungle-Cock say Jungle-Hen tell him to, Jungle-Hen say ant-hill break eggs, White Ants say Mfinn creep break house, Mfinn creeper say Elephant drag her away, Elephant say Ntun-fruit fall on head, Ntun-fruit say Black Monkey knock her down, Black Monkey say Plantain-Eater Bird frighten him; Plantain-Eater Bird say Striped Rat frighten her; Striped Rat say Brown Serpent frighten her; Brown Serpent say First Woman frighten her; First Woman say Knife frighten her; Knife say First Man let fall; First Man ask Black Fly. Black Fly say nothing but ‘Buzz-z!’

“First Man punish Black Fly. Must live always where bad smell. Punish all the others, different ways. Not punish Jungle-Cock. If punish Jungle-Cock, not crow, Sun never come. Some places, nights very long, moons long, no Jungle-Cock there. Ghost-countries. Old elephants go ghost-countries to die. No Jungle-Cock. When Jungle-Cock not crow, I frightened, run away.”

This extraordinary tale—which is more often found in West Africa than in East Africa—had, at

least, the advantage of being some sort of a savage explanation. Mbumbwe would track the spoor for them, at least a part of the way.

“As I see it,” said The Hunter, to Spencer, “this superstition is one that is natural to peoples who know the jungle and who know the jungle only. When we reach the heights where there is no timber and no jungle growth, there will be no jungle-fowl. All African jungle natives are afraid of barren rocks; they believe them to be haunted. They have a superstition that trees are a protection against ghosts. I’m afraid that if this spoor leads into the mountains, after we get into the barren country, we’ll have to follow it for ourselves.”

“I’m game to try it!” declared the boy.

“If you weren’t,” said his father, “I’d go alone! I’ve a notion that we’re on the track of a great discovery, something, perhaps, that no white man has ever seen.”

“Ghost-Land?” queried Spencer, smiling.

“Yes,” said his father, gravely, “exactly that!”

They started off at dawn.

From the moment that they struck the old elephant’s spoor, Mbumbwe had not a word to say. Two freshly made scars, red and bleeding, one on either cheek, showed that the Matabele had made

some kind of sacrifice to his native deities to ensure magical protection.

He set a terribly swift pace, all the harder in that the path climbed steadily. Up along a little rivulet, bordered with papyrus reeds, the spoor ran faintly, up beyond the range of hyphæne palms, up and on through endless thickets of "wait-a-bit" thorn, up to the higher scrub. On either side of the path was unbroken tangle, but it was clear that, wherever the path might lead, it was well-travelled.

Mbumbwe made fire that night, and cooked the simple camp meal, but he did not say one word. To every question, he nodded or shook his head. Not for worlds would he have spoken. Ghosts, he believed, have power over a man if he yields to speech!

Did the Matabele sleep that night? Neither of the white hunters knew.

Long before dawn, however, Mbumbwe seized the shoulder of The Hunter and wakened him suddenly. It was still dark, pitch dark, but, in the distance, far below them, from the forest that they had left behind them since shortly after midday, a Jungle-Cock crowed faintly.

The hot, sweet tea was soon ready, with some slices of antelope meat. But Mbumbwe neither ate

nor drank, and watched anxiously for the first glimmer of false dawn.

At daybreak they were off.

The scrub grew scantier and scantier.

Of the great fruit-trees which elephants love, there were no more to be seen. The shade-trees, mimosas and acacias, had been left behind. The teak trees grew scarce. Lianas disappeared. The whole character of the vegetation began to change, to suggest a colder clime.

Huge bare boulders cropped up, sharp and angular; the path grew stony. The little rivulet that they were following no longer gurgled musically between reed-fringed banks, but roared down rapids or splashed hurriedly over successive falls.

The gorgeously colored birds of the jungle, the whydah-bird, the honey-bird, the sun-bird, the halcyon-bird and all their splendid kin, were no more to be seen. Eagles wheeled overhead, and kites screamed.

Spoor, strictly speaking, there was none. From time to time, especially when the enclosing walls of rock made it necessary to cross the stream, the imprints of the aged elephant could be seen, irregular and deeply rutted. But Mbumbwe held on steadily, ever silent, never tired, evidently eager to

keep his word as a warrior, equally evidently in terror-driven desire to go as fast and return as soon as possible. The air was crisper than in the jungle and made walking easier, else Spencer could never have kept up the unfaltering pace.

The second night found them in a lofty valley. Crystalline rock formation stretched on every side. The scene, though gloomy, possessed a sombre majesty.

The soil was scant, giving but little herbage for the mountain goats to browse, themselves hunted by a small species of light-colored leopard, shaggy of coat and half-starved. Upon that stony soil were to be seen none of the gorgeous-colored lizards of the jungle; here were nought but rock-toads and stone-lizards. Even the scorpions shunned the region.

Why should an elephant toil up here? On what could he feed?

Spencer and his father were wakened the next morning by the sunlight shining full in their eyes. It was late.

The fire was not lit.

One glance explained all: Mbumbwe was not there.

There was no need to ask the reason; it was very



plain. That dawning, the crow of the Jungle-Cock had not been heard.

This, to Mbumbwe, was a sign that he was in Ghost-Land, and he was probably speeding for the friendly jungle as fast as his legs would carry him.

There was no fear that the white hunters could miss the way, now. The little mountain stream ran down a steep valley bordered by high rocks on either side, rocks which no elephant could climb, certainly not the aged elephant whose ill-spaced footprints revealed his tottering feebleness. That whole day long, the hunters did not see a single sign that their quarry had been feeding. He had probably taken water from the stream, and that was all.

They were just about to make camp, shortly before sunset, when they first saw the grey bulk of the old elephant moving in the distance ahead of them. He was toiling slowly, painfully onward, his head swaying from side to side, as though he could scarcely hold it upright. The trunk hung low.

Overhead, the vultures were wheeling eagerly.

Though the great beast was nearly a mile away, there was something so tragic in his utter loneli-

ness, there, high in the mountains, with not one of his own kind near him, that Spencer spoke in a whisper:

“Are we going on?”

“Not now,” said his father. “He will not go far. Let us camp. To-morrow we shall see.”

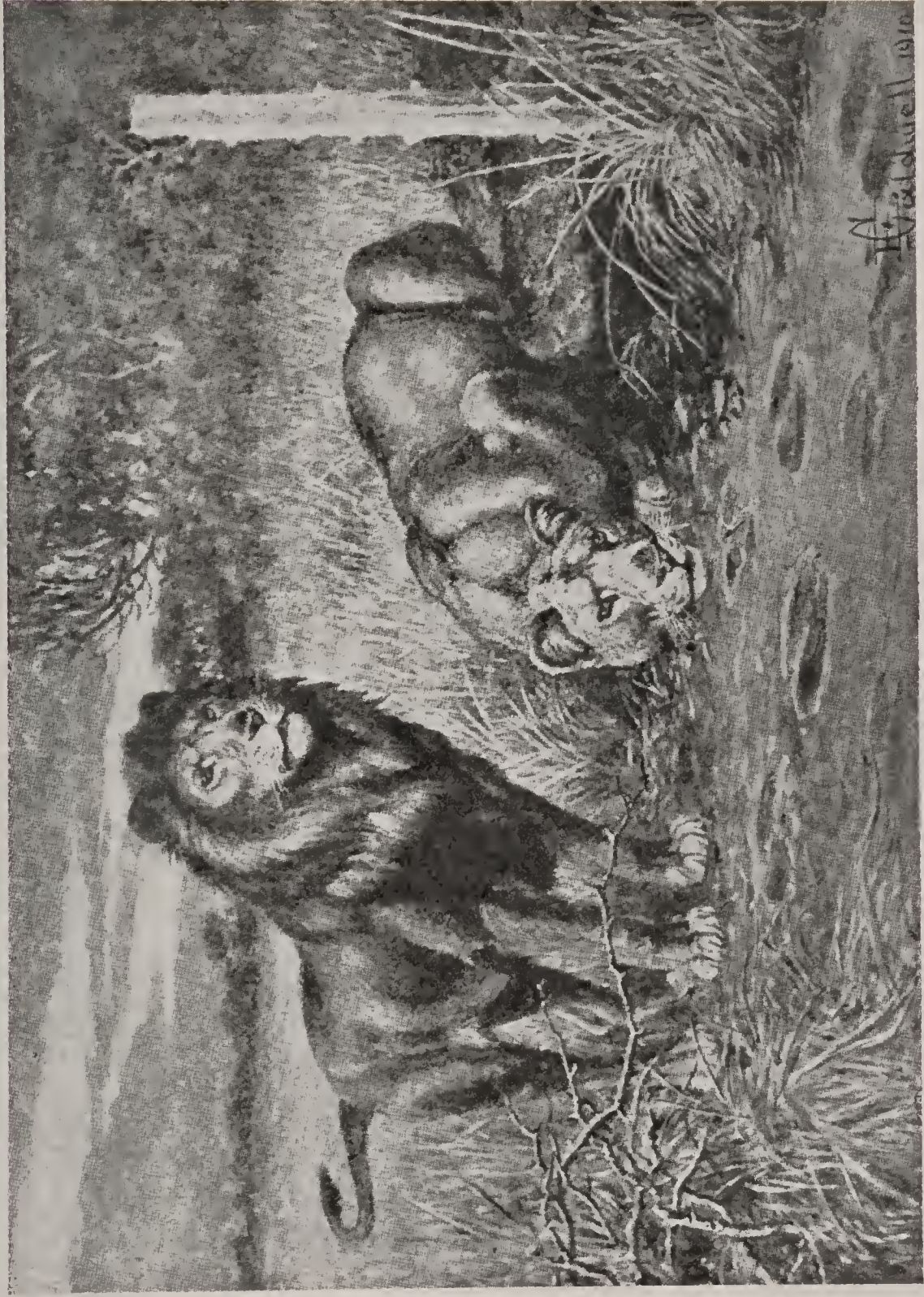
They moved on again, at dawn.

Three hours later, they came in sight of the aged elephant, once more. The wind was blowing up the valley directly from them, and, surely the tottering patriarch should have been warned of the near presence of his bitterest enemies. But old age, probably, had dulled his senses. His drooping trunk touched ground every few inches, in a vain search to find some softer places to put his worn and weary feet.

The white hunters followed up steadily and came to within a hundred yards of him.

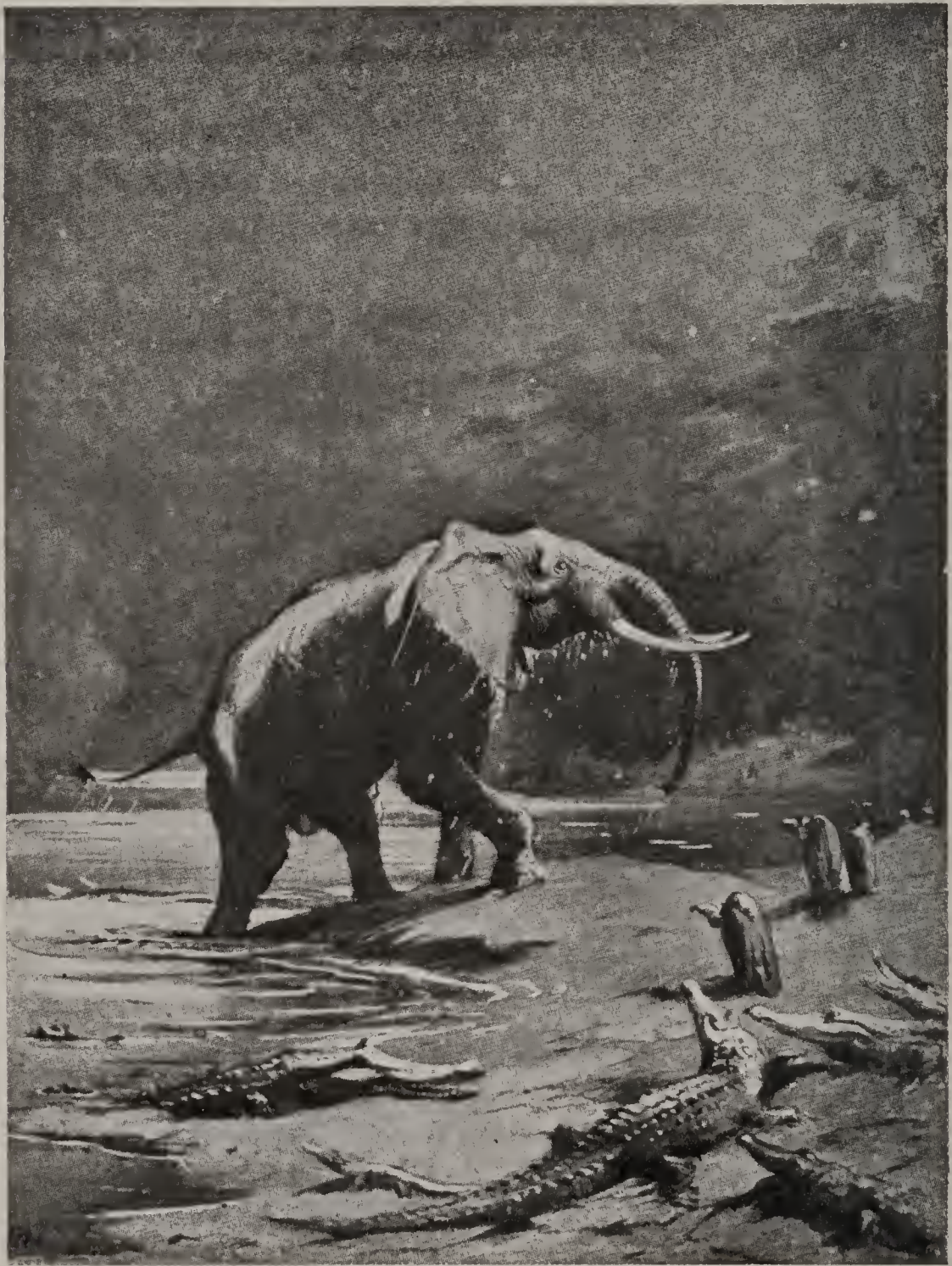
Once, indeed, the great beast turned and looked behind him, feebly put up his trunk as though to try and smell, but dropped it heavily again, despairingly.

The Hunter was right. Old age had robbed the outworn but still stately creature of his hearing; old age had stolen from him his chief protection—the sense of smell.



*Drawn by E. Catdwell.*

**AFRICAN LION AND LIONESS.**



*Courtesy of Hutchinson & Co. Drawn by Winifred Austin.*  
GOING TO THE "PLACE OF PEACE."

It was pitiful, pitiful, to see the aged elephant, still a good ten feet high despite the shrinkage of his form, staggering forward. The great ears, tattered to ribbons at the edges, were curled upward at the tips, the surest sign of extreme old age. The body was mottled with patches of white, especially about the head.

Close, close behind, walked Spencer and his father, unheard by him, unseen by him, unsmelt by him. They walked silently, slowly, accommodating their steps to the enfeebled stride of the once proud Lord of the Forest. Time after time he seemed about to fall, but some invincible purpose, some inner spirit, drove him on.

Up and up he climbed, to the very crest of the divide.

It was just noon.

At the crest, the veteran of nearly two hundred years turned upon the path and looked back. He could not see, or but very dimly, that was clear; he could not smell, or his last moments would have been troubled and embittered by the odor he hated most; and yet, in some dim gesture of regret, he stretched out his trunk in the direction where the jungle lay, the jungle where all his life had been, the jungle of his memories. With his outstretched

trunk he trumpeted, a cracked and broken note, a veritable cry of desolate farewell.

Then he turned and began to descend.

The slope was very abrupt. Twice the old master of the jungle fell to his knees, so helpless that Spencer almost felt as though he should go and try to help him up! Twice the boy thought that the great elephant, splendid still in his wreckage, could never rise. But he lurched up to his feet, none the less, his great limbs thin and trembling, and went on and on.

The afternoon sun shone more warmly on this slope.

And then, quite suddenly, the elephant stopped and stood.

The path, which showed itself to have been worn deep into the rock by centuries of usage, turned sharply off to the right.

Again the veteran looked back, for the last time.

Then he deliberately turned into a rocky defile, a veritable gorge, his footsteps growing firmer. He was near the end.

For nearly half a mile, this gorge wound on.

At last, at a sudden turn, it opened into a long and narrow valley, hemmed in by mountains on

every side. And that valley was as white as though it were covered with unsullied snow.

Spencer's father caught him by the arm.

"Then it is true!" he exclaimed. "It is all true!"

"What?" said the boy.

"Look! Look!"

Spencer gazed, first in astonishment, and then, in awe.

The whiteness of the ground was the whiteness of bleached bones. By hundreds, by thousands, by tens of thousands they lay there: the skeletons of generations of elephants that had come there in loneliness to die.

The aged elephant held on his way, in feeble confidence. His goal was won.

Quietly, he kneeled down amid the bones of his ancestors, remained kneeling a moment or two, then, with a deep sigh, lay over upon his side, his legs updrawn, his trunk outstretched upon the ground.

Overhead, in great circles, the vultures whirled, nearer and ever nearer.

The huge bulk quivered once or twice, the trunk moved convulsively, and all was still.

The aged elephant was gathered to his fathers.

The boy's eyes blurred at the dignity and the majesty of this death, and some minutes passed before he felt the touch of his father's hand.

"Come, Son," he said, and The Hunter's voice was faltering. "We have seen what Man was not meant to see."

At the entrance to the defile, both turned and looked again at the valley with its strange white floor. Ivory there was in quantity enough to make them immeasurably rich for life, tusks of every size and splendor.

"You—you won't take that ivory, Father!" protested Spencer, quaveringly.

"No, Heaven forbid! I had as soon despoil a human cemetery!"

"And Mbumbwe?"

"Will never ask a question about Ghost-Land!"

For some moments, both stood silently, then, turning slowly, The Hunter moved away.

"Come, Son, come," he said. "We will go back. We will leave the Place of Peace inviolate. Commerce, and even Science, must give way here. Let the old jungle heroes rest, their sleep all undisturbed. We can, at least, yield them Honor and Respect!"

THE END



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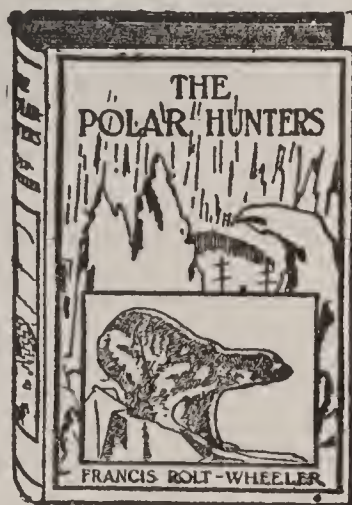
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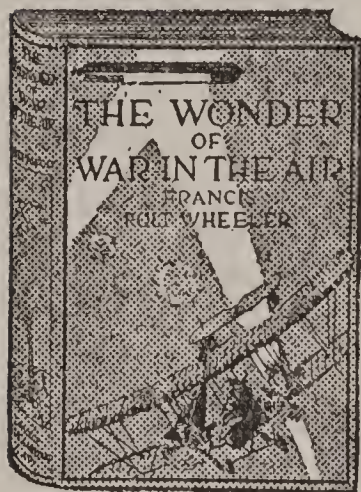
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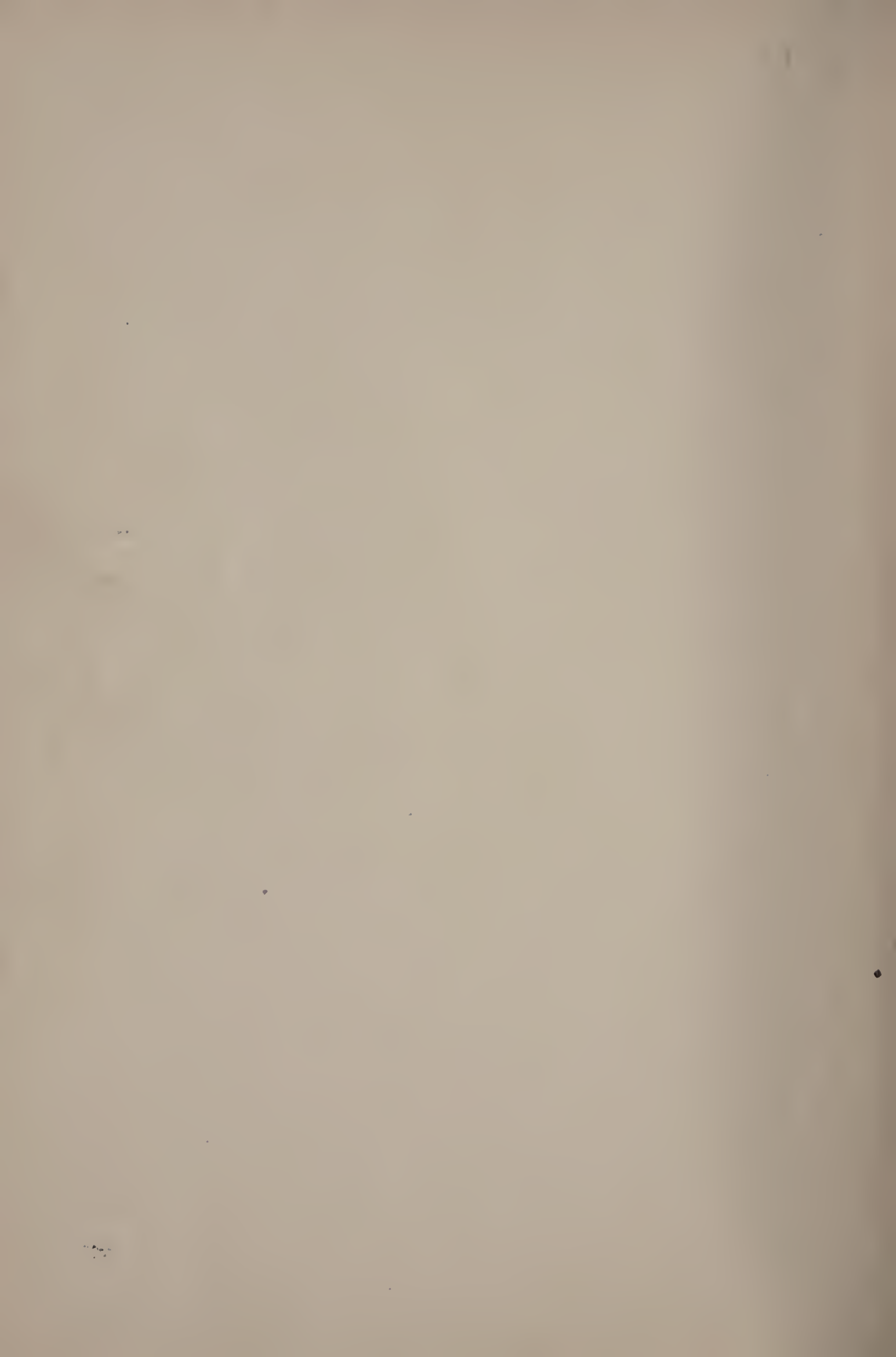








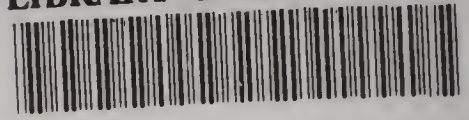






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